

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE BOOK

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

**International Student Services Office**

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**International Student Services provides the following services for international students:**

1. Issuance of immigration forms (i.e., I-20, DS-2019,)
2. Correspondence with various embassies, consulates, sponsors, and government agencies
3. Statistical information and reports to government or private research institutions
4. Interpretation of immigration rules and regulations
5. Liaison with the United States Immigration Services
6. Student Health Insurance Information
7. Program activities

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## WELCOME TO RICHARDSON

Welcome to Richardson, a city not only known for The University of Texas at Dallas, but a city that is filled with fun and entertainment. Richardson is one of the many cities in Texas that is close to Dallas. The distance between Richardson and Dallas is approximately 35 miles. The distance between Richardson and Fort Worth is about 60 miles. However, there is so much in Richardson that you can do without having to drive so far. Please use the resources around and in the campus as best as you can to make your stay here pleasant. There is so much you can do here, so explore!

### Important phone numbers:

<b>Safety Emergency</b>	<b>dial 911</b>
<b>UTD Security and Police</b>	<b>972-883-2331</b>
<b>Social Security office</b>	<b>1-800-772-1213</b>
<b>City of Richardson Post Office</b>	<b>972-235-4695</b>
<b>Drivers License Office</b>	<b>972-867-4221/ 214-553-0033</b>
<b>Drivers License Plates and Automobile Title Transfers</b>	<b>972-881-3010</b>

### Restaurants:

Richardson is a very diverse town when it comes to restaurants. Some of the restaurants that are available include American, Chinese, French, Greek, Mexican, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Thai, Vietnamese to mention but a few.

For those of you who enjoy nightclubs, museums and other entertainment areas, there are several in Richardson as well. To get more information on this you can go to this website:

[www.citysearch.com](http://www.citysearch.com). It will give you the names and prices of hotels and the different restaurants as well.

## CULTURE SHOCK

### What It Is

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 place. Coming to Dallas from another country, you may encounter many new things. The buildings and highways may look different. The food may not be the same as it is at home, and the people may look, speak and act differently from the people at home. Even the smells might be 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.

Additionally, your family and friends are far away. As a result, you may feel confused, unsure of yourself and you may have some doubts about the wisdom of your decision to come to the U.S.

### **Symptoms**

Some people are more affected by culture shock than others. Those who do experience culture shock tend to become nervous and tired. They want to sleep a lot and write many letters home. They may feel frustrated and hostile toward their host country and become overly angry about minor irritations. It is not unusual for them to become dependent on fellow nationals. All these feelings may make it difficult to deal with residents of the host country and to use their language.

### **Coping with Culture Shock**

People may react to an unfamiliar culture in many different ways. While some students may become depressed, sad or physically ill, others are stimulated by the many new experiences that are available to them. Here are some ideas that might be helpful during the transition:

Maintain your perspective. Try to remember that thousands of people have come to Dallas from other countries and have adapted and adjusted.

Evaluate your expectations. Your reactions to the U.S. and to Dallas, as well as to 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, perhaps your feelings of dissatisfaction will decrease. Keep an open mind. People in Dallas might do or say things that people at home would not do or say. But the people in Dallas are acting according to their own set of values, not yours. Try to avoid evaluating American behavior using the standards you would use in your own country.

Learn from experience. Moving into a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It gives you the opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living and to compare it to your own. There is no better way to become aware of your own values and attitudes and to broaden your point of view.

***Here are examples of some of the questions that you might try to answer as you encounter the local people:***

- How do they make friends?
- How do friends treat each other?
- How is respect shown?
- What attitudes do they have about their families?
- What is the relationship between males and females?
- Why do people spend time the way they do?
- How do they deal with conflicts or disagreements?
- What do they talk about?
- What kind of evidence do they seek or use when evaluating an idea or trying to win an argument?

## 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. It is instructive to observe your own reactions to being in a new culture and to compare your reactions with those of other people who are here from different countries. These observations can result in increased understanding of yourself and the various factors that have made you the kind of person you are.

Furthermore, if you are able to keep the perspective of a person who is observing himself or herself while undergoing an unusual experience, you may feel less anxious and you may be able to learn more from the intercultural experience. Many factors influence the way people adjust to a new culture. One of these factors is the individual's personality – degree of self-confidence, sense of humor, ability to interact with other people, ability to tolerate ambiguous or frustrating situations, and so on. Other factors include the degree of difference between the two cultures and the particular setting in which the newcomer is situated.

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

### Practice and improve your English.

The better you can express yourself the easier your adjustment will be.

### Realize that you will often be treated as a stereotype.

Foreigners everywhere are treated (at least at first) not as individuals but as representatives of groups to which they belong. On many occasions, students will be responded to as a foreign student or a student from country X. The nature of that response will depend on each native's previous experience with and ideas about foreign students or students from country X, not anything about you personally. Try to not let this discourage you. You may be able to start some interesting conversations about the subject of stereotypes – what people's stereotypes are, where they came from and so on. Remember that you have your own stereotypes about the host nationals.

### Learn the local criteria for success.

Through observation and questioning determine what is considered a good performance in studies, research, social relations and other aspects of your life in the U.S.

### Learn how to get things done in organizations.

Much of what you want to accomplish will be through organizations - academic departments, other units of the University, businesses, government agencies and so on. It is therefore helpful to learn how these organizations work. This entails knowing which units or people in the organizations provide the service in which you are interested. Who makes the decisions? How can you best approach the people who work in the organization? Secretaries are often very good sources of information on this topic, as well as other students.

Realize how the status of your role here compares to the status to which you are accustomed. Societies attach different degrees of importance to various roles or positions in society. In many countries, the role of a university student or professor is accorded more respect or status than it is in the U.S. A foreign visitor might get more attention and more courteous treatment elsewhere than in the U.S. It can be difficult to adjust to a lower social status than that to which you were accustomed; 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 than is the case at home.

Avoid generalizations.

Newcomers to a society may have a particular experience from which they generalize about the new culture and people. In fact the experience might be very unusual and not a sound basis for generalization.

Try to understand other people's situations. People behave in a certain way because of their own individual characteristics or interests and because of the situation in which they find themselves. If you do not know anything about other people's situations, you may assume that their individual characteristics account for their behavior. For example, if a person does not take the time to talk with you in the street or in an office, you may assume the person is unfriendly, when perhaps the person was late for an appointment or perhaps ill.

In the same way, Americans may understand little about your situation as a newcomer from abroad and therefore misunderstand the reasons for some of your behavior. For example, they may assume that you are unfriendly when actually you are not participating in a conversation because you feel uncomfortable when speaking English.

### **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. It is helpful to keep in mind, even though you are preoccupied with thoughts about your new setting, that you will probably be going to your own country after a certain period of time. Remember that you may change while you are in the United States. You will learn new ideas and you may adopt new attitudes and begin to behave in new ways. This may happen so gradually that you are not aware it is happening. Furthermore, while you are changing, things may be changing at home also. Your family members, friends and professional colleagues will have experiences that you do not know about, and they too may develop new ideas, attitudes and ways of behaving. Social, political and economic situations may change too. This means that when you return home, things may not be as you remember them. You may have to adjust again, this time to your own culture. This readjustment is easier if you realize that it is going to be necessary, you prepare yourself for it, and you try to keep your expectations realistic, not passing judgment on the people you encounter when you return home.

### **The Challenges and Satisfactions of Returning Home**

Since arriving in the United States, many of you have adapted rather well to your new environment. Most of you have made the difficult transition from one culture to another. You had to speak a different language, change your diet, change your way of thought and lifestyle. Initially you probably experienced a lot of hardships and frustrations, but eventually you were able to adjust. This was no small task.

Now you may be preparing for a trip home. Your parents, relatives and friends are all anxiously awaiting your arrival. Of course you, your family and your friends have certain expectations. Unfortunately, their expectations and yours may not be the same; in some cases, you may have experienced changes in yourself that cause friction between you and your family. Always remember

that you have changed and they have changed, and it is simply impossible to return to the way things were when you first departed.

### **Reverse Culture Shock**

Upon your return to your country, you may experience a phenomenon called “reverse culture shock.” The following is a partial list of challenges you may find yourself in when you return home:

- Problems of personal identity and insecurity
- Adjustment to changes in lifestyles and daily routines
- Family and community pressures
- Adjustments from American individualism to familialism
- Feelings of superiority due to your international experience
- Absence or poor quality of services taken for granted in the U.S.
- Social alienation due to a long stay abroad
- Linguistic and communication problems
- Verbal and non-verbal modes and mannerisms may be misinterpreted
- Unfamiliarity with forms of communication or styles of expressions that have become current in your absence
- Political changes and modifications
- Shifts in national priorities and policies
- Inability to reconcile aspects of U.S. education, especially academic freedom and creativity
- Challenges of reinterpreting and adapting skills and expertise
- Lack or inadequate facilities and resources for research
- Inadequate or lack of professional education programs to keep up with new developments of knowledge
- Inability to find employment in ones chosen field
- Facing a glutted job market
- Inability to communicate what was learned abroad

## **USEFUL SERVICES AND INFORMATION**

### **1. Transportation**

#### **Automobile Rental**

Automobiles may be rented by the day, weekend, week, or month by a licensed driver over 25 years of age. Prices vary, so call several automobile rental companies to compare charges. Automobile rental companies are listed in the *Yellow Pages* of the telephone directory under Automobile Renting or Leasing.

#### **Hitchhiking**

It is not common on American highways to see people hitchhiking, that is, standing beside the road and indicating with a thumb or sign that they want a ride in a passing car. Hitchhiking is illegal in many states. Because of the dangers involved, you are advised neither to hitchhike nor to pick up hitchhikers.



### **Buses and Rail**

The public transportation system in Dallas and Richardson is called the Dallas Area Rapid Transit System (DART) (214)-979-1111, [www.dart.org](http://www.dart.org). The DART system provides bus service to the campus from various locations. Schedules are available near the Info Depot in the Student Union. Fares range from 50 cents to \$2.50 payable upon boarding the bus. Exact change is required. You may need to use two or more buses to reach your destination. If you buy a day-pass for \$2.50, you can ride the bus and/or train an unlimited number of times in 1 day. Monthly passes are also available.

### **Taxi Cabs**

There are several taxi cab companies in the Dallas area. Taxi service is generally much more expensive in the United States than in many countries. It is customary to pay an additional 15% of the fare as a tip. Consult the *Yellow Pages* for a listing of taxi cab companies.

## **2. Mass Communication**

### **Newspapers**

The major Dallas newspaper, *The Dallas Morning News*, is published daily. Its advertisements are helpful for learning about events and sales in the area. You may subscribe to The Dallas Morning News for home delivery by calling 214-745-8383, or at [www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com). The student newspaper, the *UTD Mercury*, is published every other week and is available in various locations on campus. It is free and helps to keep you informed of events and activities on campus.

The local newspaper is *The Richardson News* which offers information on Richardson events. *The New York Times* offers more national and international news than most other papers. *USA Today* publishes a weekday newspaper that is available in all parts of the U.S. Most major newspapers are available at newsstands outside gas stations, convenience stores, and inside grocery stores.

### **Radio**

Many AM and FM radio stations can be received in the Dallas area. Most stations are categorized by the type of music they play, such as pop, classical, country, rock, or easy listening. Radio stations in the U.S. are basically divided into two groups: commercial and public. Commercial stations are supported by advertisers and tend to play music targeted towards listeners of certain age groups who would buy the advertisers' products. Public radio stations are supported by government funding and voluntary listener contributions (There is no subscription fee for either radio group). Many stations carry brief, hourly news programs and weather forecasts.

### **Television**

Television is probably the most popular form of entertainment in the United States, as it is in other countries. Television sets are sold at local department stores at relatively low prices. Beware of purchasing a used television because the guarantees or warranties may be very limited or nonexistent.

With cable service, you can receive more than 50 channels. However, cable service requires a one-time installation fee and a standard monthly charge. Specialty channels (movie, sports) can be added for additional costs. For available cable companies, see Television-Cable in the *Yellow Pages*.

**Caution:** Although television can be an excellent and entertaining way to improve one's English, it can also have negative effects. Television often presents what most people would consider a distorted view of life in the United States.

## **Telephones**

Telephone service in the U.S. is operated by privately-owned companies and can be installed easily and quickly. A new telephone subscriber will be required to pay a substantial deposit as well as an installation fee. Monthly bills for local service will vary depending upon the type of service selected. Long distance international calls (overseas) cost extra. No matter who makes the call on the phone, the person who signed for the phone is responsible for the payment of that call. If bills are not paid in full and on time, service will be discontinued. Overseas calls can be very expensive.

## **Telephone Directory**

Telephone directories (also referred to as telephone books) contain the name, address, and telephone number of each telephone subscriber. In addition, emergency telephone numbers, instructions for making various kinds of telephone calls and general information are provided in the first few pages of the telephone directory. *The Yellow Pages* list all local services and businesses, classified according to the kind of service or business offered. Directories are published by the phone company and are free with telephone installation.

## **Initiating Local Service**

Companies providing phone service can be found by looking in *The Yellow Pages*.

## **Using Telephones**

Telephone numbers in the U.S. are ten digits long with the first three digits being the area code. For example, the number for UTD's International Student Services is 972 (area code)-883-4189 (phone number). The area code designates the segment of the country in which the phone is located. Common local area codes for the Dallas/ Richardson area are 972, 469, and 214. When calling a phone with a local area code, you must dial only the ten digit number. To make calls to phones with other U.S. area codes (long distance calls), you must dial a "1" before the ten digit number. Area codes are listed in the front of the telephone directory. Long distance calls are billed at a higher rate than local calls.

Making international calls from a U.S. phone requires that you dial 011 + the country code + the phone number. The country code of the country that you are calling can be found in the Yellow Pages or by calling the telephone operator. You can reach the telephone operator by dialing "0" from your local phone.

## **Public Telephones**

When using a pay phone, pick up the receiver, deposit the amount of money indicated by the instructions on the phone, wait for the dial tone (a humming sound), then dial the number. Special instructions for using public telephones are attached to the telephones themselves.

## **Direct Dialing and Long Distance**

If you wish to make a long-distance call from your phone, you can simply dial "1", the three-digit area code, and the seven-digit number. This call is billed in a monthly statement sent to you by the phone company. Charges for direct-dialed long-distance calls vary according to the time of day

when the calls are made, usually with lower rates after 5:00 PM and even lower rates after 11:00 PM. Refer to the telephone directory for more information.

### **Operator Assisted Calls/ Collect Calls**

Making phone calls through the operator is more expensive than direct dial. The charges for operator assisted/ collect calls are billed to the person *receiving* the call instead of the person *making* the call. When you place a collect call, the operator will ask the person who answers if he or she is willing to accept the charges for the call.

1. Calling person-to-person. If you want to speak with a particular person, the operator will ask for that person when the telephone is answered. If the person is not available, they are not charged for the call. The person-to-person long-distance call is the most expensive.
2. Calling station to station. If you want to speak with anyone at a particular phone number, you can call station to station, whereby you speak to whoever answers. If no one answers the phone, they are typically not charged for the call.

To make an operator assisted/ collect call, dial “0”, the area code, and the seven-digit number. An operator will ask for the information needed to complete the call. If you are calling person-to-person, the operator will ask for the name of the person you are calling. If you are calling station to station, the operator will ask your name.

### **Getting Assistance**

If you have questions about how to use a telephone or make a particular call, dial “0” and ask the operator for assistance. To find a telephone number you can look in the local telephone directory or dial “411.” There will be a fee assessed to your phone bill if you use the 411 service.

## **3. Mail**

### **Post Office Locations**

The Post Office nearest to UTD is located at 1975 Promenade Center, Coit Rd. in Richardson. The phone number is 972-690-8708. There is a mailbox located on campus in the parking lot near the UTD Police Station. A stamp machine is located in the lower level of McDermott Library. Books of stamps may be purchased at the Info Depot, Student Union, 2.204.

### **Pick-up and Delivery**

Mail is delivered to residences Monday through Saturday. If you wish to send mail out, you can put it in your mailbox for the mailman to pick up, deposit it in one of the blue mail boxes located on many streets and on campus, or take it to the local Post Office.

### **Change of Address**

You should notify the Post Office and the University 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 mailing address. This can be done for a small fee at the post office. ***Please note: you cannot use a post office box for your interaction with the U.S. Immigration Service.***

### **Zip Codes**

The United States Post Office requires a Zip Code on every letter with a U.S. destination. It is a five or nine digit number designating the section of the U.S. to which the letter is going. For Zip Code

information, call 972-647-2996 between 8:00AM and 5:00PM weekdays. For general postal information, call 972-741-5508 or see [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

### **Mailing Parcels Overseas**

Postal regulations regarding content, weight, dimensions and the manner in which items are wrapped vary from country to country. To avoid delays in shipment please contact the Post Office for information regarding postal regulations. In addition, postal rates change periodically. Call the Post Office for updated mail rates.

### **Telegrams and Cables**

There are many companies that can send telegrams and cables for you. See your Yellow Pages for a complete listing. Western Union Telegraph is a common provider of telegraph and cable services in the U.S., and charges for telegrams and cables can be billed to your telephone number. To send a telegram or cable by phone using Western Union, you can visit their Richardson Office at the corner of Coit Road and Beltline Road. The telephone number is (972)-644-8660.

### **Laundry Services**

Many apartment complexes provide a laundry room with several washers and dryers for their tenants. If this is not the case for your residence and you don't wish to purchase a washer or dryer, laundromats are conveniently located throughout the area. Check the *Yellow Pages* under Laundries-Self Service.

### **Using Laundry Machines**

Instructions for using washers and dryers are usually posted in the laundry room or Laundromat. Washers usually require 75 cents or a dollar to operate and dryers 50 cents or 75 cents, and you provide your own laundry soap. If you have never done your own laundry, be sure to read the washing instructions on your clothes' labels and the instructions on the box of detergent.

### **Dry Cleaning**

Delicate clothing can be taken to a dry cleaner, where they are cleaned with a solvent. You can locate a dry cleaner by looking in the *Yellow Pages* of the telephone book under Cleaners. Clothes are taken to a cleaner and left for a period of time ranging from a few hours to a few days. Some cleaners require pre-payment.

### **Hair Cutting and Styling**

See the telephone directory *Yellow Pages* listings under Barbers and Beauty Salons. Traditionally, men received haircuts at barber shops and women went to beauty salons for haircuts, styling, coloring, etc. Now, many businesses are called Hair Styling Salons and offer services to both males and females.

## **4. Religion**

### **General Comments**

Religion does not play as pervasive a role in the United States as in many other countries. Though the major religion in the U.S. is Christianity, there is no official religion or established church that is supported by the government. In fact, strong efforts are generally made to prevent governmental support of religious activities of any kind. The doctrine of separation of church and state is widely

respected, and perceived deviations from it over such matters as prayer in public schools cause vigorous debate.

Religion is generally considered a private matter and many people choose not to discuss their beliefs with others. Americans are generally taught not to discuss religion with people they do not know well, lest they offend or create an argument with someone who has differing views. Visitors from abroad will find a wide range in the religious practices of Americans. Some attend religious services weekly and also participate in religious related social and service activities. Others may attend religious services irregularly, perhaps no more than once or twice a year. There are some Americans who do not attend religious services at all.

### **Religious Institutions**

Dallas has many religious institutions, the names and addresses of which are in the *Yellow Pages* under Churches and Synagogues.

### **Foreign Visitors and Religion**

Foreign students and scholars who want to visit a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious service can simply look up appropriate addresses and telephone numbers in the *Yellow Pages* and attend services. Those representing faiths not listed in the directory can seek out fellow nationals who share their beliefs and ask how they go about practicing their religion in Dallas.

### **Cults**

As it is used in contemporary America, the word cult refers to a religiously-oriented group that may have no affiliation with an established church. Cults generally differ from traditional churches in a number of ways. One of the most common signs of a cult is that it requires complete obedience from its members; other various kinds of manipulation may be used to guarantee the complete loyalty of the cult members. They may have a leader who has an exalted position. Their members' personal possessions sometimes become the group's property. They often operate in a secretive way and are unclear about their purposes. They may believe they are being persecuted by the general society.

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 do not make clear in their offers of friendship and help that they are cult members trying to persuade new people to join. To protect yourself from cult members who are recruiting, you will want to be wary of people who (a) tell you they can provide easy solutions to your problems, (b) seem excessively friendly and eager to help, (c) urge you to join them because everyone is doing so, (d) argue that you should feel guilty if you do not join their organization or (e) invite you to isolated weekend workshops with unclear goals. Do not go to meetings that you are not free to leave at any time.

## **5. Housekeeping**

### **General Information**

Many students coming to the United States have never done their own shopping, cooking, and housecleaning. If these activities are new for you, you should be aware that in the U.S. it is completely acceptable for people who are not servants or women to shop for groceries, cook, wash

dishes and clothes, clean the house, and take care of children. Most Americans do not have servants, and these duties are performed by family members. Landlords generally expect tenants to maintain a certain level of cleanliness in their residences.

## **Major Appliances**

### **Stoves**

Kitchen stoves may be gas or electric. In either case it is important to keep the burners and the oven clean so they work safely and effectively. It is easier to wipe the burners after each use to keep soiled food from hardening on them. If the oven is not self-cleaning, clean it periodically using ammonia or a special oven cleaner. When using oven cleaner or any other specialized cleaning product, read the label carefully and follow instructions. Many cleaning products are harmful if inhaled or allowed to touch your skin.

### **Disposal of Trash and Garbage**

Ask your landlord what to do with trash and garbage. Garbage is collected once or twice a week by city employees. If your apartment has a garbage disposal in the sink, be sure to ask your landlord what kinds of waste cannot be put into it. A garbage disposal is a machine that grinds food waste and allows it to be washed down the sink drain. Garbage disposals can be dangerous if used improperly. If you are unfamiliar with disposals ask someone who knows how to use one to instruct you.

### **Keeping the Kitchen Clean**

American kitchens are less open to fresh air than are kitchens in some other places. Thus grease and oil in the air tend to accumulate on walls and on the tops of refrigerators and cabinets. These areas should be cleaned to avoid the development of unpleasant odors. This is especially true if you fry food frequently. Keeping food crumbs off the counters and the floors and keeping food items sealed and placed in cabinets or refrigerators will help to prevent insects and rodents.

### **Keeping the Bathroom Clean**

While Americans in general do not clean their bathrooms on a daily basis as people in some other countries may do, they believe that bathrooms should be kept relatively clean and free of odors. This means at least weekly cleaning of toilet bowls, bathtubs, sinks, shower stalls, and bathroom floors. Hair, soap residue and smears on mirrors and tile should be removed. Products for cleaning toilet bowls, porcelain (sinks, tubs, and toilets), tile and glass are available in many stores.

## **6. Cars and Bicycles**

### **Drivers License**

You may drive legally in Texas if you have a current International Driver's License (issued for one year only) and your home country driver's license in your possession; otherwise, if you plan to drive, you must obtain a Texas driver's license. In addition, a Drivers License is used as a common form of identification in the United States, and is frequently helpful when conducting business, not just when driving.

To obtain a valid Texas driver's license:

- Apply at one of the many Department of Public Safety (DPS) Test stations in the Dallas area. The DPS nearest to UTD is located at 210 W. Parker, Suite 224. Plano, TX 75074. The phone number is (972) 867-4221.

- Produce a certified copy of your birth certificate or passport.
- Pass a written exam.
- Pass a driving skills test.
- Undergo an eye test to determine if corrective lenses are needed.
- Be 16 years or older.
- Show proof of liability insurance if you own a car.
- Pay the application fee.
- Have a valid Social Security Number or a valid passport with a valid visa or I-94.

Driving lessons are available at various locations listed in the *Yellow Pages* under Driving Instruction. If you have a certificate from a Driving School, you will not have to pass a driving skills test to obtain a license. A certificate from a Driving School may also decrease the cost of insurance.

It is very important to learn and follow traffic regulations. Regulations concerning driving speed, turning and parking are used to control automobile and bicycle traffic in the U.S. Most people generally adhere to these regulations, which are routinely enforced by the police. Violations may result in fines, jail sentences and/or loss of driving privileges. Automobiles that are illegally parked may be towed away and the owner will be required to pay a fine as well as towing and storage costs.

### **Texas Safety Belt Law**

Texas law requires the use of seatbelts by the driver and front-seat occupants of any vehicle. Children less than two years of age must be secured in a special car seat which must meet federal safety standards. Drivers and front-seat passengers who do not buckle up will be fined if stopped by a police officer.

### **Buying a car**

If you are not knowledgeable about automobiles, you may want to take someone who is knowledgeable with you when shopping for a vehicle. Such a person could help you evaluate both the condition of the car and the claims made by the person who is trying to sell it. If you buy an automobile and the contract or purchase agreement says “As is” please be aware that you have no recourse if the automobile is in need of repair soon after the purchase.

### **Vehicle Registration**

When you buy a car, the certificate of ownership or certification of title must be transferred to you and “registered” under your name from the previous owner. This can be done at various locations in Dallas County. A substation of the County Tax Assessors Office is located at 516 Twilight Trail in Richardson. The phone number is (214) 653-7011.

### **Vehicle Inspection**

Vehicles registered in Texas must be inspected every 12 months. There is a fee for an inspection sticker, which is applied to the lower left hand corner of the windshield and shows the number of the month in which the inspection was performed. Inspection stations are located throughout the Dallas area at various service stations, dealerships, garages and most major department store auto service centers. Proof of liability insurance must be shown for inspections.

### **Automobile Insurance**

The state of Texas requires that you have automobile insurance. There are several types of automobile insurance:

1. Liability insurance provides protection when you are involved in an accident for which you are responsible. 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.
2. Collision insurance covers losses if your car is in a collision with another car.
3. Comprehensive insurance covers losses caused by storms, thieves and vandals as well as providing liability and collision coverage.

### **Buying car insurance**

In the *Yellow Pages* of the telephone directory, insurance agents are listed under the heading Insurance. Unless a friend can recommend an agent, you should talk to at least two agents about your insurance needs. Insurance rates vary from company to company and depend on the value of the car, the amount it is driven, the age of the driver, and his or her driving record.

### **Driving in Hazardous Weather**

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

**Winterize your car.** You should make sure that your tires are not worn smooth; put anti-freeze into your radiator unless your car's engine is air cooled; change to lighter weight motor oil; and make certain your brakes, windshield wipers, turn signals, and headlights are in good operating condition.

**Drive carefully.** There are times in Dallas when roads can be slippery and/or visibility is very limited. It is during these times that driving should be avoided. Local radio and television broadcasts report hazardous driving conditions as well as school closings. If you must drive under these adverse conditions, you should remember several safety rules: Start and stop slowly. Do not follow other cars closely. Drive slowly. Don't stop suddenly. Be very aware of the drivers around you, and obey all traffic regulations.

### **Driving Tips:**

1. Drive on the right-hand side of the road.
2. Obey speed limits. In most areas, speed limits are strictly enforced, and offenders must pay fines.
3. Yield to oncoming traffic when making a right turn at a red light.
4. Do not pass school buses loading or unloading children whether the bus is on the same side of the road as the car or on the opposite side.
5. Reduce speed in all school zones.
6. Do not stop on the highway but pull completely off the road if you must stop.
7. Keep in the right hand lane at all times when driving on two lane roads.
8. Always signal when turning, stopping or changing lanes.
9. Always keep your car locked when it is unattended.
10. Never pick up hitchhikers.



11. Wear seatbelts at all times. Passengers in the front seat must also wear seatbelts. Children must be restrained in a car seat or wearing seatbelts regardless of where they are sitting.

### **Bicycle Safety**

When you are riding your bicycle, you must obey the same rules and traffic signs as a motorist. You can be ticketed by police and be required to pay fines for violating traffic regulations while riding a bicycle, just as you can for violations in a vehicle. Use hand signals to let motorists know when you plan to make a turn. Putting your left arm straight out from your side signals a left turn. Bending the left arm upwards at the elbow indicates a right turn. If you are riding your bicycle at night or in late evening where visibility is limited, you must have a headlight and rear light or reflector on your bicycle. It is also a good idea to wear light-colored or reflective clothing when riding at night.

Before riding a bicycle in the area, spend some time observing bicycle traffic patterns, which might not be the same as the ones to which you are accustomed. Notice that often neither cars nor pedestrians yield to bicyclists. Bicyclists must, therefore, be quite attentive to vehicles and pedestrians, and must be able to stop or turn aside if they find their path obstructed. In some countries, bicycle traffic may get more preferential treatment than it generally does in the United States.

### **Bicycle Theft**

Because bicycle theft is a serious problem, it is important to always lock your bicycle securely. Ask the person who sells you the bicycle to recommend an effective lock for it. You should lock your bicycle to a bicycle rack, not to light poles, trees or posts.

## **7. Holidays in the U.S.**

### **General Information**

Legislation has moved the celebration of several holidays to the Monday nearest the date the holiday commemorates. The purpose of this legislation was to create as many three-day weekends (i.e., Saturday-Sunday-Monday) as possible. The four principle national holidays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, were not subjects of the date changing legislation and are still celebrated on the same day each year. Many businesses and all government offices close in observance of these holidays.

Many communities have public celebrations or parades on federal legal holidays, especially Independence Day, and campus organizations may sponsor special events. Churches give special programs on Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and all people are welcome to attend these services, even if they are not Christians. Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter are also special times for American families to gather together for festive dinners.

The following are some of the most popular holidays. Not all are celebrated throughout the U.S. and not all are celebrated by everyone. Some holidays are only for followers of certain religions. Those marked with an \* are federal legal holidays. This means banks, government offices (including the US Postal Service), and some businesses are closed in observance of these holidays.

***New Years Day\**** - January 1. Celebrating usually occurs the night before, on New Year's Eve, when it is common for groups of people to have a parties to celebrate the coming of the New Year.

It is customary to make loud noises at midnight when the New Year officially arrives; embracing or kissing others at midnight is also customary.

***Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday\**** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in January. This is the birthday of a famous civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

***St. Valentine's Day*** - February 14. This is a day for friends and couples to exchange cards and gifts. Children usually exchange Valentine's cards with their classmates. The holiday originally honored St. Valentine.

***President's Day\**** - 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in February, honoring U.S. Presidents, especially George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

***Ash Wednesday*** - Dates vary. This marks the beginning of the 40-day period of Lent, a period of penitence and fasting in some Christian denominations. On Ash Wednesday, some Christians attend a church service during which small ash marks are placed on their foreheads to symbolize man's ultimate return to dust.

***St. Patrick's Day*** - March 17. This honors St. Patrick, who brought Christianity to Ireland. Many people wear something green on this day, and it is customary for children to pinch you if you do not wear something with green in it on St. Patrick's Day.

***Good Friday*** - This day is celebrated sometime in March or April, depending on the lunar calendar. On this day, Christians remember the death of Jesus Christ.

***Easter*** - The holiday is on the Sunday after Good Friday. At Easter, Christians remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baskets of candy and dyed, hard-boiled eggs are hidden by a mythical Easter Bunny, and the children participate in an "egg hunt".

***April Fool's Day*** - April 1. This is a day when people often play practical jokes on others.

***Mother's Day*** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May. Gifts, cards, and/or special attention are given to mothers and grandmothers.

***Memorial Day\**** - Last Monday in May. It is a day to remember the fallen soldiers of U.S. wars.

***Flag Day*** - June 14. Flags are flown to mark the adoption of the American flag.

***Father's Day*** - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in June. Gifts, cards, and/or special attention are given to fathers and grandfathers.

***Independence Day*** - July 4. Parades, picnics, parties, fireworks, and decorating with flags mark the celebration of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence from Great Britain in 1776.

***Labor Day*** - 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September. Labor Day is the commemoration of the working person.

***Rosh Hashanah*** - The Jewish New Year  
And:

**Yom Kippur**, the Jewish Day of Atonement, both celebrated on varying dates in September or October.

**Columbus Day** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in October. This honors Christopher Columbus, who discovered the Americas in 1492.

**Halloween** - October 31. A children's holiday, associated with carving faces on pumpkins (jack-o'-lanterns) and making witches, cats, and ghosts for decorations. Children often go to parties in costumes or go trick-or-treating. Trick-or-treating is putting on a costume, going door-to-door in your neighborhood, knocking on doors, and saying trick or treat. Neighbors will give children a piece of candy or fruit. Young children should be accompanied by an adult when trick-or-treating.

**Veterans Day \* (Armistice Day)** – November 11, often observed on the Monday closest to that date. This holiday honors all who serve and have served in the Armed Forces; it also commemorates the end of World War I.

**Thanksgiving** - Fourth Thursday in November. It is a harvest celebration, stemming from harvest-time festivities in the original American colonies. Traditionally, families gather and have a large meal that includes turkey and pumpkin pie and give thanks for the year's blessings.

**Christmas\*** - December 25. A major U.S. holiday. It began as the day Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ, but is now a widely celebrated day of feasting and gift-giving. Preparations, including gift-buying and decorations of homes and public places, begin as early as Thanksgiving. Santa Claus, a mythical figure, is said to visit the homes of children on the night of December 24 (Christmas Eve) and leave gifts for them while they sleep.

**Hanukkah** – Festival of Lights, an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem after its defilement by Antiochus of Syria. It is celebrated on varying dates in December.

## 8. Housing Information

### The General Situation

On-campus housing is available through Waterview Park Apartments which is located within walking-distance to all campus facilities.

Off-campus housing in the area surrounding the university includes rooms, apartments, and houses and is available on a contract or lease basis. Students can learn of available housing through newspaper advertisements or with the assistance of an apartment locator service. Apartment locator services are listed in the *Yellow Pages* of the phone directory.

### Room

A room has facilities for sleeping and studying. It may be in a private house or in a rooming house, where there are many bedrooms. In either case, bathrooms may be shared with other residents. Cooking and/or laundry privileges may be included.

## **Apartments**

An apartment is a complete living unit. In most units, laundry machines are shared with other residents in the apartment building. An efficiency apartment has two rooms: a bathroom and another large room that serves as a kitchen, bedroom, and living room. It is suitable for one, or perhaps, two people. There are also one, two, and three-bedroom apartments. Unfurnished apartments generally have only a refrigerator and stove, and possibly, window coverings, and the renter must acquire all furniture that is needed. A furnished apartment includes all furniture, but not linens (towels, sheets, etc) or cooking, and eating utensils. Since unfurnished apartments cost less and inexpensive second-hand (used) furniture is easy to buy and sell in Dallas, students who will be here for at least one year may find that it is more practical to rent an unfurnished apartment and buy used furnishings. A renter, or tenant, usually has to pay for utilities (i.e. gas, electricity, water, and telephone services), although the monthly rent may include some of these. The landlord or property manager can explain the procedures for acquiring utility services.

## **Houses**

Students who are here with their families may want to rent an entire house, which may be furnished or unfurnished. Generally, utilities are paid in addition to rent. Rent may vary depending on size, location, furnishings, and the general condition of the house. Houses may be located through real estate agents or through newspaper advertisements.

## **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 for a stated period of time. A lease specifies the landlord's responsibilities for maintenance and repair of the housing unit. Provisions concerning early termination of the lease may also be included.

When you sign a lease, you will usually pay the first month's rent and a security deposit or damage deposit which may amount to as much as two months rent. The landlord should return the deposit to you within 30 days after you leave the residence, assuming you have paid your rent, left the apartment clean/undamaged, and have not been evicted. If your deposit is not returned, the landlord should provide a written statement explaining why the deposit was withheld. The Dallas Tenant's Association (214-828-4244) can provide assistance to tenants whose security deposits have been wrongfully withheld.

## **What you should look for in a lease**

1. First of all, you should pay careful attention to the duration. Make sure you can keep the residence as long as you want, but that the lease is not binding for a time period longer than you anticipate needing the housing. Is the lease renewable by the month or the year? Can you, the renter, break the lease with one or two months notice to the landlord? In the absence of such a provision, you may be required to pay rent until the end of the period covered by the lease even if you move. Some leases may permit you to sublet your room or apartment. Sublet means that you may find another tenant to rent your apartment in your absence.

2. Secondly, be certain about which utilities are your responsibilities. Ask the landlord or a current tenant for the average utility costs and then add these to the rent to determine your total monthly housing costs.

3. Tenants are entitled to a safe, sanitary, and livable environment. Landlords are required to provide adequate winter heating and summer cooling and regular insect control. If you make any special agreements with the landlord concerning repairs or alterations, make sure those agreements are written into the lease, signed, and dated. Under U.S. law, it is essential to have important agreements in writing and signed.

4. Lastly, consider and respect any exclusions and restrictions that may be in a lease. Common ones pertain to children and pets. Some landlords do not allow either; most landlords do not permit pets. If you are renting a room or sharing an apartment, be sure to ask the landlord to provide references or a list of names of previous tenants.

### **Renting without a lease**

Some property owners may not require a lease. This has some advantages, the most obvious of which is that you may vacate by giving the property owner 30 days written notice. There are, however, disadvantages to not having a lease. A lease prevents the property owner from raising the rent for the duration of the lease. According to the standard lease, the property owner must also maintain the unit and be responsible for any repairs, including heating, plumbing and appliances. Without a lease, the tenant does not have these guarantees, although the property owner must meet certain habitability standards even if the lease is not written. The property owners, like the tenant, can end a verbal rental agreement by providing 30 days written notice to the tenant.

### **Advertising Terms**

Below is a partial list of definitions for the abbreviations that may appear in advertisements for rooms, apartments and houses:

**Sum Sublet/fall opt or SBTL FL OPT**- summer sublet with option to rent in fall

**Avail immed** – available immediately

**LG/BD apt**- large one bedroom apartment

**Unfurn** – unfurnished (without furniture)

**Furn** - some furniture provided

**H/W pd** - heat and water included in rent

**A/C** – air conditioning

**C/A** – central air conditioning throughout living quarters rather than only in some rooms.

**Lndry** – laundry on premises

**Refrig** – refrigerator included

**W/D** – clothes washer and dryer on premises

**All appls** – appliances on premises, usually stove and refrigerator, may not include washer and dryer or microwave

**000-000-000 morns**-mornings, **afts**- afternoons, **eves**- evening, **appt**- appointment) call this phone number at the stated time

**\$/mo** – rent per month

**\$ + utils** – rent plus utilities

**R+dep** – rent plus deposit

**\$ +elect** – rent plus electricity

**rent negot**- rent negotiable

**\$/OBO** – or best offer (landlord will rent to tenant offering to pay the most, if no one will pay the desired rent)

**1 mi S** – one mile south

**2 blks** – two blocks

**newer bldg**- newer building  
**cond**- condominium  
**fam rm**- family room (large recreation room)  
**gar**- garage  
**off st prkg** – off street parking places  
**occ** – occupants (limited number living in the apartment)  
**prof/grad**- available to the professional or graduate students  
**resp adult** – available to responsible adult  
**ref or refer** – references needed from previous landlord

## Utilities

If utilities are your responsibility, the information below can assist you in obtaining those services. There may be other companies available to provide these services, and this is not meant to be an exhaustive list. For other companies, look in *The Yellow Pages* in the telephone directory.

- **Electric TXU Energy**

(972)-791-2808

[www.txu.com](http://www.txu.com)

Information that you will need to provide (if available): address of tenant's former electric service company, your place of employment, your marital status, your driver's license number, your social security number (if you have one), your phone number and a copy of your birth certificate or passport. A deposit and initiation fee is required for customers without prior service for two years. The deposit may be waived with a letter of credit from another electric company with which you have had service, including a company in your home country.

- **Water**

(972)-744-4120

This is managed by the City of Richardson and to open an account, you must go to City Hall at 411 West Arapaho. More information can be found at

<http://www.cor.net/Gen2/utilities/opennewaccount.html>. A deposit is required.

## Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance (also called homeowners' insurance) can be purchased to protect against losses caused by fire, theft, or vandalism. Renter's insurance covers personal belongings in your residence and in your automobile. Insurance may also cover damages which you have caused to the property. The cost of renter's insurance varies depending on the value of your personal possessions. When buying insurance, it is wise to get rate information from two or three different homeowners' insurance companies. You can find company names and telephone numbers in *The Yellow Pages* under Insurance.

## 9. Shopping

### General Comments

Since prices and quality of merchandise vary, it is helpful to become acquainted with those stores where you can shop most conveniently and economically. Such information is available from people

who have lived in the Dallas area, from newspaper advertisements, and from *The Yellow Pages* section of the telephone directory. You can ask a store employee about the merchandise without being obligated to buy anything.

Prices in stores are fixed. A shopper does not bargain for a lower price with the store employee except in the case of automobiles and perhaps large appliances. Many stores operate on a self-service basis where shoppers use one of the provided shopping baskets or carts and select the merchandise that they want to buy. The merchandise is then taken to the cashier, who totals the amount of the purchase, and adds the appropriate sales tax. If you need assistance, clerks are available.

It is advisable to keep receipts for purchases in case the item is defective or unsatisfactory, and you need to return it. The receipt proves that you made the purchase at a particular store, and the cashier will often allow you to exchange or return the item if you bring the receipt.

Removing merchandise from the store without paying for it is called shoplifting, which is a criminal offense. Many stores have closed-circuit television/surveillance cameras through which store employees monitor for shoplifters. Many Dallas businesses will take all possible legal actions against shoplifters even if the stolen item is small and inexpensive. Being arrested once for shoplifting can result in a court hearing, a fine, and publicity in the newspapers. Repeated convictions for shoplifting can result in deportation.

#### **A Caution about Sales Tactics**

You may encounter sales people who use various high-pressure tactics to try to make you to buy from them. This may happen in person or on the telephone. Please remember that you do not have to buy anything from any sales person. Buy only those things you genuinely need or want and can afford. Do not let the sales person influence you to make a purchase. Remember that you are entitled to ask a sales person any question you wish about a product or service, and you are entitled to a clear and complete answer. You can tell the sales person you want to think about the matter for a few days, or that you want to talk to other people who have purchased the product or service. If a sales person telephones you, you do not need to listen to the person's entire speech. Simply interrupt the person, and state that you are not interested in the product or service.

If you are in doubt about the wisdom of a particular purchase, you might want to consult with another person who has experience with the same product or business.

#### **Sales Tax**

A sales tax is added to the cost of most purchases. Income generated from sales taxes is used to support various state-run programs, such as highway maintenance, public education, and law enforcement. The Dallas area sales tax rate is 8.25 percent. No sales tax is charged for groceries or prescription medicines.

#### **General Shopping**

There are three general kinds of food stores: supermarkets, neighborhood/convenience stores, and specialty food stores. A supermarket is a large store which sells not only groceries but also paper goods, kitchen supplies and health and beauty aids. Supermarkets in the Dallas area include Albertsons, Kroger, Tom Thumb, Wal-Mart, and Minyard's, to name a few. Neighborhood/

convenience stores are smaller and have fewer non-food items. They usually have longer hours of business and charge somewhat higher prices. They often sell gasoline, some automobile supplies, and a limited range of foods. Most people do nearly all their food shopping at the supermarket and go to the neighborhood/ convenience stores only to buy one or two items needed quickly.

If foods from your country are not available from the supermarket, they may be available from a specialty food store. Ask students from your home country where they buy such foods, or look in the *Yellow Pages* under Grocers-Retail.

### **Clothing**

Clothing can be purchased in small specialty shops, department stores, (where items such as clothing, hardware, appliances, furniture, fabric, and sewing supplies, kitchen utensils, shoes, books, records and toys can be purchased), second-hand stores such as Goodwill Industries (which sell used merchandise at low prices), shopping malls (Collin Creek Mall, Valley View Mall, North Park Mall, Willow Bend Mall), and discount stores such as Target, Wal-Mart, and Ross.

### **Furniture**

Furniture can be purchased at furniture stores, department stores, and second-hand stores. In addition, used furniture can also be purchased from private individuals who have sales at their homes (called yard or garage sales) or who advertise the items they wish to sell in the classified section of the newspaper.

### **Pharmacies/Drug stores**

Drug stores (Walgreens, CVS, to name a few) sell not only prescriptions, non-prescription medicine, and toiletries, but also sell small household goods, office supplies, magazines, and newspapers. Many supermarkets have pharmacies where prescription drugs can be purchased.

### **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, discount stores, and private individuals.

### **Alcoholic Beverages**

A person must be 21 years of age and provide proof of age to legally purchase or drink alcoholic beverages in Texas. This law includes drinking in public places like bars and restaurants, as well as in your home.

### **Money Management**

Most foreign students, like many American students, live on limited budgets. It is best to manage your money wisely in order to make sure it lasts as long as possible. It is important to be cautious about spending money until you have become accustomed to the value of the dollar and are fully aware of what your essential living expenses will be. It is not wise to carry large amounts of cash with you or keep it at your residence. Instead, deposit it in bank.

## **10. Banks and Banking Services**

### **General Description**



There are three types of banking services in Dallas: full-service banks, savings and loan associations, and credit unions. Their services are similar in that they all offer savings accounts, checking accounts, and loans to qualified customers, but these services may vary from one bank to the next. The interest rates for these services may be somewhat more competitive at credit unions and savings and loans, but they generally vary only slightly. Banks offer additional services, such as safe-deposit boxes and international currency exchanges. Credit unions are member-owned, and one must usually be employed at a university or at selected businesses to become a member.

### **Opening an Account**

To open any kind of bank account, go to the bank of your choice, and tell the receptionist that you would like to open an account. The receptionist will direct you to a person who can explain the kinds of accounts that are available and help you open one. Married people can open a joint account which either or both people can use. There are periodic changes in the kinds of accounts and other services that banks offer. Banks have customer service personnel to answer customer questions and assist with problems.

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

Some people pay their bills using personal checks. These payments are sometimes presented in person, but they are usually sent through the mail (never send cash in the mail). Additionally, most banks offer online bill payment services, which have become quite popular. For a fee, banks will provide personalized checks with your name, address, and telephone number. It is wise to wait until you have a permanent address and phone number before you have your checks printed. In the meantime, the bank will issue you a temporary supply of blank checks.

Each month your bank may send you a statement of account which will include a summary of debits and credits made to your account. Be 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. Subtract these amounts from the balance in your checkbook.

A savings account earns interest at relatively low rates. If you have several hundreds of dollars above your routine living expenses, a savings account is a safe way to invest it. You can withdraw any amount from a regular (or passbook) savings account whenever necessary. If you have a savings and a checking account in the same bank, you may be able to transfer funds from one account to another by telephone or via internet.

Banks also offer investment options including money market accounts and certificates of deposit (called CDs) which may require specified minimum terms of deposit and may earn higher rates of interest than regular savings accounts. A CD or a money market account is a prudent investment if you are certain that you will not need the money until the designated time period has passed (which can be 90 days, six months, one year, or more).

### **Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)**

The automatic teller is a computerized device through which bank customers can make deposits or withdrawals at any time of the day or week. To operate an ATM, the customer needs a plastic card

(called a bank card or a debit card) issued by the bank and a personal identification number (PIN) also provided by the bank. Instructions for operating the automatic teller are on the machine. Automatic tellers are located at banks and various other locations, such as supermarkets and shopping centers. ATMs are also available at various locations on campus.

### **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 lost, and they are more easily accepted by businesses away from your own area of residence. Banks sell traveler's checks for a small fee.

## **11. Money Management Hints**

1. Budget carefully. Determine what your expenses will be and plan accordingly.
2. Keep accounts. Always fill out your check register as soon as you write a check. Do not write checks if you are not sure if there is enough money in your account, and keep track of how you spend your money.
3. Tax returns. Many students earn so little that income taxes withheld may be refunded. Examine all options for exemptions or rebates, and do not hesitate to seek advice from the Internal Revenue Service. Keeping records of expenditures throughout the year will make it easier to complete income tax returns.
4. Transportation. A few extra dollars for a near-campus apartment can save hundreds of dollars each year on an automobile. Automobiles are convenient but very expensive to own and operate, especially if you are on a limited budget.
5. Buying on credit. For many students college is the first exposure to buying on credit. Credit may seem to be a convenient way to meet your needs, but be careful not to accumulate a large debt. You may have to pay from 13 to 20 percent interest per year on some accounts.
6. Buy used items. Garage and yard sales are advertised in newspapers, and you can buy used appliances and household goods at very reasonable prices. Sell them the same way when you leave. Second-hand stores also offer cheaper items.
7. Take advantage of sales. Stores usually advertise in the newspaper when they are having a special sale.

## **GETTING ALONG WITH AMERICANS**

American society includes all types of people – friendly and unfriendly, intelligent and not so intelligent, honest and dishonest. American society is also very diverse and includes people from many different ethnic, racial, religious and socioeconomic groups. Even with this diversity, it is possible to mention certain general characteristics which describe attitudes and practices common among Americans that tend to distinguish Americans from people of other cultures. Keep in mind that the following remarks are generalizations and that you may find individuals who are exceptions to them.

### **Individuals vs. Collectivist Cultures**

Social scientists seeking ways to compare cultures have recently worked on a distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures.

Collectivism is characterized by individuals subordinating their personal goals to the goals of some collectives. Individualism is characterized by individuals subordinating the goals of collectives to their personal goals. (Harry C. Triandis, Richard Brislin, and C. Harry Hui. “*Cross-Cultural Training Across the Individualism-Collectivism Divide*,” International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1989, p. 271.)

While collectivists can be found in the United States and individualists can be found in many collectivist societies, it is safe to generalize that the United States has an extremely individualistic culture. Collectivists seeking to live and work among individualists will want to learn certain things about individualists, so as to understand them better, be able to predict their reactions and interpret them more constructively. Collectivists, according to Triandis, Brilin, and Hui, will want to understand that individualists are likely to:

- Pay relatively little attention to groups (including families) to which they belong.
- Be proud of their accomplishments and expect others to feel proud of their own accomplishments.
- Be more involved with their peers and less involved with people who are older or more senior in an organization. They are also more comfortable in social relationships with those who are their social equals; and less comfortable in relationships with people of higher or lower status than themselves.
- Act competitively.
- Define status in terms of accomplishments (what they have achieved through their own efforts) rather than relationships or affiliations (the family or other group to which they belong).
- Seem relatively unconcerned about being cooperative or having smooth interpersonal relations.
- Seem satisfied with relationships that appear superficial and short-term.
- Be ready to do business very soon after meeting, without spending much time on preliminary, getting-acquainted conversation.
- Place great importance on written rules, procedures and deadlines, such as leases, contracts and appointments.
- Be suspicious of, rather than automatically respectful toward, people in authority.
- Assume that people in general need to be alone some of the time and prefer to take care of problems by themselves.

In his introduction to *Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Richard Brislin offers an observation that has important implications for collectivists working in an individualistic society:

To transcend the distance between self and others, people in individualistic societies have to develop a certain set of social skills. These include public speaking, meeting others quickly and putting them at ease, making a good first impression, and being well mannered, cordial and verbally fluent during initial encounters with others. These skills are not as necessary for collectivists. When it comes time for a person to meet unknown others in the larger society, members of the collective act as go-betweens and make introductions and abilities, and so forth. In short, individualists have to rely on themselves and to develop skills that allow them to branch out in society, whereas collectivists have a supportive group that assists in this same goal.

## **1. American Characteristics**

### **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 depend on them.

### **Equality and Informality**

Americans are taught that “all men are created equal.” While they continually violate that idea in some aspects of life, in others they adhere to it. They treat each other in very informal ways, even in the presence of great differences in age or social standing.

### **Time Consciousness**

Americans place considerable value on punctuality and 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.

### **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. Hard work, cleverness and persistence are valued as means to achieve success.

### **Communicative Style of Americans**

The preceding paragraphs concerned some values that generally prevail among Americans. Another way of describing differences between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, besides comparing their values, is by comparing their communicative style.

When people with differing communicative styles interact, they may feel ill-at-ease and misjudge or misunderstand each other. It will be helpful to be aware of the communicative style of Americans. Here are some generalizations about the communicative style of Americans:

### **Preferred Topics**

In casual conversation (called small talk), Americans prefer to talk about the weather, sports, jobs, people they both know, or past experiences, especially ones they have in common. As they grow up, most Americans are taught not to discuss politics or religion with people they do not know well because politics and religion are considered controversial topics. Sex, bodily functions and perceived personal inadequacies are considered very personal topics and are likely to be discussed only between people who know each other very well. Younger people generally discuss sex more freely than older people. By contrast, people in other cultures may believe that politics and/or religion are good conversation topics and also have different ideas about what topics are too personal to discuss with others.

### **Favorite Forms of Verbal Interaction**

In the typical conversation between Americans, participants take turns frequently, usually after the speaker has spoken only a few sentences. Americans prefer to avoid arguments; if argument is unavoidable, they prefer to be restrained and carry on in a normal conversational tone and volume. Americans are generally rather impatient with ritual conversational exchanges (Only a few of them are common; “How are you?” “Fine, thank you, how are you?” “Fine.” “It was very nice to meet you.” “I hope to see you again.”). People from other countries may be more accustomed to speaking and listening for longer periods when they are in a conversation; they also may be more accustomed to ritual interchanges (about the health of family members, for example) than Americans. They may enjoy arguing, even vigorous arguing, of a kind that Americans may find unsettling.

### **Depth of Involvement Preferred**

Americans do not generally expect very much personal involvement from conversational partners. Small talk is enough to keep matters going smoothly. Generally, it is only with very close friends that Americans discuss personal topics.

### **Channels Preferred**

The ideal among Americans is to be somewhat verbally adept, speaking in moderate tones, using relatively few and restrained gestures of the arms and hands. They do not touch each other very often.

### **Level of Meaning Emphasized**

Americans are generally taught to believe in the scientific method of understanding the world around them, so they tend to look for specific facts and physical or quantifiable evidence to support viewpoints. Underlying this search for facts is the assumption that there are truths about people and nature that can be discovered by means of objective inquiry that is carried out by trained people using scientific means of measurement and observation.

### **Misunderstandings**

Misjudgments and misunderstandings can arise from interactions between people who have different communicative styles. Here are some examples:

Foreign visitors in the U.S. might hear casual talk among Americans, and conclude that Americans are not intellectually capable of anything more than simple talk about such subjects as the weather, sports, professors or their own social lives. The conclusion that Americans are intellectually inferior may also be reached by people who regard argument as a favorite form of interaction and who find that some Americans are not very adept at arguing.

- Americans might use the labels shy, too formal or too polite to describe people who customarily speak little and who rely heavily on ritual conversation.
- Vigorous arguing (with raised voices and much use of hands and arms, and perhaps more than one person talking at a time) of the kind that is natural to some people may alarm Americans, who expect violence, or at least long-lasting anger, to follow from loud disagreements.
- What Americans might regard favorably as keeping cool - that is, not being drawn into an argument, not raising the voice, looking always for the facts - might be seen by others as coldness. Conversely, Americans are likely to see those who do not keep cool as being too emotional.
- Embarrassment or unease almost always results when someone raises a discussion topic that the other person thinks is inappropriate for the particular setting or relationship.

## **Nonverbal Communication**

When we think about communicating, we think first about spoken language. But communications is also nonverbal and involves dress, facial expressions, gestures, postures and body positioning. A few statements about nonverbal communication with Americans have already been made (pp. 27-28). Here are some additional comments:

### **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 with them.

### **Touching**

There is no taboo on touching conversation partners. Some Americans periodically touch their conversation partners lightly on the arm or shoulder while talking. American men rarely touch each other, except when shaking hands. Women touch each other somewhat more often but with only rare exceptions do they walk hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm. Americans usually become nervous if another person stands closer than an arm's length, unless the other person is a close friend. They stand slightly closer if they are side-to-side rather than face-to-face.

### **Hygiene**

As you can readily tell from television commercials, Americans have been taught that the natural smells of people's bodies and breath are unpleasant. Most Americans bathe and shower daily (more often if they engage in vigorous exercise during the day), use an underarm deodorant and brush their teeth at least once daily. In addition, they may use mouthwash or mints to ensure their breath is free of food odors. Women generally shave their legs and underarms and use perfume each day, while men may use a scented cologne or aftershave lotion. Most Americans will quickly withdraw from a person who has body odor or bad breath. This withdrawal may be the only signal that they are offended by another person's breath or body odors. The topic of these odors is so sensitive that most Americans will not tell another person that he or she has bad breath or body odors.

### **Other Guidelines**

In a thoughtful and concise introduction to American society and culture, Cornelius Grove of AFS International/ Intercultural Programs offers these points:

1. Americans have no taboo 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 and do not feel it necessary to prevent others from seeing these locations.
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 important points in conversation.
5. One beckons to another person to come closer by holding the hand with the palm and fingers up. Asking another to move farther away is done by holding the palm out and moving it 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 U.S. people 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., the doors of rooms usually are left open unless there is a specific reason to close them.
10. Punctuality, being on time, is important to many U.S. people. They are likely to become quite annoyed if forced to wait more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time for meetings and appointments.

From *A Fondness for Icedwater: A Brief Introduction to the U.S.A. and Its People*, AFS International/Intercultural Programs, 1984.

## **2. Guidelines for Practical Situations**

The comments in the preceding section are very general.

### **Shaking Hands**

Men usually shake hands with each other the first time they meet, but not with women unless the woman extends her hand first. Women do not usually shake hands with each other. After the first meeting, shaking hands is not necessary. It is polite to shake someone's hand if it is offered to you.

When Americans shake hands, they normally exert a small amount of pressure on each others' hands, move their clasped hands slightly upwards, then slightly downwards, and then release their grip.

### **Names and Titles**

Americans names generally have three parts: first (or given) name, middle name or initial (first letter of middle name), and last (family or surname) name. In most cases, the first name appears first, then the middle name or initial (if it is used - often it is not), and finally the family name. For example, "I would like you to meet my professor, Albert Einstein." On many forms and applications, the last name is listed first, followed by a comma and then the given name and middle initial. For example, a person named John Fitzgerald Kennedy would be written on official forms as Kennedy, John F.

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 applies to fellow students and neighbors.
- If the other person is clearly older than you, you should use Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. and the last name. For example, you would address Marlon Brando as Mr. Brando. An older person will probably address you by your first name from the beginning. Ms., pronounced *miz*, is used for both unmarried and married females.
- If the other person has a title such as Dr., Ambassador or Dean, use that title and the last name. For example, you would address Edward Kennedy as Senator Kennedy. Any faculty member can be addressed as Professor, whether he or she holds the rank of assistant professor, associate professor or full professor. Mister or Ms. is equally acceptable.

- If someone asks you to address him or her by first name, you should feel free to do so.
- Americans do not use a title followed by a first name. For example, you would not address Elizabeth Taylor as Miss Elizabeth, but as Miss Taylor or, if she asked you to, as Elizabeth.
- The use of nick names is fairly common among Americans. A nick name is not the person's real name, but a name assigned because of certain physical characteristics, behavior patterns, shortening their given name or some other factor. Foreign students often get nick names if their own names seem long, unpronounceable or just unusual to Americans. (Many Americans seem to believe it is unreasonable to expect them to learn to pronounce a long or unusual foreign name. For example, a student whose name is Nakagawa might become known as Naka.) Being called by a nick name is not uncomplimentary. It may indicate that you are viewed with respect and even affection. If you do not wish to be called by a nick name, politely ask the person to call you by your given name.
- If you are in doubt about what to call a person, ask the person, "What should I call you?" Conversely, Americans will sometimes be confused about what to call you. If you see that a person does not know what to call you, tell him. Say, "You can call me \_\_\_\_\_."

Americans' ready use of first names may make it appear to you that they are oblivious to differences in age and social status. They are not. There are subtle differences in vocabulary and manner, depending on the relationship between the people involved. For example, an American is less likely to use slang or obscenities when speaking to a person who is older, whose social standing is higher, and/or whom he does not know very well. An American will usually talk less and be less assertive in the presence of a person with higher status.

### **Relationships in the Workplace**

Cultural differences are reflected in the workplace as well as in other parts of society. Whether you have a student job in food service, a post-doctoral research position in a laboratory or teaching responsibilities as a visiting professor, you will find that the basic American values discussed elsewhere in this chapter are reflected in the behavior of the people around you. Individualism, equality and efficiency are cultural values particularly noticeable in American workplaces.

Furthermore, each workplace has its own culture. Even with these differences, there are guidelines foreign students and scholars will want to follow if they want to be accepted by the Americans around them and do well on the job.

- Arrive at work punctually. If you must be late or miss work, notify your supervisor as soon as you can.
- Ask questions about any assignments or procedures 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 when you don't.
- 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. 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. Observe how they interact with each other and try to follow their example. Learn something about the topics they discuss when they are socializing, so you can join their informal conversations. If you have opportunities to participate in social activities with coworkers, try to do so.
- Treat people with respect.
- When you are talking to people, look directly at their eyes from time to time; do not keep your eyes turned away from theirs.
- Periodically ask your supervisor, “How can I improve?”
- 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 among Americans, 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 no resolution, the supervisor’s supervisor, then the head of the unit.

### **Ritual Greetings**

When two people are first introduced, the dialogue is often “Hello? How are you doing?” “Fine, thank you. How are you?” “Fine, thanks,” or less formally, “Hi. 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 “Hi”. Any of these may be followed by “How are you?” The answer is usually “Fine,” whether you are fine or not.

These ritual greetings are much shorter than those of which people from many other countries are accustomed. People from countries where ritual greetings are more elaborate may have a negative reaction to the American custom, thinking that it reflects coldness and lack of concern for other people.

The American ritual parting remark “See you later” or “Talk to you later” means “good-bye” and does not mean the person intends to see you later.

### **Social Gatherings**

You will probably have opportunities to visit an American home for dinner or parties. The following gives a general idea of the behavior that is appropriate in formal situations and the expectations that are common at informal social gatherings. In general, you will notice what may seem to be a lack of attention to the formalities of a traditional host-guest relationship. Americans usually want their guests to feel at home, which means to feel relaxed and able to act naturally as they presumably would in their own homes. Most Americans do not regard social gatherings as opportunities for hosts to display their wealth, generosity or good breeding.

Invitations to more formal engagements such as dinners or cocktail parties are usually written. 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 to say whether you plan to be present. If it says, “Regrets Only,” reply

only if you do not plan to be present. 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?” When replying to a formal invitation, you should never say that you accept an invitation unless you truly intend to do so.

It is essential to arrive on time for a meal or a cocktail party. You may be thought inconsiderate and impolite if you do not arrive at the appointed hour. It is a very good idea to notify your host or hostess if you cannot avoid being late. After the party, a telephone call or a personal comment expressing appreciation for an invitation is appropriate.

Most formal dinner parties usually begin with cocktails and hors-d’oeuvres (small appetizers). If you do not drink alcohol, it is perfectly appropriate for you to ask the host or hostess for a non-alcoholic drink. Many dinners are served buffet-style, where the food is put on one table and the guests serve themselves and eat while standing.

Student parties are likely to be quite casual, with invitations often given over the phone or in person. The social rules are more relaxed. Guests might bring some portion of the meal (for example, a salad, dessert or beverage) after asking the host or hostess what would be appropriate to bring.

Potlucks (meals where every guest brings a dish to share) are common for larger groups. Potlucks are considered more convenient since they reduce the effort and cost required of the host and they provide an interesting variety of food. Often people share special dishes they like to cook.

### **Keeping Appointments and Dates**

It is considered impolite and extremely inconsiderate to fail to keep an appointment or date without giving prior notice to the other person. However, it is acceptable to decline an invitation.

If keeping an appointment or a date becomes impossible, notice should be given as soon as possible. If you fail to keep your appointment, you should call to apologize. Changing plans for an appointment or date does not present the same problems as breaking a date. If you have agreed to go to a movie and then decide that a party would be preferable, it is acceptable to call the other person and suggest changing plans. The other person can then either accept or decline the proposed change.

### **Gifts**

The custom of gift giving varies from country to country. Some general ideas (subject to variation and exception) about gift giving customs in the U.S. are provided below. Knowing the custom can help avoid awkward situations.

- As a rule, gifts are given to relatives and close friends. They are sometimes given to people with whom one has a casual but friendly type of relationship, such as a host or hostess but it is not necessary or even common for gifts to be given to such people. Gifts are not usually given to professors or others who hold an official position. The offering of gifts in these situations is sometimes interpreted as an effort, possibly improper, to gain favorable treatment.
- Christmas is the only national gift-giving day when most Americans give gifts, with the exception of some adherents of non-Christian religions. Otherwise, gifts are given on occasions which are special to the recipient - birthdays, graduation from high school or

college, weddings and the birth of children. Gifts are sometimes given when someone has new house or is moving away. 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 house guest and staying more than a day.

- Cards, rather than gifts, are given to acquaintances who are not close friends. This is especially true at Christmas when it is common for people to send cards to their acquaintances, business or school colleagues.
- Generally, an effort is made to select a gift which 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; generally, people on limited budgets are not expected to spend large amounts on gifts. Expensive gifts are to be expected only when the people involved have a very close relationship with each other.
- If a gift is opened in the presence of the giver (as is often done), 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.

### **Tipping**

Tips, or service charges, are not added to the bill in U.S. hotels or restaurants. Nevertheless, tips are usually expected and needed by employees. It is often customary to tip the waiter or waitress in a restaurant 15 to 20 per cent of the amount of the check, if the service is satisfactory. Tips are not expected in cafeterias or fast food establishments. In a hotel, the bellhop who assists you to your room expects a tip as do taxi drivers and hairdressers.

## **3. Time Schedules**

### **Individuals and Families**

In general, it is acceptable to telephone individuals or families between 9:00AM and 9:00PM. Americans eat breakfast shortly after rising; lunch, a small meal or sandwich around noon; and a large meal, called dinner or supper, sometime between 5:30 and 8:00PM. The meal schedule may vary on Saturdays and Sundays, when all meals may be taken later and the large meal may be in the afternoon.

### **Business Hours**

University business hours are (with a few exceptions) 8:30AM to 6:30PM. Check with the specific department you need for hours. Most businesses open at 9:00AM while closing hours may vary with many businesses closing at 5:00 or 6:00PM. Retail businesses in shopping centers are usually open until 9:00PM Monday through Saturday, and many are open on Sunday. If unsure of the hours, call the business for the information.

### **Daylight Savings Time**

In order to have daylight further into the evening in spring and summer, most of the United States uses daylight savings time between the first Sunday in April and the last Sunday in October. Newspapers will remind people to set their clocks forward one hour before going to bed on the last Saturday night in April, and to set their clocks back one hour before retiring on the last Saturday night in October (The actual change from daylight to standard time takes place at 2AM on the

Sunday). Many people try to remember the direction in which to move their clocks in April (the spring) and October (the fall) by recalling the instruction: spring forward, fall back.

#### **4. Relationships with Americans**

##### **General Comments about Cross-Cultural Relationships**

Foreigners anywhere may have problems establishing relationships with the local people. This can be frustrating for those who want to get to know local people and learn to understand them better. The following paragraphs offer some suggestions for forming relationships.

Assumptions and values about relationships, whether they are friendships or romantic relationships, differ markedly from culture to culture. Misunderstandings may occur because people from different cultures often have different answers to such questions as these: Under what circumstances can one appropriately initiate interaction with someone else? What interactions are socially acceptable, considering such variables as age, sex, marital status, differences in social status and the setting where the encounter takes place? How much is appropriate to let the other person know about you?

A particular area in which assumptions and values differ between cultures is that of friendship. Friendships among Americans tend to be shorter and less intense than those among people from many other cultures. Because Americans are taught to be self-reliant, they live in a very mobile society. For this and for various other reasons, they tend to avoid deep involvements with other people. Furthermore, Americans tend to compartmentalize their friendships, having their friends at work, friends at school, a tennis friend, and so on. While Americans often seem very friendly when you first meet them, this friendliness does not necessarily mean that they are looking for a deeper relationship.

Stereotypes can also create problems in relationships. People normally have in their minds stereotypes about people who are different from themselves. Stereotypes are based on limited and incomplete experiences and information, but they shape people's thoughts and expectations nonetheless. Americans have many stereotypes about foreign students in general (for example, that they are very hardworking, intelligent and rich; that they are clannish and do not speak English well) and about particular categories of international students (for example, Chinese are polite, Italians are emotional). International students have their own stereotypes of Americans (for example, that they are arrogant, rude, outspoken or generous).

There are two stereotypes which often afflict male-female relationships involving U.S. and foreign students. The first is the idea that American females are invariably willing to have sex. The second common stereotype, held by some American females, is that male foreign students have no interest in American females other than having sex with them (American females sometimes have the same stereotype about American males). The existence of these and other stereotypes can create considerable misunderstandings and block the development of a relationship between individuals. Stereotypes are probably inevitable, given the way the human mind seeks to categorize and classify information, so it may not be realistic to suppose we can forget our stereotypes. However we can be aware of them and be ready to find exceptions to them.

## **Establishing Relationships with Americans**

Many Americans that you meet have had virtually no experience with foreign students or anyone else who is significantly different from themselves. Thus, they may be uncomfortable and not know what to say to you. Americans may not want to reveal their ignorance of other countries and cultures, or they may believe language differences will make communication too difficult. Because they have grown up far from other countries and have not been especially aware of economic ties between themselves and other countries, many Americans see no reason to be especially interested in learning about other countries and cultures. They may see the foreign students as clannish or associating only with other foreign students, and may believe that the foreign students have no particular interest in talking with them.

What about the foreign students? In many ways, their attitudes resemble those of U.S. students. Foreign students may fear that language barriers will prevent them from understanding or being understood. They may fear embarrassment over failures to understand American English, particularly slang. They do not know what to talk about with Americans. They may be bewildered by what they see as the U.S. students' inability to establish close relationships, even among themselves.

## **Suggestions for Starting Relationships**

What can foreign students do in these circumstances? They need to take the initiative in meeting U.S. students. Foreign students can invite native students they know to parties, sports events and so on. Also foreign students can start conversations or join 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 area organizations that rely on volunteer assistance from community members.

A group of experienced foreign students talking about making friends with Americans offered these suggestions:

- Be patient with Americans' ignorance of your country and their stereotypes about you and people from abroad.
- 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.
- Consciously 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 inside of your house; secondary school; how weekends are spent; differences in classroom behavior; slang terms; roles of various family members; wedding customs; gestures.

If you have not learned what topics Americans consider appropriate for different settings and types of relationships, you can nearly always talk about what to talk about. That is, you can ask the Americans what topics they consider appropriate (and inappropriate) for the particular occasion. You can explain what you would talk about if you were in a similar situation at home and ask if the same topics would be appropriate here. Conversations such as these, about cultural differences, are almost always safe, relatively easy to start, and interesting.

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

This is not by any means to say that foreign students should try to avoid each other and should stop having activities that are for foreign students only. Such activities are very necessary to any group of expatriates 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, foreign students can make their own stays in the U.S. more beneficial for themselves and for the natives. With initiative, patience, and persistence, foreign students can establish rewarding relationships with people from the U.S.

### **One Foreign Scholar's Suggestions**

Here, in slightly edited form, are some suggestions offered by one foreign scholar after she had been in the U.S. for a few months.

1. *Never put your feet on the table.*
2. *Do not call people by their first names unless they tell you to do so.*
3. *Do not ask the same person for help all the time.*
4. *Be self-confident; do not feel small, like an insect.*
5. *Try to understand that your American colleagues might feel insecure around you. They have a great appreciation for people who speak foreign languages and who have traveled abroad. Try to put yourself in their position: it can be tiring to explain things to someone all the time.*
6. *Do not stay more than two hours when you are invited to someone's house and do not expect nor wait to have food or drink. They may not be served.*
7. *When you are talking with someone, try to understand when that person considered the conversation finished and do not continue. Following this suggestion will make it more likely that you will have more conversation with that person later.*
8. *You do not have to like everything just because you are here, but it might not be best to tell Americans what you do not like. Some Americans are naïve, and they may feel sorry that you do not like something (I do not do this, but I feel that it is better to say "I'm okay" even though I am not, since this is what Americans want to hear. There is no reason to make innocent people feel guilty!).*
9. *If an American invites you for a meal or snack in a restaurant, you might be expected to pay for your own food. You cannot assume that an American will pay just because he or she invited you.*

### **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. In fact, young Americans are generally encouraged to spend time with friends of the opposite sex. The relationship between two people of

opposite sexes might be a casual acquaintance, a brother-sister type of relationship or a romantic involvement.

In Dallas, there is a sizable homosexual (or gay) population, so same-sex couples are not rare.

The non-American, faced with this perplexing variety of values and practices, is likely to become confused. American students themselves are often very unsure how to meet another person who is interested in romance; how to find out what the person thinks or feels; what kinds of relationships 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. When getting together, Americans tend to do something, such as going to a movie or a concert. Going somewhere together is traditionally called a date because the time you will meet and the place you go to are agreed upon in advance. Dates can be initiated by either person and do not necessarily lead to romantic relationships.

If you are attracted to someone and suggest an occasion to meet, you must be sensitive to the reply. It is important to look for signs that tell you whether the feeling is mutual, whether the person is either attracted or uninterested. Sometimes the reply to an invitation may be vague. This may mean the person is avoiding making a commitment because he or she is uninterested. It is also possible that the person may simply be indecisive about how he or she feels about dating you and may agree to date to find out more about you.

If you are asked on a date with someone that you are interested in, but you already have plans for the proposed time, you may simply suggest an alternative time.

Arrangements for transportation are generally based on convenience. The person who has a car will offer to drive. The matter of who pays for the activity should be clarified beforehand. Traditionally the male would pay for the entertainment, but nowadays each person might pay his or her own way. This is referred to as “going dutch”.

After a few enjoyable evenings or outings together, continuing the relationship may be easy and effortless. If you get the idea that the other person is not interested in continuing the relationship, simply withdraw.

It should be emphasized that if you or the other person agrees to a date or invites you into his or her home, this is not a commitment to any sexual involvement on either part.

### **Sexual Involvement**

In general, at least during the early stages of a relationship, Americans have no particular expectation about sexual involvement. It is appropriate to await developments and to try to be sensitive to the interests and feelings of the other person. A date implies no commitments of any kind other than the individuals' meeting at the agreed time and place.

The question of sexual involvement is problematic in any society. It is often more problematic in the U.S. than in many other places as there is such a wide range of attitudes and practices here. There are

few if any reliable ways to guess in advance what a particular person's attitudes about sexual involvement are; moreover, a person may seem to have different attitudes at different points in time or in different relationships. 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. This is especially true since Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has become a prominent concern.

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 various clinics including the Student Health Center on campus. Furthermore, the possibility of contracting the AIDS virus is a growing concern. The number of people infected by this disease is increasing and warnings from medical institutions are frequent. The primary recommendations are to choose partners carefully and to use condoms. For more information consult the brochure "What Everyone Should Know About AIDS and HIV" available at the Student Health Center.

## **5. Children**

Parents may want to be aware of some social aspects of child care and parent-child relationships in the United States. There are regional and social-class variations in the ways American parents relate to their children, variations according to the situation, where parents and children are interacting (indoors vs. outdoors, private home vs. sidewalk, etc.) and, of course, variations from one family to another.

Consider these questions, and compare what you see in Dallas to what you might see at home:

1. How are children generally viewed?
2. What do parents want for their children?
3. Where do parents take their children?
4. How much noise are children permitted to make and how much physical freedom (to run about, to touch things in shops, public places or other people's homes) is allowed?
5. How much difference does it make whether a child is male or female?
6. What forms of punishment are acceptable?
7. What is the role of adults who are not a child's parents in instructing or disciplining that child?
8. How are children expected to treat adults? Other children?

This Guide offers a few observations on each of these points.

### **The General View of Children**

In some cultures, children are very highly valued. Adults want to marry and to have many offspring. Some religious groups and some individuals in the United States also share these values, but many Americans have different opinions about children. They might consider children important but think that it is best to have no more than they can readily afford to raise. For many couples, the ideal is a planned family with one or two children. The sex of the child is not of major importance in most American families. Some Americans choose not to have children at all, and that choice is socially acceptable.



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 as soon as they can. Parents will praise and encourage their children: “Very good. You can do it yourself!”

### **What Do Parents Want for their Children?**

Although economic changes are making it more difficult to realize, many American parents still hold to the notion that their children should have better lives than they themselves had. They will, if it is possible for them to do so, invest considerable time and money in a child’s improvement and instruction, in such things as dental care (straight teeth seem especially important); medical care; a pre-school (where in some cases very young children are encouraged to learn to read); with lessons, classes, and practices for learning to draw, play a sport, dance, sing or play a musical instrument; and perhaps counseling to help overcome emotional difficulties.

In general, American 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), reasonably well educated, able to find employment suited to the children’s interests and talents, and reasonably prosperous. Parents are concerned for their children’s safety, and will try to protect them by watching them closely. It is the law that children must wear seatbelts when riding 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 child care - perhaps with a babysitter or in a pre-school or day care center.

### **Where Do Parents Take their Children?**

Many parents want to expose their children to as many aspects of life as possible, so they will take their children almost any place except to an expensive restaurant (which is usually expected to have a quiet atmosphere) or a live theater performance. A formal invitation to an American’s home does not normally include children unless it explicitly states that children are invited. If you have doubts about whether the people inviting you to their home expect you to bring your children, ask them.

Americans generally have the idea that parents need some time away from their children. Parents often go out together and arrange for someone to baby-sit for the children.

### **Noise and Physical Freedom**

The setting is of considerable importance here. Children can be more noisy and active in a park than in a mall, and more noisy and active outside than indoors where the noise they make might disturb neighbors.

Young children are expected to be noisier and more physically active than adults, so some amount of active behavior on the part of children in public places is tolerated. Parents are still expected to have their children under control, so they will not touch or damage anyone’s property or unduly disturb other people as they move about.

### **What Forms of Punishment Are Acceptable?**

American experts on child-rearing continually debate the matter of appropriate means of punishing children who misbehave. Some parents try to emphasize rewarding 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 is not only unacceptable, it is illegal. Parents who harm their children even with the goal of discipline may be arrested for child abuse.

### **The Role of Adults Who Are Not a Child's Parents**

In some societies it is expected that adults who are not the child's parents - perhaps other relatives, neighbors, or simply adults who happen to be present - can intervene to discourage a child from misbehaving. Americans do not generally have that expectation. Two exceptions: An unrelated adult might intervene when a child is doing something that seems dangerous and also when one child is physically mistreating another. In these situations the adult would act to stop the threat of harm, but would not administer any punishment. Punishment is left to the parents.

Some Americans will act to stop what they consider misbehavior (for example: making too much noise, touching breakable objects) on the part of children visiting their homes or in stores. Other Americans will tolerate the misbehavior - at least if the child's parents are present.

### **How Children Are Expected to Treat Adults and Other Children**

Children raised to be independent and self-reliant cannot be expected to be as respectful and obedient toward their elders as can children raised to know their place in the social hierarchy. American children might argue with or otherwise challenge their parents and other adults. They may freely express their views and will not automatically accept instructions or comments from other people of any age. The typical behavior of independent, individualistic American young people may seem inappropriate to visitors from some other countries. American parents try to teach their children to be polite to their elders (to not interrupt them, not make too much noise in their presence, and refrain 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. They are not supposed 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 as they treat other males because there is no assumption that male children are superior. American parents are likely to become disturbed if they see an older child picking on a younger one or a male child mistreating a female child.

### **Male vs. Female Children**

Americans will generally say that if they are going to have a child, they will be happy no matter what the child's sex, as long as the child is healthy. There is generally no open preference for male children. If there is a spoken preference, it is often for one child of each sex. Many Americans try to avoid conveying the idea to their children that certain social or occupational 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.

### **Concluding Comments**

The preceding comments have not addressed the problems confronted by parents raising children in a foreign culture. Those problems are many and vexing. Children have their own adjustments to a new language and culture, and their parents need to keep that in mind so they can be as helpful as possible. Young children usually master the local language much more quickly than their parents, and they are subject to media influences and peer pressure they would not encounter at home. Parents may experience considerable frustration if they wish their children to continue to use their own language and to behave in ways that would be appropriate in the home country. Parents may want to talk with parents from other countries who have been here longer to learn how to maximize the benefits and minimize the difficulties of raising children in a different culture.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **1. Immigration Information**

#### **INFORMATION FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS**

All information is subject to change without notice. Please keep in close contact with the International Student Services Office for the latest information regarding immigration changes and updates.

#### **General Information**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (U.S. Immigration Service) is a part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The U.S. Immigration Service is the primary agency responsible for enforcing United States immigration laws and regulations. The office which has jurisdiction over the Dallas area is located at 8101 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, Texas 75242. The International Student Services Office has International Student Advisors whose primary responsibility is to assist you in understanding and complying with these regulations. The International Student Advisors do not work for the U.S. Immigration Service; they work for the university. As university employees they will be your liaison with the U.S. Immigration Service. While you are in the United States as a non-immigrant, you should be aware of certain regulations. The information presented here will help you understand these regulations and enable you to maintain your legal status.

#### **SEVIS**

SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is a computer information system for international students in F, M and J status. U.S. universities, Homeland Security offices, U.S. ports of entry and U.S. embassies and consulates are electronically connected to a central data processing system. The goal of SEVIS is to keep up-to-date information for each student and his/her dependent(s) from the moment of entry into the U.S. until the student departs. SEVIS became mandatory for institutions who issue documents for the F, M and J visas on February 15, 2003. Students having questions about SEVIS can contact the International Student Services Office at MC 1.310 or by phone at (972)-883-4189.

## Documents

- **Passport**

Your passport must be kept valid for the duration of your stay in the U.S. Maintaining a valid passport is your responsibility. The passport can be renewed by your home country consulate or embassy in the U.S., and you should contact them 6 months prior to your passport's expiration date.

- **U.S. Visa**

United States consulates or embassies overseas issue U.S. visas. The stamp may be obtained only outside the U.S. The stamp indicates your visa type, the period during which you may enter the U.S. and the number of entries permitted. The expiration date of the visa stamp indicates the last day you can use that visa to enter the U.S., but it does not determine the length of time you may stay in the U.S. (see form I-94 section). Therefore, your visa may expire during your stay in the U.S. and you do not need to renew it until you plan to leave and re-enter the country.

- **Form I-94**

When you enter the U.S., the immigration official will look at your visa stamp and issue a corresponding Form I-94 (Arrival Departure Record). The I-94 is a small white card that is usually stapled to your passport beside your visa stamp. It indicates your visa status while in the U.S., the place and date of your entry to the U.S. and the period of authorized stay. You must leave the U.S. before the date stamped on the I-94, as it tells you how long you can stay in the U.S. without violating your immigration status. Instead of a date on the I-94, F and J students should have "D/S" or "Duration of Status." This allows them to legally remain in the U.S. as long as they maintain their F or J status. The form I-94 should be kept in the passport and surrendered when leaving the U.S.

- **Form I-20**

The Form I-20 is issued when a student has been admitted to a college or university in the U.S. and has shown adequate financial resources to support at least one year of study. You must present the Form I-20 to the U.S. Consular Office to obtain an F-1 student visa. Upon entry to the U.S., the Form I-20 should be kept with your passport for the duration of your studies. Your program, degree level and the date of completion of your studies are listed on the Form I-20, and any change of this information requires a new I-20 from the International Student Services Office.

- **Form DS-2019**

The form DS-2019 is used to obtain a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. Students who are issued Form DS-2019 for J-1 visa status are usually funded by their home government, the U.S. government, the host institution or are participating in an exchange or cooperative reciprocal program.

- **Alien Information Collection Form**

All international students are required to fill out the Alien Information Collection Form. This form will be given to you at the international student orientation. If you have not completed this form, contact the Payroll/Tax compliance office at 972-883-2611.

## **F Students: Status and Visa Regulations**

### **Maintaining F-1 Status**

In order to maintain your F-1 status and therefore be eligible for F-1 status benefits you must:

1. Report to the DSO at the school you are authorized to attend on your I-20 for initial registration in SEVIS. You must follow USCIS and university transfer procedures to attend a new school.
2. Not work, either on or off campus, unless specifically authorized under the regulations at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(f) (9) or (10).
3. Have a valid, unexpired passport, I-20 and I-94 card. A valid F-1 visa is not required to maintain F-1 status.
4. Apply for a new I-20 when you change your program of study or educational level.
5. Notify the Office of the Registrar of any change of residence or mailing address within ten days of the change. You may also use the Student Information System to make the change.
6. Complete your program by the end date on your I-20. You can extend an I-20 for compelling academic or medical reasons if you apply prior to the end date on your I-20. CPT and academic probation are not valid reasons to extend your I-20.
7. Abide by the F-1 grace period rules, including remaining in the U.S. for no longer than 60 days after completing a full course of study or a period of full-time Optional Practical Training.
8. Pursue a full course of study in your degree program every long semester unless approved for reduced enrollment by your International Student Advisor. Enroll full-time by Census Day of the semester. Undergraduate students must take 12 credit hours per semester. Graduate students must take 9 credit hours per semester. Summer enrollment is optional unless it is your first semester or you are beginning a new academic program. If you are a teaching or research assistant, your academic department may have specific hour requirements. F-1 students may only count 3 online credit hours towards the full-time requirement. F-1 students may not take all classes in a single 8 or 6 week session.
9. Make normal progress towards completing your course of study before the expiration date on your I-20.
10. Abide by any special requirements, such as Special Registration (NSEERS) requirements.

If you have difficulties or questions about F-1 requirements, please contact the International Student Services Office. If you do not follow the above requirements, and you do not have permission from your International Student Advisor, you will be “out of status” and must apply for reinstatement with U.S. Immigration Service. See your advisor for reinstatement procedures.

### **Transfer**

For immigration purposes, “transfer” simply means that a student is leaving one school’s “I-20 program” for another school’s “I-20 program.” This can happen when an international student:

1. Graduates from a U.S. high school and comes to U. T. Dallas.
2. Leaves one undergraduate or graduate program and goes to another institution.
3. Graduates from one degree and pursues another degree at a different institution.

Students who want to transfer must be in contact with two schools: the current school and the new “transfer” school.

To transfer, a student must:

1. Apply for admission and be admitted to the new “transfer” school.
2. Inform the current university as soon as possible after admission, no later than the last day of the current semester.
3. Inform the new transfer university of the expected transfer date (usually the last day of the current semester).
4. Complete the process at the transfer university no later than 15 days after the first class day of the first semester of enrollment.

Careful attention to the last date of the semester at the current school and the first day of classes in the transfer school are extremely important; failure to complete the transfer process in the prescribed timeframe will cause a student to become “out of status”.

### **Travel**

If you plan to travel outside of the United States during your studies, you need the following documents to re-enter the U.S.:

- A valid passport,
- A valid F visa and,
- An I-20 endorsed by your International Student Advisor. This endorsement must be requested from the ISS Office at least two weeks before departure.

(Students participating in Optional Practical Training have additional requirements.  
Contact the ISS Office for more information)

**While in the U.S., you are required to carry your immigration documents** (passport and I-20) with you. However, if you will be on the UTD campus you may choose to carry only photocopies.

There are special rules and procedures for those traveling to Mexico, Canada or certain US contiguous islands. Students who plan to visit these areas should see an International Student Advisor before departing.

### **Changes in I-20s**

Each time you change universities, majors, degree programs or levels you must provide financial documentation and receive a new I-20. The ISS Office must notify the U.S. Immigration Service within 15 days in order for you to maintain your status. Please contact the ISS Office before making these changes to ensure that your status is not jeopardized.

### **On-Campus Employment**

F-1 students who have maintained their immigration status may be employed on the campus of the school for which the most recent I-20 has been issued. Employment may not exceed 20 hours per week during the semester but may be up to 40 hours during annual vacation periods. Once an I-20 is used and signed for a different university, employment is limited to the new campus.

### **Off-Campus Employment**

Immigration regulations prohibit all types of off-campus employment without specific authorization. After two long semesters as a full time student, F-1 students are eligible to apply for off-campus work permission in the form of Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Economic Hardship. For details about the Co-op/CPT program, please see the Career Center, McDermott Library 1.3122. Engineering and Computer Science students should go to the Industrial Practice Program Office (IPP Office) for information about Co-op and CPT. The IPP Office is located in the Engineering and Computer Science Complex, South, Suite 2.502. For details about OPT and Economic Hardships see the ISS Office, MC 1.310.

### **F-2 Status**

The spouse or child of an F-1 student may use an I-20 to apply for an F-2 visa and enter the U.S. for the same length of time as the F-1 student. Any student wishing to bring a spouse and/or child to the U.S. should visit the ISS Office to discuss the procedures and to have the necessary documents prepared. Dependents in F-2 status are not allowed to work or study.

## **J-1 Student Status and Visa Regulations**

J-1 status is issued to someone who participates in an Exchange Visitor Program as approved by the U.S. Information Agency. The University of Texas at Dallas operates an approved Exchange Visitor Program and is therefore authorized to issue DS-2019 immigration documents. Other agencies, such as the Fulbright Program, the Institute for International Exchange, and AMIDEAST are authorized to issue DS-2019's for people to attend The University of Texas at Dallas. The J-1 category is separated into several categories. This book will give information about the J-1 student category.

In order to be eligible to participate in a J-1 student program, you must

- 1) Be accepted by a U.S. institution that has an approved Exchange Visitor program and,
- 2) Have the majority of your funding come from a source other than personal funding, usually from the institution or from your government.

If you are out of the U.S. and you are approved for a J-1 program, you will receive a DS-2019. This form is used to obtain a J-1 visa from a US embassy.



### **J-1 Employment**

A J-1 student may request permission from the DS-2019 sponsoring institution to work up to 20 hours per week on campus. A J-1 student may request permission from the DS-2019 issuing institution to engage in academic training. If approved, the student is allowed to work in his/her field of study for a period not to exceed 18 months. Contact the DS-2019 issuing institution for more information regarding on and off-campus employment.

### **Travel outside the US**

If you plan to travel outside of the U.S. during your studies, you need a minimum of the following documents to re-enter the U.S. after your trip:

- A valid passport.
- A valid J-1 visa.
- A DS-2019 endorsed by the issuing institution.

There are special rules and procedures for those traveling to Mexico, Canada, or certain U.S. contiguous islands. Students who plan to visit these areas should see an International Student Advisor before departing.

### **Course Load Requirements**

J-1 students are required to maintain full-time enrollment as established by the DS-2019 sponsoring institution. At The University of Texas at Dallas, full-time study for graduate students is defined as nine credit hours per fall and spring semester. Undergraduate full-time study is 12 credit hours per fall and spring semester. If you are unable to maintain full-time enrollment see your sponsoring institution to discuss your options.

### **Extension of J-1 Stay**

A J-1 exchange visitor is admitted to the U.S. for a finite period of time. The DS-2019 form has an expiration date. If your participation in the exchange program will extend past this expiration date, you must apply for an extension. Request a DS-2019 extension with the sponsoring institution 30-60 days before the expiration date on your DS-2019.

### **Transfer from one J-1 Student Program to another J-1 Student Program**

The J-1 exchange visitor must have permission from the DS-2019 issuing institution to transfer to another sponsor. This process can take up to 3 months. Application for permission to transfer should be made to the institution to which the student wishes to transfer.

### **J-2 Status**

An exchange visitor's spouse or child may use a DS-2019 dependent form to apply for a J-2 visa. Regardless of enrollment, the J-2 dependent must maintain comprehensive health insurance while in the United States. The J-1 may inquire about health insurance options available to dependents by contacting the UTD Student Health Insurance Office located in the International Student Services Office.

## **J-2 Employment**

A person in J-2 status may apply to the U.S. Immigration Service for permission to accept employment. This process takes several months, and the permission will be granted only if the employment is not designed to support the J-1 exchange visitor. Contact the sponsoring institution for more information.

## **2. Tax and Social Security Information**

Filing federal income tax forms is the personal responsibility of each international student and scholar. Income tax laws and procedures are complex and ever-changing. The UTD International Student Services Office cannot provide assistance in preparing tax forms, but does provide tax basic information through tax workshops each spring. The University of Texas at Austin provides in-depth information for non-immigrants on their tax filing responsibilities. Their website, found at <http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/index.html> can help you to:

- Determine if you are required to file a tax return;
- Determine which form or forms you should file;
- Understand the filing instructions; and
- Prepare and submit your own federal tax forms.

Some states, excluding Texas, also collect income taxes. There are some exceptions:

- Income not for service. Income received in exchange for any service that is performed and is classified as a scholarship, fellowship or grant may be exempt from taxation. Graduate assistantships are not exempted. Any income for which any service (e.g., teaching, or research) was performed will be taxed.
- Tax treaties. If there is a tax treaty between your country and the U.S., your income may be exempt from taxation.

### **When to File Your Income Tax Return**

April 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for filing a return on the income earned during the preceding calendar year. During 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 has been withheld. The W-2 form is used in preparing your income tax return. Since the amount withheld often exceeds the amount you would be required to pay, failure to file a tax return may result in a financial loss for you. You must file a return in order to receive a refund.

### **Choosing the Appropriate Tax Form**

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, foreign students and scholars are classified as non-residents for tax purposes. Non-residents use an income tax form called 1040 NR.

### **Where to Get Tax Forms**

Tax forms and instructions are usually available from the IRS and public libraries. You can also download them from [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). If you have previously filed an income tax return, a new one may be mailed to you the following year.

After leaving the U.S., you can get a tax return from the nearest U.S. consulate to file your tax form for the calendar year during which you lived in the U.S. These forms become available in January.

### **Documentation**

To complete income tax forms, it is necessary to keep complete records of your financial transactions. If you seek assistance in preparing your income tax returns, you will need complete financial records including income and expenditures. Nonresident aliens should gather all applicable items from the following list in order to prepare the annual income tax report:

- Form 1040 NR or 1040 NREZ and instructions,
- Form 8843, Statement for Exempt Individuals,
- Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement (from your employer),
- Forms 1099 (summarizing your investment earnings for the year),
- Form 1042S, (a report of any scholarship or income eligible for tax treaty benefits paid to you),
- A copy of your federal and state income tax returns filed for the previous year.

### **Getting Assistance in Filing Income Tax Returns**

The IRS is the agency responsible for collecting income taxes. You may address questions to the IRS by calling 1-800-424-1040, toll free. The IRS usually makes trained people available to assist taxpayers, with locations and times widely publicized in February and March of each year.

A number of businesses will assist taxpayers in preparing their income tax returns for a fee. You can find them in the *Yellow Pages* under Tax Return Preparation.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY**

Social Security is the U.S. government's social insurance plan. It is intended to benefit retired people and people who are injured, disabled or left without adequate means of financial support. The plan is financed by withholdings from employees' pay and employers' contributions. Virtually all Americans have a Social Security number (SSN) that designates their account with the Social Security Administration.

### **Obtaining a Social Security Number**

In order to apply for a SSN, F-1 and J-1 students must provide their passports, I-94's, I-20s (DS-2019 for J-1s), proof of registration of classes, and proof of a job offer or an I-20 authorized for CPT or OPT. F-1 students will need to request a letter from the Career Center for proof of on campus employment. The Career Center and the International Student Services Office will process the request and the student can pick up the completed letters at the ISS Office.

### **Exemptions**

F-1 and J-1 students are exempt from Social Security withholdings. Further information can be found in the Social Security Administration Publication SSA 78-10056 which is available from any

Social Security Office. F-1 students may want to show this booklet to an employer who is not familiar with this exemption.

### **3. Medical Information**

#### **MEDICAL CARE IN THE U.S**

The medical care 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 illnesses or injuries. The extremely high cost of medical care reflects the enormous investments in research, medication and technology that are required to make this type of care available. Second, there is no national medical care program or national insurance program. Consequently, medical costs in the U.S. are exceedingly high, and the individual incurring the charges must pay them. Individuals can purchase health insurance, which will pay for a large percentage of major medical expenses.

#### **Health insurance requirement**

International students holding non-immigrant visas and living in the United States are required by the U.T. System Board of Regents to have approved comprehensive health insurance while enrolled at U. T. Dallas or other U.T. System component institutions. These students will automatically be assessed a mandatory health insurance fee upon registration (as authorized by the Texas Education Code Section 54.504). This fee purchases the U.T. System Student Health Insurance Policy for the entire semester.

#### **Coverage provided by the U.T. System Student Health Insurance Plan**

This plan, like all others in the U.S., does not cover all medical expenses. In general, it covers between 60% to 80% of covered medical costs resulting from illnesses and injuries. The remaining balance is the patient's responsibility. Some covered costs include hospital room and board, operating room fees, laboratory tests, anesthesia, intensive care, surgeon's fees, and physician's visits. For additional information on covered costs, please refer to the online Student Health Insurance Brochure at [www.studentresources.com](http://www.studentresources.com).

All health insurance plans have exclusions and limitations. In other words, the insurance company simply will not pay for specific procedures, supplies, etc. Some of the expenses this plan will not pay for are preventative care, pre-existing conditions, dental, hearing and vision care, abortion, services and supplies for foot disorders, sleep disorders, acne, etc. For a complete list of exclusions and limitations, please refer to the online Student Health Insurance Brochure at [www.studentresources.com](http://www.studentresources.com).

#### **Important!**

If you have a present illness, and have not been insured by a U.S. sponsored health plan that paid claims for your illness, your condition will be considered pre-existing. Before the Student Health Insurance Plan will cover your condition, you must first be insured on the policy for 12 consecutive months. Upon the one-year anniversary, the Student Health Insurance Plan will begin to cover your illness/condition.

#### **Understanding your health insurance & seeking help**

U. T. Dallas has a Student Health Insurance (SHI) advisor located within the International Student Services Office, room MC1.310 of the McDermott Library. The SHI staff provides valuable information

to students regarding their health insurance. We are dedicated to teach you how to understand the insurance process, access medical care, find physicians and answer insurance related questions. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments by phoning 972-883-6161 or 972-883-4189. For general information, please phone 972-883-6161, send email to [issocurrent@utdallas.edu](mailto:issocurrent@utdallas.edu) or visit our office.

## HOW TO ACCESS MEDICAL CARE WHEN YOU ARE SICK/INJURED: TWO OPTIONS

**Option 1:** If you are a registered, fee paying student at UTD, have a Comet Card and if your illness or injury is not an emergency, you may schedule an appointment at the UTD Health Center in room SU1.606 of the Student Union Building. The Health Center phone number is 972-883-2747.

The Health Center offers treatment for minor injuries and acute illnesses. Other services offered are well-woman exams, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted disease testing, routine blood work, urinalysis, etc. Prescriptions can be written by the Health Center, but not filled because there is no retail pharmacy on campus. Referrals to specialists for students covered under the Student Health Insurance Plan can be written by the Health Center as well. If the Health Center is unable to treat your illness, you may be told to see a Primary Care Physician off-campus. Or, you may be given a referral to see a specialist.

*If you miss a scheduled appointment at the Health Center, a fee will be added to your account for failure to cancel your appointment.*

**Option 2:** If you are insured under the Student Health Insurance Policy and would rather see an off-campus physician you may do so. You may choose a Primary Care Physician (PCP) on the Texas True Choice Network at [www.texastruechoice.com](http://www.texastruechoice.com). Only Family Practice Physicians and General Practice Physicians may be selected as PCPs. (Whenever you seek medical care, remember to take your insurance information with you.)

A PCP can treat a wide variety of illnesses and usually handles most of a patient's healthcare needs. If your PCP is unable to diagnose or treat your illness/injury, you will be referred to a specialist. The PCP will issue a paper referral form to you. You must bring the referral form and your insurance information to your appointment with the specialist. Without a referral, the insurance company will not cover the cost of a specialist consultation fee. A consultation fee with a specialist can cost as much as \$500. (Please remember the UTD Health Center can issue a referral to you at no extra cost.)

To choose a Primary Care Physician please visit the Texas True Choice Network at [www.texastruechoice.com](http://www.texastruechoice.com) or access it by phoning 1-888-344-6105. Select the red box entitled Quick Directory Search. Now select TTC Statewide and submit. You may search by name, location, facility, etc. These providers have a contract with Texas True Choice to provide medical care at lower, negotiated prices. By choosing doctors, hospitals, diagnostic services, laboratories, and ancillary services within this network, your portion of covered medical costs will be 20%. The insurance company will pay 80% of the usual and customary covered expenses.

If you choose a doctor, hospital, or other medical services outside of the Texas True Choice Network your portion of medical costs will be 40%, plus all amounts billed above the usual and customary set price. Therefore, it is advisable to stay within the Texas True Choice Network.

If you are traveling outside of Texas, but within the United States, access the nationwide network, Beech Street, at [www.beachstreet.com](http://www.beachstreet.com) or by phoning 1-888-344-6105, covered medical expenses will be paid at 80%. If you seek non-emergency medical care when out-of-network, the insurance company will pay 60% of the usual and customary set prices. Your portion will be 40% plus all amounts billed above the usual and customary set fees.

### **Scheduling Medical Appointments:**

When scheduling a doctor's appointment, explain that you have the *Student Health Insurance PPO Plan with The MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company through The University of Texas at Dallas. The assigned PPO network is Texas True Choice.* Be prepared to give the following information to the provider's office:

1. **Your UTD-ID: This is the 8 digit number you use to register for UTD classes.**
2. **The policy number: 2006-502-1 (This policy number will change after August 17, 2006.)**
3. **Insurance Carrier's Address:**  
Student Insurance  
P.O. Box 809025  
Dallas, TX 75380-9025  
469-229-6700 or 1-800-767-0700

If you need additional assistance, please contact the SHI Office at (972)-883-6161 or email: [issocurrent@utdallas.edu](mailto:issocurrent@utdallas.edu).

### **What to do in case of emergency**

For a true emergency, seek emergency care at the nearest hospital or emergency facility. The Student Health Insurance Policy considers a true emergency to be "the sudden onset of a medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in: 1) Placement of the insured's health in serious jeopardy; 2) Serious impairment of bodily functions; or 3) Serious dysfunction of any body organ or part."



If you seek medical care at an Emergency Room and your condition is not a true emergency, the insurance company will not pay for these expenses.



If you are admitted into the hospital after seeking emergency medical care, notify the insurance company within two business days by phoning 1-877-295-0720. If you are too ill to make the call, a family member, your doctor, or the hospital may give notification on your behalf.

### **What is a deductible?**

Many health insurance policies require insured members to pay a deductible. The Student Health Insurance Policy has an accumulative annual deductible of \$300. After you have paid the first \$300 in medical expenses, the insurance company will pay 80% for covered charges billed by a network provider, or pay 60% of usual and customary charges for covered medical expenses billed by an out-of-network provider. You are responsible to pay your portion of 20% or 40% and any other remaining balance.

**Waivers for the student health insurance fee**

International students are assessed the Student Health Insurance fee each semester upon registration. The U.T. System Board of Regents will allow a waiver of the U.T. System mandatory student health insurance policy if the student provides adequate evidence of:

1. Continuing coverage under the U.T. System Employee Health Plan or a comparable mandatory employee plan. This applies if you have University employee health insurance coverage as a UTD Teaching or Research assistant, or if you have mandatory insurance coverage through your or your spouse's employer.
2. Continuing mandatory coverage through a government sponsored plan health plan which covers health care in the United States. This applies for students with coverage as a result of sponsorship from a governmental agency such as the U.S. Department of State (Muske fellowship, AMIDEAST program, etc)

Proof of insurance must be written in English and include benefit amounts listed in U.S. dollars as required by the U.T. System Board of Regents. The coverage must be for the duration of the semester. All policies must include: a minimum of \$100,000 U.S. dollars in medical and hospitalization benefits with 80% coverage for each illness and injury; a minimum of \$7,500 U.S. dollars in repatriation benefits; a minimum of \$20,000 U.S. dollars in medical evacuation benefits. The coverage must be nondiscriminatory for pregnancy/maternity benefits.

If you meet one of these conditions, you may request a waiver of this fee. Waiver periods are held each semester for approximately 6 to 8 weeks before Census Day. You must apply for a waiver prior to Census Day every semester. This will not be done for you. This is the student's responsibility. Waivers are not issued after Census day for any reason. It is your responsibility to supply sufficient evidence of insurance to the Student Health Insurance Office within the waiver period. Please watch for waiver notices on campus and emails stating when the waiver period will begin and end each semester.

For more information, please visit our website at  
[www.utdallas.edu/student/international/insurance/index..html](http://www.utdallas.edu/student/international/insurance/index..html)

## CAMPUS INFORMATION

### 1. Code of Conduct Summary and Related Advisories and Policies

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business, and each student is charged with notice and knowledge of and compliance with the contents and provisions thereof.

All students are expected and required to obey federal, state and local laws, to comply with the Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations, with System and University rules and regulations, with directives issued by an administrative official of the System or the University in the course of his or her authorized duties, and to observe standards of conduct appropriate for an academic institution.

It is the policy of the University to provide an educational environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the University community. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status and sexual orientation. Gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, is addressed by the University's sexual harassment policy.

References herein to Regent's Rules and Regulations are to The University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations. Chapters and sections referenced herein refer to The University of Texas at Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures.

### SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

The University expects from its students a high level of responsibility with respect to academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends on the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student maintain a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty is the submission as one's own work of material that is not one's own. As a general rule, it includes, but is not limited to, one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, and/or collusion.

*Cheating* includes, but is not limited to



- copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs;
- using during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test which would include, but not be limited to, time restrictions, use of blue book, seating arrangements;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solutions, or computer program;
- substituting for another student, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself, to take a test;
- soliciting another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- possession during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes." The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation only if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test.
- submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit (including oral reports) more than once without written authorization from the instructor.

*Plagiarism* means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission or incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit without appropriate attribution.

*Collusion* means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit.

*Falsifying academic records* means the altering of grades or other falsification (statements, acts or omissions) of academic records including but not limited to the application for admission, grade reports, test papers, registration materials, and reporting forms used by the registrar's office or other University offices.

*Falsifying data or experiments* includes, but is not limited to, the submission of false findings and/or the citation of false references in research or other assignments submitted for credit and/or for the awarding of a degree.

*Facilitating academic dishonesty* means intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another engage in some form of academic dishonesty.

## **MISCONDUCT**

All students are expected and required to obey federal, state and local laws, to comply with the Regents' Rules and Regulations, System and University rules and with directives issued by an administrative official of the System or institution in the course of his or her authorized duties, and to observe standards of conduct appropriate for an academic institution.

Any student who engages in conduct that violates the Regents' Rules and Regulations, System or institutional rules and regulations, specific instructions issued by an administrative official of the institution or the System acting in the course of his or her authorized duties or by federal, state, or local laws is subject to discipline whether such conduct takes place on or off campus or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Any behavior which may have been influenced by a student's mental state or use of drugs or alcoholic beverages shall not in any way limit the responsibility of the student for the consequences of his or her actions.

Primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the faculty. Students who engage in any acts that result in disruption of a class may be directed by the faculty member to leave the class for the remainder of the class period. Prohibited acts include behavior prohibited by the instructor (e.g., persistently speaking without being called upon, refusing to be seated, disrupting the class by leaving and entering the room without authorization, etc.). It must be emphasized that this provision is not designed to be used as a means to punish classroom dissent. The lawful expression of a disagreement with the instructor is not in itself disruptive behavior.

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated pursuant to Chapter 49 against a student who

- violates a federal or state penal law on University property or in connection with any University-oriented activity.
- possesses or uses any type of explosive, firearm, imitation firearm, ammunition, hazardous chemical or weapon as defined by state or federal law while on campus or on any property or in any building owned or controlled by the System or the University.
- conducts himself or herself in a manner that significantly endangers the health or safety of members of the University, or of visitors on the campus; this includes but is not limited to physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment and coercion.
- steals, damages, defaces, destroys, or takes unauthorized possession of University property or property belonging to another. This includes roadside signs, road markers, and parking lot signs and ties. The removal of these items is considered theft and can contribute to major accidents.
- engages in hazing, submits to hazing, or fails to report first-hand knowledge of hazing incidents; such conduct is prohibited by state law and, in addition to disciplinary actions, is punishable by fines up to \$10,000 and confinement in county jail for up to two years. Hazing is defined by state law as, "...any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution." Any person with knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred on or off campus must report the incident to the dean.
- uses alcoholic beverages on property and in buildings and facilities owned or controlled by the System or the University, except while on premises that have been licensed by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission or while in attendance by invitation at a specific event sponsored by the System or the University and at which alcoholic beverages are served for those over the age of 21.
- engages in gambling, or in illegal use, possession, and/or sale of a drug or narcotic.
- enters, walks, runs, lies, plays, remains, or is in the water of any fountain or other artificial body of water located on the University campus which is not designated and maintained for recreational or therapeutic purposes, or who dumps, throws, places or causes any material, object, person, animal,

trash, waste or debris to be placed in the water of any fountain or other artificial body of water located on the University campus, or who damages, defaces, or removes any portion of any fountain, monument, building, statue, structure, facility, tree, shrub, or memorial located on property owned or controlled by the System or the University.

- engages in speech, either orally or in writing, that is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action.
- acts either singly or in concert with others, obstructs, interferes with or disrupts any teaching, research, administrative, disciplinary, public service, learning, or other authorized activity to be held or conducted on campus, or on property or in a building or facility owned or controlled by the System or the University. Obstruction or disruption includes but is not limited to any act that interrupts, modifies or damages utility services or equipment, communication services or equipment, University computers, computer programs, computer records or computer networks accessible through the University's computer resources.
- violates any rule or regulation governing on-campus residential living or provision of a residential living contract.
- alters or assists in the altering of any official record of the System or the University or submits false information or omits requested information that is requested for or related to an application for admission, the award of a degree, or any official record of the System or the University. A former student who engages in such conduct is subject to bar against readmission, revocation of degree and withdrawal of diploma.
- engages in sexual assault which is defined as physical contact of a sexual nature which is against one's will or without one's consent.
- engages in disorderly, lewd, indecent, inappropriate, disruptive, loud, or obscene conduct or behavior that interferes with the orderly functioning of the University or interferes with an individual's pursuit of an education on University-owned or -controlled property or during an authorized University class, field trip, seminar, competition, or other meeting or University-related activity on or off University property.
- engages in the unauthorized use of property, equipment, supplies, buildings, or facilities owned or controlled by the System or the University.
- fails to comply with a verbal or written request or instruction of an official of the University or the System acting in the course of his or her duties.
- gives false testimony or other evidence at a campus disciplinary or other administrative proceeding.
- publishes or aids in publishing or circulates or aids in circulating any anonymous publication.
- engages in physical abuse or threat of physical abuse of any person on the campus, within any building or structure owned or controlled by the University or at any function, program, event, or assembly conducted, sponsored, supervised or authorized by the University.
- commits such acts that constitute a violation of the Texas Penal Code.
- has knowledge of, or is in the presence of the manufacture, use, possession or sale of an illegal substance. Having knowledge of such behavior or being present when a violation occurs constitutes equal responsibility and involvement in the incident.
- skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, and bicycles inside University facilities or in unauthorized outdoor areas.
- engages in misuse, vandalism of, or tampering with fire equipment, including fire extinguishers, alarms, hoses, and smoke detectors, as well as false reporting of a fire, bomb threat, or other emergency.
- participates in the game "assassin," "killer" or variations thereof on University owned or controlled property.

- engages in prohibited conduct while participating in off-campus activities sponsored by the University or the System, including field trips, internships, rotations, or clinical assignments.
- attempts, aids, abets, conspires, hires, or is an accessory to any conduct prohibited by Chapter 49, or
- otherwise engages in conduct that is inappropriate for members of an academic institution (such conduct includes but is not limited to pranks, throwing food at persons or property, public nudity and harassing phone calls).

## **Student Grievances**

Any student who perceives that he or she has been subject to any form of discrimination may file a written complaint with the Dean of Students. The statement must contain the nature of the alleged discrimination, the date on which the alleged discrimination occurred, and other appropriate information as required by the Dean. The Dean will investigate the allegation or refer the matter for investigation pursuant to University administrative policy. On the basis of the information presented, at the conclusion of the investigation, the Dean will determine: 1) that the charges of discrimination are without basis, 2) that further investigation is required, 3) that campus action shall be initiated to alleviate a discriminatory situation, or 4) that a formal hearing will be held.

On occasion disputes arise pertaining to some aspect of a student's academic standing at U. T. Dallas arising from an administrative or faculty decision that the student regards as incorrect or unjust. In an attempt to address the grievance in a timely and orderly manner, appeal procedures are summarized below. A complete procedural statement may be found in Chapter 51.

### **Grade Grievance Procedures**

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originated (hereafter called "the respondent.") If the matter cannot be resolved in discussions between the student and the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal. Complete appeal instructions are available in Chapter 51.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to the principle that the University's working and learning environment will be free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Suggestions that academic or employment reprisals or rewards will follow the refusal or granting of sexual favors also constitute sexual harassment.

The complete text of the University's policies and procedures on sexual harassment may be found in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual located in all major administrative offices and on the University website, [www.utdallas.edu/utdgeneral/business/admin\\_manual/pdf/d111150.pdf](http://www.utdallas.edu/utdgeneral/business/admin_manual/pdf/d111150.pdf). A

copy is located in the Office of the Dean of Students where the dean and staff are available to assist in interpretation of the policy and procedures.

## **Financial Transactions with the University**

### **Tuition and Fees**

A student who fails to provide full payment of tuition and fees, including late fees assessed, to the University when the payments are due is subject to one or more of the following actions at the University's option:

- (a) bar against readmission;
- (b) withholding of grades, degree and official transcript;
- (c) all penalties and actions authorized by law.

### **Returned Checks**

Students will be assessed a fee for each returned check unless their bank provides written notification that the bank was at fault. Students who write bad checks to the University for tuition and fees will have their registration canceled unless full payment is made by the census day listed in the academic calendar shown in the current University catalog.

### **Other Debts**

Students who owe other debts to the University, including but not limited to parking and library fees, will be subject to a ban against readmission and withholding of grades, degree and official transcript.

## **Sexual Assault Policy**

- (a) It is the policy of the University to strive to maintain an environment that is free from intimidation and inappropriate sexual conduct. In particular, the University will not tolerate any form of sexual assault, including, but not limited to, acquaintance rape, date rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, or any other form of non-consensual sexual activity.
- (b) A student who individually, or in concert with others, participates or attempts to participate in a sexual offense, regardless of whether it takes place on or off campus, is subject to disciplinary action under Chapter 49, notwithstanding any action that may or may not be taken by the civil authorities.
- (c) The University encourages any person who is the victim of a forcible or non-forcible sexual offense to immediately report the incident to any of the "Campus Security Authorities" (University police, Office of the Dean of Students, University residence life personnel and deans, directors, department heads, except those with significant counseling responsibilities). Other University personnel who may be contacted are Student Health Services and the Women's Center. There is no requirement to notify law enforcement authorities of a sexual offense; however, the University encourages all victims to do so and University personnel will assist in notifying local and campus police to report a sexual offense. University police should be notified as soon as possible (the preservation of evidence is crucial in a sexual offense case). Do

not bathe, shower, douche, or change clothing. If needed, contact one of the above mentioned resources, or a support person for assistance. University police will handle all cases that occur on campus. If transportation is needed to obtain a medical examination, the University police department will arrange for transportation to the hospital. For the protection of the victim, a pseudonym can be used in the report process.

- (d) When a student reports that the campus regulations prohibiting sexual assault have been violated, informal procedures that provide for the protection of the emotional health and physical safety of the complainant may be invoked. For example, a student who lives on campus may be moved to another campus living environment if he or she chooses and if accommodations are reasonably available. Similarly, a complainant may be allowed to make changes in his or her class schedule. Such arrangements will be made through the Office of the Dean of Students. If the complainant provides credible evidence that the accused student has engaged in prohibited sexual assault, the Dean may take interim disciplinary action against the accused student as appropriate.
- (e) A student who wishes to file a sexual assault complaint that will be addressed by the University disciplinary system should contact the Dean of Students at 972-883-6391. A student may choose to file a complaint with the Dean whether or not the student chooses to press criminal charges. A student who wishes to file a complaint against a faculty or staff member may contact the Dean as well. Procedures for discipline and dismissal of staff and faculty are outlined in the University Handbook of Operating Procedures.
- (f) Notwithstanding the rights of the accused student, faculty or staff member, a complainant under this policy is entitled to the following rights:
  - (1) The right to present his/her testimony during the disciplinary hearing.
  - (2) The right to have a support person present. This person is not entitled to represent the complainant nor to assist the complainant with his or her testimony. If the support person is to act as a witness, the hearing officer may require him or her to testify prior to the hearing.
  - (3) The right not to have evidence of his or her past sexual history with third parties admitted as evidence.
  - (4) The right to have the hearing closed to spectators.
  - (5) The right to know the outcome of the hearing to the extent permitted by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- (g) The University Student Counseling Center (972-883-2575), the Dallas County Rape Crisis Center (972-653-8740) and the Collin County Rape Crisis Center (972-881-0088) are available to provide support services for anyone affected by any form of sexual assault. Students who may have been assaulted by someone who is not affiliated with the University may also contact any of the available University support services.
- (h) Following is a list of educational and preventative programs and support services on campus that address the issue of sexual assault. Brochures and other printed materials are available from each office. Additional information may be obtained by calling the numbers listed.

Student Counseling Center 972-883-2575

Individual and group counseling, Educational programs

Student Health Center 972-883-2747

Educational and prevention information, Testing for sexually transmitted diseases after an assault, Presentations upon request

New Student Programs	972-883-6171
Resources for prevention and support	
The University of Texas at Dallas Police	972-883-2331
Crime prevention presentations, Escort service, Crime statistics information	
Residential Life/Housing	972-883-6391
Peer Adviser training on issues related to sexual assault, On-site educational programs, Individual and group support and follow-up	
Women's Center	972-883-6555
Individual counseling, Educational programs, Referrals	

## **Substance Abuse**

The University of Texas at Dallas, in accordance with Regents' Rules and Regulations and with the University's Handbook of Operating Procedures, bans the illegal use, possession and/or sale of a drug or narcotic on the U.T. Dallas campus. If a student is found guilty of the illegal use, possession and/or sale of a drug or narcotic on campus, the minimum disciplinary penalty is suspension for a specified period of time or suspension of rights or privileges, or both. Programs to educate students about the problems and penalties of illicit drug and alcohol use are provided at U.T. Dallas through the Student Counseling Center.

## **Hazing**

Hazing, submission to hazing, and failure to report firsthand knowledge of hazing incidents are prohibited by state law and are punishable by fines up to \$10,000 and confinement in county jail for up to two years. Such acts are also a violation of the Regents' Rules and Regulations and of the U. T. Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures, Chapter 49. Violations of these rules and regulations are subject to disciplinary penalties which include permanent expulsion. Any person with knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred on or off campus must report the incident to the Dean of Students.

## **STUDENT RIGHT-TO-KNOW, CAMPUS SECURITY**

In compliance with the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act enacted Nov. 8, 1990, The University of Texas at Dallas collects specified information on campus crime statistics, campus security policies, and institutional completion or graduation rates. U. T. Dallas publishes and distributes an annual report of campus security policies and crime statistics to all current students and employees, provides copies of the report to applicants for enrollment or employment upon request, and submits a copy of the report to the Secretary of Education upon request.

The University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations can be viewed at <http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/CompleteTOC-2.htm> and Chapters 49 and 51 of the U.T. Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures can be viewed <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs>.

## **2. Education and Student life**

### **KEYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

**T**he American academic system differs from most others in the world. To succeed academically, you will need to learn how the system is organized and how it works. You will need to learn, as Americans say, “how to play the game.” 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 continue to take courses and have the opportunity to talk with experienced students in your field of study. The more you discuss topics such as these with experienced students, the sooner you will be able to develop an understanding of the way in which your program functions.

In the American educational system, the best student is the one with the highest grade point average (GPA). Getting the highest possible GPA means getting the highest possible grade in every course. Within each course, getting the highest possible grade means getting the highest possible mark on each assignment and examination. Academic success in the American system requires consistent, disciplined studying for all assignments, examinations and courses. It will not be possible to wait until the latter part of the semester to begin studying; you are likely to get behind and to experience academic difficulty.

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. In general, foreign students earn lower grades during their first semester in this country. Then, as they become accustomed to the system and as their English improve, 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, rather than only difficult ones that require unusually heavy amounts of work. When arranging your course schedule, consult with your academic adviser as well as experienced students who are familiar with faculty.

You may be tempted to take more courses than necessary in order to try to earn your degree faster. Taking too many courses may result in discouragement, stress, poor academic performance and a subsequent failure in the competition for financial assistance. Be familiar with the “pass-fail” grade option and the procedures for dropping and adding courses.

#### **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 studying at a U.S. institution.

#### **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 for clarification. If you do not ask, it will be assumed that you understood everything or that you are not interested.

#### **Talk with your Teachers**

Teachers expect students to ask questions in class or immediately following class. They expect students who are having problems to see them during their office hours. If you are not doing well in a class and



you do not see the teacher to discuss the situation, the teacher is likely to assume that you are not really interested in the class.

### **Understand the Assumptions behind the American Educational System**

From your past experience in other educational systems, you may have developed certain assumptions about the nature and purposes of education and about the way your field of interest should be studied. For example, you may have been taught to view education as a process of absorbing information and ideas from scholars who know a great deal about a body of knowledge.

In contrast, you will find that education in the U.S. is viewed more as an effort to acquire additional information about and a greater understanding of the unknown. You may have been taught that it is important to be able to memorize large quantities of information provided by professors, authors or other experts. Here, by contrast, you may find the ability to memorize material is less important than the ability to synthesize (that is, bringing together and mixing in a new way) material from many sources and to develop 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 a difficult task for new foreign students, especially at the graduate level.

It is important to be aware of differences between the U.S. and other education systems. Whether or not you personally accept the values of the education system here, you will have to act in accordance with them to be academically successful.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC SYSTEM-GOALS OF THE ACADEMIC SYSTEM**

### **Broad Education**

The American academic system is intended to provide a broad education for as many people as possible. There is no screening examination which directs a student, at an early age, into an academic or non-academic area. A high proportion of the population completes secondary school, and secondary school is not as challenging as it is in countries where access to education is more limited. While a significant proportion of the population attempts some kind of post-secondary education, post-secondary study at the undergraduate level may not be as challenging as it is in some other systems.

### **Specialization**

While the American educational system 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 many others.

Generally, 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 in the U.S. to evaluate the work that students do in each class. A student's grades receive considerable attention in competition for scholarships and fellowships, for admission to universities and graduate schools and for jobs.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE ACADEMIC SYSTEM**

### **The Semester System**

The academic year at U. T. Dallas is composed of two semesters of approximately 16 weeks in length. In addition, there are eight-week and twelve-week summer sessions. While many U.S. universities use the semester system, some divide the academic year into shorter periods, either quarters or trimesters.

### **Credits**

The quantity of academic work a student does at the University is measured in credits. The number of credits a course is worth usually depends on the number of hours per week the class meets. A three-credit course, for example, will meet three hours weekly for one semester. It might meet for three fifty minutes 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 General Catalog. The Catalog, which lists all University course offerings and requirements, can be purchased at the UTD Bookstore.

### **The Grading System/Academic Advising/ Registration**

Grading, advising and registration are explained in detail in the University Catalog. You should become familiar with the first forty to fifty pages of the Catalog.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE U.S. ACADEMIC SYSTEM**

### **Lectures**

The most common method of instruction in the U.S. is the classroom lecture. Lectures often are supplemented by classroom discussion, reading assignments in textbooks or library books and perhaps written assignments.

It is important to contribute to the discussion in the classroom. In some societies it is disrespectful for students to question or challenge the teacher. In this country, by contrast, 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 participation in 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 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. For some undergraduate classes, there may be graduate teaching assistants (TAs) who are available to answer questions.

### **Seminars**

The seminar is a small class, 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 or Research Papers**

In many courses you will be required to write a term paper or research paper (often called simply a paper). A term paper is 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 term 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 to allow time to ask another person to review your paper and suggest revisions.

Books are available which explain the format of a term paper, including the use of footnotes and bibliographies. If you have questions, be sure to speak to your professor or TA.

## **Computer Services**

Generally, professors require that papers be typed rather than hand written. Visit the Information Resources on the third floor of McDermott Library about the location and hours of student computer labs.

## **Library Services**

Many of your class assignments will require the use of the library. If you are unfamiliar with the library system used at UTD, ask a librarian for assistance.

## **Examinations**

Tests or examinations will be given in most of your classes. There may be a mid-term examination near the middle of the semester and a final exam at the end of the semester. Additional tests or quizzes may be given with greater frequency, perhaps even weekly. Tests are administered to ensure that students are doing the work that is assigned to them and to measure how much they are learning.

There are two general types of tests:

1. Objective examinations: an objective examination tests the student's knowledge of particular facts. Foreign students may have difficulty with objective examinations, not because they do not know the material, but because they are unfamiliar with the format of the test or because their knowledge of English is not sophisticated enough to enable them to distinguish subtle differences in meaning. Five types of questions commonly found on objective examinations are listed below:
  - 1) Multiple choice – the student must choose from among a series of answers, selecting the one that is most appropriate.
  - 2) True or false – the student must read a statement and indicate whether it is true or false.
  - 3) Matching – the student must match words, phrases or statements from two columns.
  - 4) Identification – the student must identify and briefly explain the significance of a name, term or phrase.
  - 5) Blanks – the student must fill in the blanks left in a phrase or statement in order to make it complete and correct.
2. Subjective Examinations: Sometimes called essay questions, subjective examinations require the student to write an essay in response to a question or statement. This type of examination tests a student's ability to organize and relate his or her knowledge of a particular subject.

## **Coping with Quizzes and Examinations**

The suggestions below may help you cope with the many quizzes and examinations you will have at the University:

1. Keep up to date on your studies.
2. Schedule time to review. Before the test, review your notes from lectures and readings.
3. Try to anticipate what the instructor will ask on the test. This may be done by recalling the points that were emphasized during lectures.
4. Rest before the test.
5. Read test instructions carefully. Notice whether you are allowed to use scratch paper, calculators or dictionaries.
6. Avoid spending all your time on only one or a few of the questions.

### **Study Skills**

Remember that the U.S. education 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 study skills that can be learned. Some of these skills are mentioned and briefly discussed here. For additional ideas or assistance with study skills, you can visit Learning Resources in MC 2.2402.

### **Organizing Your Time**

You will have a large amount of work to do and a limited amount of time in which to do it. Therefore, the most effective use of your time is essential. One strategy for time management is to construct a weekly study schedule.

Allot specified periods of time each day for studying. Undergraduates will probably need to spend at least two hours studying for each one hour they spend in class and graduate students at least three hours. Review the course outline or syllabi you receive at the beginning of the semester and note how much you will need to read and how many papers you will have to write for each class. Fill in your study schedule accordingly and discipline yourself to follow the schedule. If it appears later that your schedule is out of balance, with too much devoted to some courses and not enough to others, modify your schedule and adhere to the new one.

### **Reading Effectively**

When you see the length of the reading lists your instructors give you, you may realize it is not possible to memorize all the information or even to study the material as intensively as you would like. Some tips for effective reading are listed below. For additional assistance in improving reading skills, visit Learning Resources in MC 2.402.

**Skim:** Skimming means looking over and/or reading quickly, paying attention to the table of contents (if it is an entire book), 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:** Read the material looking for the main points, the conclusions and the contentions. Underline and write notes in the margins.

**Questions:** Rather than passively accepting what the writer has written, ask yourself questions about it. “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 the material again. Review your notes. Try to retain the main points of the readings.

## **Deriving as Much as Possible from Classes**

Below are some suggestions that may help you to receive maximum benefit from your classes.

**Read in advance:** If you have reading assignments related to a lecture, do the reading before the class to derive the greatest benefits from the lecture. From the reading you may develop questions to ask in the class.

**Take notes:** Write down the main points during the lecture. Many speakers will use key words or phrases to identify the important points. For example, a speaker may say, “There are three major reasons for this. The first is ...;”, “The next major development was...,” and “The main thing to keep in mind about this is...,”

**Review:** After class, review your notes. Note items you don’t understand. Before the next class, spend ten to fifteen minutes reviewing your notes from the previous class.

**Get help if you need it:** If you have specific questions or if you are having general difficulty understanding what is happening in a class, get help. 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. If you are having serious difficulties, consider a tutor, a person you can hire to work with you privately on the material that is being covered in the class. Learning Resources maintains a list of students who will tutor for a fee. Your professor or academic advisor may also be able to recommend tutors.

**Try not to be discouraged:** Foreign 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 may talk too fast and/or may not give well-organized presentations; fellow students’ comments may be incomprehensible because they use so much slang; and the entire setting may seem strange and confusing. As time passes and you have more experience, these difficulties will diminish. Be patient.

## **Academic Integrity**

Every student at The University of Texas at Dallas is expected to exercise independent thought and expression as he or she strives for academic achievement. Incorporated in the quest for intellectual growth are the expectations of honesty, originality in written and oral expression, a respect for the exchange of ideas, and acknowledgement and recognition of the abilities and contributions of others.

The following information is provided as a guide to assist UTD students with a variety of Academic Integrity issues:

### **Daily Assignments and Homework**

- Presume the assignment requires individual, independent work.
- Group or study-buddy work should be clearly identified on the course syllabus. If in doubt, ask!
- Turn your materials in on time and in the proper format (hardcopy, electronic, etc).
- Be certain to put your name or identifying number on your paper.
- Retain confirmation of document delivery if submitted electronically.

### **Essays and Significant Class Papers**

- Begin your research as soon as the paper is assigned.
- Make notes of your readings and properly identify the source of the information.
- Prepare several draft documents – Remember to give credit to source of the information.
- Ask the professor what style of citation they prefer (MLA, Chicago style, IEEE, APA, ACS, etc.)
- Use quotation marks and proper footnotes where applicable regardless of academic subject!
- Protect your work from others:
  - Lock your computer if you step away
  - Avoid storing your information on someone else's computer: (They may not be as trustworthy as you think.)
- Be certain to put your name or identifying number on your paper.
- Turn your paper in timely in the manner prescribed by your professor (hardcopy, electronic, etc.).
- Save your drafts and research notes until the paper has received a final grade.

### Examinations

- Be prepared to:
  - Leave all personal belongings at the front of the room – including cell phones (**Turn them off** or don't bring them at all. Be respectful of your fellow students.)
  - Present your UTD Comet Card for identification
  - Remove your hat
- Keep your eyes on your own paper during the exam and protect your responses from inquisitive neighbors.
- Don't even consider crib notes, writing on body parts or hand signals with classmates.
- Sharing exam information, questions or answers with other students is a form of academic dishonesty.

### General Comments about Academic Dishonesty

There is no generally accepted definition of academic dishonesty. However, there are elements of dishonesty that are readily identifiable:

- *Cheating* – intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise (examples: crib notes, copying, unauthorized collaboration)
- *Fabrication* – intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise (examples: making up sources for the bibliography of a paper or faking the results of a laboratory assignment)
- *Plagiarism* – deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement (examples: turning in a paper written by another person or buying a paper from a commercial source and failing to properly attribute quotations within a paper)
- *Facilitating Academic Dishonesty* – intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another engage in some form of academic dishonesty
- *Misrepresentation* – providing false information to an instructor concerning an academic exercise (examples: giving a false excuse for missing a test or deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted a paper)
- *Failure to Contribute to a Collaborative Project* – involves not doing one's fair share

- *Sabotage* – actions that prevent others from completing their work (examples: disturbing a lab experiment, removing materials from a reserved reading file)<sup>1</sup>

### **Selected Resources**

An abundant supply of resources is available for students to consult. Whether it's improving your writing style, combating a habit of copying text, learning to adequately express your personal opinions or thoughts, or just double-check you've given credit where credit is due there are readily accessible writing and study aids available. We've selected a few to recommend:

*UTD Learning Resource Center* – Wow. This is a great resource right here on campus. They can help with developing your writing skills and with mathematical stumbling blocks. Both the writing and math labs are located on the second floor of the McDermott Library (room 2.402). Check out their web site: [www.utdallas.edu/dept/ugraddean/lrc.html](http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/ugraddean/lrc.html) or call them at 972-883-6707. They are sincerely interested in helping you overcome those weak areas that sometimes loom large and become major hurdles.

*Your Professor* – Yes, it's true! Professors are frequently overlooked in the resource category. Don't be bashful. Professors generally don't bite students and would probably be glad to discuss with you concerns over a paper topic or computer program. Check to see when they have office hours and schedule an appointment with them. Doing this will assure you that you have their undivided attention. Just showing up at their doorstep may not be the best approach.

*Internet Resources* – Again, an abundance of information is available via Internet. Be judicious about information acquired on web sites. Just because it's posted doesn't mean it's true or correct! Here are a few addresses that may prove useful:

Research citations: [www.plagiarism.org/research\\_site/e\\_citation.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/research_site/e_citation.html)

UTD Judicial Affairs: [www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs](http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs)

### **Did You Notice????**

We've provided several resources that we think are pretty good. Did you notice we didn't suggest you consult your roommate or best friend for assistance in completing academic exercises? We didn't suggest doing a cut and paste job from the Internet on your lab or term paper either. Or, that you give a pleading classmate or your significant other a copy of your homework or computer program. No, it's not oversight on our part. These are common examples of academic dishonesty. Doing your own work on each academic exercise facilitates intellectual growth and honors your commitment to academic success.

### References

1. Whitley, Jr., Bernard E. and Keith-Spiegel, Patricia. Academic Dishonesty An Educator's Guide Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.

### **Possible consequences of cheating**

To protect conscientious students and to guarantee the quality of their education, the University assesses heavy penalties against those who plagiarize. The Student Code of Conduct outlines the penalties for plagiarism which range from an "F" grade to dismissal from the University. If these penalties seem severe, remember that your integrity as well as the integrity of the University is at stake. A copy of the Student Code of Conduct is included in your International Student Orientation materials and is also available in

the office of the Dean of Students (SU 26, 972-883-6391), where staff are available to assist students in the interpretation of University policy.

### 3. Get Involved On Campus

#### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are so many organizations on campus that you can be a part of. For up to date information, start at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu) then click on the letter “S” on the index. Search for the heading “Student Organizations” and find out what is available.

**If you want to start your own student organization**, pick up registration forms at the Student union in the Student development Office (SU 2.604), Phone: (972)-883-6158 and the Student Organization Suite (SU 2.506), (Phone: 972)-883-6551. Forms can also be found online at [www.utdallas.edu/student/slfe/sof.html](http://www.utdallas.edu/student/slfe/sof.html).

### 4. Safety and Security

It is wise to take certain precautions to protect yourself and your property. Here are some specific suggestions:

#### Personal Safety

- Keep your doors locked even when you are at home.
- If someone comes to your door, do not open the door unless you know the person. You are not required to open the door simply because someone knocks.
- Leave both an outside and an inside light on if you will be returning to your home after dark.
- Use caution if you patronize bars and clubs at night.
- Report harassing telephone calls to the phone company.
- Avoid walking alone at night, especially in areas of town or on the campus that are not well lighted.

#### Protecting Valuables

- Lock the doors to rooms, apartments and automobiles.
- At the library: do not leave valuables unattended, even briefly. Take your backpack, coat or other valuable possessions with you if you are going to be away from your table.
- At bookstores: to reduce shoplifting, bookstores may ask patrons not to take a backpack or other bag into the store. Stores may provide a place 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.
- Bicycles: Secure bicycles to a rack with a sturdy lock and chain.
- Garments: Winter coats, hats and scarves are sometimes stolen from coat racks. If you own expensive winter clothing, you may wish to keep it in your sight in public places.



- While on vacation, make arrangements for a friend to check your home daily. Burglaries often occur when thieves know that no one is at home. The post office will hold your mail while you are away upon request. If you own many valuables buy insurance for your household goods.

## **POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Local Police**

If a person is convicted of violating a law, his or her name and the nature of the violation are recorded in the police department's files. This is called a police record.

Minor violations as well as criminal violations become a part of a person's police record which can be made available to certain government authorities upon request.

If you are issued a ticket for a violation, be sure you read the instructions and meet the date requirements; otherwise a warrant for your arrest will be issued, and you run the risk of being incarcerated.

Along with enforcing the law, remember that the police can be a source of help. If for any reason you feel unsafe or threatened, call the police who are available to assist you.

## **TEXAS WEATHER**

### **Tornados**

Tornados are powerful twisting windstorms which can measure up to several hundred yards (or meters) in diameter and may produce winds of more than 300 m.p.h. (500 k.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 tornadoes. Tornado watches are broadcast on all radio and television stations. A tornado warning means that a tornado has actually been seen. Severe weather warning sirens are located at various fire stations and schools. When the siren is heard, proceed as follows.

If you are indoors:

- Move promptly to interior sheltered areas on the ground floor or below ground in buildings. The severe weather shelter areas for campus buildings are indicated on the walls near building directional signs. Be familiar with these locations before an emergency.
- Avoid areas where glass and windows would present a hazard.
- Do not use elevators. Use the stairs.
- If time permits, take a cushioning object to protect yourself and a battery-operated radio for up-to-date information. The weather stations in this area are KRLD (1080 AM) and WBAO (820 AM).
- When in the shelter, stay close to the floor and prepare to protect your upper body and head.
- Stay in the shelter area until the all-clear signal is given.

If you are outdoors:

- Seek indoor shelter if possible; otherwise lie flat in a ditch or low spot.
- Do not remain in a parked motor vehicle.

The following are suggestions from the American Red Cross  
(<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/readyhurricane.html>)

### **Prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan**

- Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places - a friend's home in another town, a motel or a shelter.
- Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places as well as a road map of your locality. You may need to take alternative or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Take these items with you when evacuating:
  - Prescription medications and medical supplies
  - Bedding and clothing, including sleeping bags and pillows
  - Bottled water, battery-operated radio and extra batteries, first aid kit, flashlight
  - Car keys and maps
  - Documents', including driver's license, Social Security card, immigration documents, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, etc.

### **Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Including the Following Items:**

- First aid kit and essential medications
- Canned food and can opener
- At least three gallons of water per person
- Protective clothing, rainwear and bedding or sleeping bags
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. Remember that you will need a professional to turn them back on.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Food Terms

**A la carte** - each item on menu is ordered and paid for separately.

**Bagel** – a round, hard roll with a hole in the middle.

**Barbecue or Bar-B-Q** – a meal cooked out of doors over charcoal.

**Brunch** – a combination of breakfast and lunch, eaten in the late morning.

**Cheeseburger** – a hamburger with a slice of cheese melted on it. A vegetable cheeseburger or cheeseburger deluxe also has lettuce and a slice of tomato on it.

**Cocktail** – an alcoholic drink served before meals.

**Cocktail Party** - a party where alcoholic, non-alcoholic beverages and hors d'oeuvres are served, not a full meal.

**Eggs** – (a) over easy (or over medium, or over hard) eggs fried on both sides; (b) sunny side up eggs, yoke side up - not turned over to fry on both sides, (c) scrambled eggs - eggs beaten and fried.

**Steak**- Steak is served either (a) rare- close to raw (b) medium- between raw and cooked (c) well done-fully cooked

**“For here or to go”** - the clerk is asking if you are eating your meal in the restaurant or if you want to take the food with you.

**French fries** - potatoes cut into strips and cooked by deep frying in oil.

**Greasy** – food that has been fried in oil; or has an oily appearance.

**Greasy spoon** - a restaurant with a dirty appearance.

**Hamburger** – a fried or broiled ground beef patty served on a bun.

**Munchies** - bite sized snacks; to have the munchies is to be hungry.

**Pot luck** - a meal composed of dishes brought by various people.

**Submarine sandwich, or sub** – sandwich on a long roll with assorted fillings and spices.

**Waffle** – similar to a pancake, but square and has many square indentations, instead of being smooth and round.

## **Appendix 2 – Terms of Etiquette**

**BYOB Party** – bring your own beer, or bring your own liquor.

**Cover charge** – cost of admission to a bar or nightclub.

**Date** – pre-arranged social activity involving at least two people, usually a male and a female.

**Double Date** – two couples who plan to go somewhere or do something together.

**Dutch treat; To go dutch, or Going dutch** – each member of the couple on the date pays his or her own expenses; usually this is agreed to by those involved before the date.

**Formal (or black tie)** – formal occasion where formal dress (a tuxedo or suite for men, a long dress or evening dress for women) is expected. National dress is generally acceptable.

**Host family** – a family which has volunteered to meet a foreign student because of an interest in sharing their home and activities with a student from abroad.

**Informal (dress)** – at most affairs, ordinary street clothes, at social affairs, dresses for the women and sport coats and neckties for the men.

**Mixer** – an organized activity to get people acquainted with each other, usually with refreshments and dancing.

**National dress** – some distinctive clothing that is typical of a country or culture, even though it may not commonly be worn today.

**R.S.V.P.** – a reply is required telling whether or not you can attend a function to which you have received an invitation (original French phrase: *repondez s'il vous plait*).

**Semi-formal** – usually formal dress or national dress for women, business suit or national dress for men

**Stag party** – all male party; **To go stag** – a man goes to a dance or party without a date.

**Thank you note; or bread and butter note** – a short note sent to a hostess afterwards in thanks for a meal, overnight stay or a gift.

## Appendix 3 – Slang Terms

As is true of any other people in the world, Americans have developed certain peculiarities in their everyday language. You are sure to encounter certain colloquialisms and slang terms which could not have been predicted by any English language textbook or teacher. Some words are often unique to a certain group of people (such as those within the University community) and are forever changing. The following is a list which will give you an idea of the more common of these usages. Also included are terms or vocabulary which you may not have encountered before, but which will prove useful to you during your stay in Texas. No list of this type can even come close to being complete. For this reason, you must remember never to hesitate or be embarrassed about asking for clarification of a meaning or usage with which you are unfamiliar. Americans will enjoy helping you become familiar with the oddities of their language, and many acquaintances have begun with shared, good-natured laughter over a misused or misunderstood idiom.

Americans like to abbreviate words when they talk. Thus they are likely to say phys ed for physical education and bio for biology. It would be impossible to list all such abbreviations here. If you hear one you do not know, ask someone what it means.

Definitions followed by a \* are impolite, profane, sexist or obscene, and may be highly offensive or insulting to other people. Perhaps the safest advice would be to not use these words. Certainly avoid using them in the presence of members of the opposite sex or people of higher status. You will likely hear many of them, however, which is why they are included in this list. One should remember that the meaning of a word can vary, depending on the context and the intonation.

### A

**Acid** - L.S.D., a drug that produces hallucinations.

**Awesome** - very good, interesting or appealing

### B

**Bar** - a place where alcoholic beverages are served.

**Barf** - vomit.

**Bastard\*** - 1) An illegitimate male child, 2) crude, insensitive person.

**Big Deal** - important event; may be used sarcastically to refer to something that is not important.

**Bitch\*** - 1) to complain, 2) a woman with an unpleasant personality; son of a bitch\* - phrase insulting to males.

**Blast** - “its going to be a blast” – its going to be a lot of fun.

**Blitzed** - intoxicated by alcohol.

**Blow; or bomb** - to be unsuccessful

**Blow it off** - to ignore or avoid someone or something.

**Be blue; or Have the blues** – to feel depressed.

**Bogus** - 1) non-existent, fake, 2) bad, awful, unsatisfactory.

**Bombed** - intoxicated by alcohol.

**Booze** - liquor

**Bounce a check** – to overdraw a checking account.

**Bread** - money.

**Brew or brewsky** - beer.

**Broke** - Having no money.

**Buck** - one dollar.

**Buddy** - friend.

**Bug off\*** - leave immediately; “leave me alone” (command).

**Burn a cigarette** - to borrow a cigarette.

**Bummed out** - depressed.

**Bummer** - unpleasant experience.

**Burn out** - school or job related stress.

**Burned** – rejected, insulted, or otherwise negatively treated.

**Burned out** - 1) exhausted; 2) dull or lifeless.

**Busted** - 1) to be caught by the police while using drugs, or by anyone in authority while misbehaving; 2) to be out of money, broke.

**Buzz** - 1) mild intoxication; 2) to get ones hair cut short.

## C

**Can** - toilet or restroom.

**Check out** - 1) to sign materials from the library; 2) to try to find out something, or “check it out” – to look over a situation.

**Chew the fat; or Shoot the breeze** - to talk to someone.

**Chick\*** - young woman (offensive term for many women)

**Chill out or cool it** - a command to stop what you are doing, relax.

**Coke** - 1) Coca-cola; 2) Cocaine.

**Cop; or Copper** - police officer

**Cop out** - to not face the issue.

**Couch potato** - a lazy person who spends a large amount of time on a couch watching television

**Crash** -1) to stay overnight at someone else’s dwelling usually without notice or formal arrangement; 2) to go to sleep after becoming extremely tired.

**Creep\*** - an unpleasant person who does odd things.

**Crib** - where some one lives (house, apartment, etc).

**Croak, or Kick the bucket** - to die.

**Cruising** - driving around for pleasure with no particular destination.

**Crush (to have a crush on someone)** - to be extremely infatuated with someone.

**Cut it out!** - stop it.

## D

**Dead** - very tired.

**Dealer** - Someone who sells illegal drugs.

**Dope** -1) marijuana; 2) idiot.

**Dork** - an unfashionable and awkward male.

**Dorm** - dormitory

**Dough** - money.

**Down in the dumps** - depressed.

**Down low (DL)** - Private, or quiet, as in “Keep it on the down low”.

**Drag** -1) to inhale a cigarette or marijuana cigarette; 2) a type of car race; 3) something that is boring or tedious; 4) a man in drag- a man wearing women’s clothing; (a cross-dresser).

**Draw or draft** - glass of beer ordered at a bar.

**Drop in** - to visit unexpectedly.

Druggie - a person who abuses drugs.

Dude - a guy.

## F

**Fast** - sexually aggressive or quick to seek sexual contact.

**Fed up; or Sick of** - disgusted with or tired of.

**Flaky** - Unreliable person.

**Fired up** – to get excited about something; to get motivated.

**Fix up** – to arrange a date for a friend.

**Fool around** - 1) to spend time on a purposeless activity; 2) to have sexual relations with someone, usually someone other than one’s spouse or regular boyfriend or girlfriend.

**Fox\*** - a sexually attractive female.

**Frat rat** - one who belongs to a fraternity.

**Freak out** - to lose control of ones self.

**Frenching** - kissing with tongues.

**Fuzzbuster** - Device used by some motorists to determine when police are using radar to detect drivers who are speeding.

## G

**Gay** - homosexual.

**Geek** - an unattractive, unstylish, socially inept person.

**Get a clue** - think sensibly.

**Get it on** - 1) to have sexual intercourse; 2) to be involved in an intense activity.

**Get a kick out of someone/something** - find someone or something amusing or enjoyable.

**Get lost\*** - go away (as a command).

**Get out of here** - I don’t believe you; you must be joking.

**Get with it; or Get with the program; or Get your act together; or Get your shit together\*** - get organized.

**Get on someone’s case -to annoy; or Get off someone’s case** - to stop annoying a person.

**Give someone a break** - to stop criticizing or teasing; or **Give me a break!** – expresses disbelief

**Give someone a buzz or a ring** - to call someone on the telephone.

**Goofing off** - acting silly; doing something that has no particular purpose.

**Give up** - to quit

**Gone** - drunk, as in “He was totally gone.”

**Gross** - something crude, usually unpleasant

**Grossed out** - made to feel uneasy because of something unpleasant someone has said, often something to do with sex or other bodily functions.

**Group** - group of musicians.

**Groupies** - loyal fans that follow a musical group.

**Grungy** - dirty, unclean

## H

**Hairy** - difficult; hard to do

**Hang in there** - keep trying, do not be discouraged,

**Hang out** - 1) to waste time; 2) a regular meeting place for friends; 3) to spend time with friends.

**Hang up** - 1) to conclude a phone call and put the receiver down, 2) fear, phobia or worry.

**Hang over** - the physical symptoms after heavy alcohol drinking; may include headache, stomach ache, etc.

**Hassle** - 1) a problem or inconvenience; 2) cause another person to have a problem or inconvenience.

**Head** - foam on a beer.

**Hick** - someone from a small town or rural area; usually uncomplimentary.

**Hickey** - red mark or bruise produced by sucking on someone’s neck or other body part.

**High; or stoned** – to be under the influence of marijuana, alcohol or a number of other drugs.

**Hit** - a dose of LSD, marijuana or other drug.

**Hit on; or Make a pass at** - to display interest and make sexual advances.

**Hit the road** - to leave a place.

**Hit the sack; or Turn in** - to go to bed.

**Hitch a ride**- to get a ride from another person.

**Hitchhike** - to get an automobile ride from a stranger who is going in your direction. Usually done by standing on the side of the road, signaling with either a sign or with your thumb, and waiting for someone to stop; it is dangerous and illegal.

**Honking** - huge, large

**Hoof it** - to walk.

**Horny\*** - desirous of sexual activity

**Hot** - 1) stolen; 2) sexually aroused; 3) very spicy food; 4) very latest fad; 5) good-looking, very attractive.

**Hot head** - person who angers easily and often.

**Hot to trot\*** - desirous of sexual activity

**Hung up** - be in conflict over a problem.

## I

**In a nutshell** - very briefly and concisely.

## J

**Jam Session** - group of people gathering informally to play guitars or other instruments.



**Jerk** – 1) person who cannot do things correctly; 2) a person who treats others insensitively. A mildly derogatory term.

**Jock** - an athlete or athletic person, especially one who is not very intelligent; a mildly derogatory term.

**John** - toilet.

**Joint** - 1) marijuana cigarette; 2) prison; 3) bar.

## K

**Kegger** - social function where beer is served from a keg.

**Knock it off!** - Stop doing that!

**Knock up\*** - to make a woman pregnant.

## L

**Lay\*** - 1) to have sexual intercourse; 2) a person you have sexual intercourse with.

**Lighten up** - relax, don't be so serious.

**Living together** - living with someone you are in romantic relationship with without being married.

**Loaded** - 1) usually means under influence of marijuana or alcohol; 2) extremely wealthy; 3) a loaded topic- very controversial topic.

**Loosen up** - relax.

**Lose it** - to lose control of one's self.

**Luck out; or Get lucky**- to have something good happen due to luck or chance. Often the term get lucky is used to refer to sexual intercourse.

## M

**Macho** - exaggerated concern with masculinity.

**Make out** - 1) to kiss.

**Male chauvinist pig; or MCP** - derisive term for a male who acts as though he assumes males are generally superior to females.

**Mega** - very large in volume, scale, or quantity. Usually used as a prefix to a noun (e.g., megabucks, megaproblems).

**Mess with** - to interact with or get involved with, usually in a way that causes harm of some kind: "Don't mess with Texas".

**Messed up** - 1) mentally and emotionally confused, 2) not neat, 3) intoxicated by alcohol or drugs.

**Mind your own business; or Get your nose out of my business** - don't ask questions or make statements about this matter; it is my concern and not yours.

**Mooch** - to borrow frequently and/or take things from others, usually without the intention of returning or repaying.

**Munchies** - snack foods; or have the munchies, to be hungry.

## N

**Narc** - 1) to inform an authority figure that someone has done something wrong; 2) a person who betrays friends by giving such information.

**Nerd** - a strange or socially inept person.

## O

**On the house** - free, at no cost.

**On the spur of the moment** - done without premeditation or planning.

**Oops!** - an exclamation used when a small mistake is made.

**To be open** - to be accepting of something or someone; to speak frankly about oneself

**Out of one's mind (head)** - 1) crazy; 2) doing something ridiculous

**Out of it; or Really out of it** - tired and not concentrating.

## P

**Pain in the neck; or Pain in the ass; or Pain in the butt\*** - an unpleasant person or experience

**Pal** - friend.

**Pick up** - to leave a social setting with someone of the opposite sex, usually someone unknown, for a sexual encounter.

**Pig\*** -1) policeman; 2) a person who is overeating

**Pig out** - to overeat.

**On the pill** - Taking birth control pills

**Pinkie** - the smallest finger.

**Piss\*** - to urinate.

**Pissed off\*** - crude term for anger: "I am very pissed off at him."

**Pooped; Pooped out** - being tired or exhausted.

**Pop; or Soda; or Soft drink** - carbonated beverage (e.g., Sprite).

**Pot; or grass** - marijuana.

**Psych** - to fool someone

**Psych up** - to prepare oneself mentally or emotionally for something.

**Psyched out** - emotionally unprepared

**Pull someone's leg** - to fool someone.

**Pusher** - someone who sells drugs, see dealer.

**Put someone on** - to tease or try to fool.

## Q

**Queen\*** - a flamboyant male homosexual

**Queer\*** - a homosexual

## R

**Rag\*** - to complain or criticize someone; 2) sanitary napkin; or On the rag- 1) having a menstrual period, 2) acting irritably because of a menstrual period.

**Rap** - 1) to talk, 2) style of music.

**Take a rain check** - postpone; accept the same invitation but for a later date.

**Raunchy** - vulgar, crude.

**Redneck\*** - Uneducated person from a rural area

**Relationship** - a close affiliation with someone, usually romantic.

**Right-hand man** - an important and reliable assistant.

**Rip-off** - 1) steal; 2) anything too expensive and not worth the price.

**Rowdy** - noisy, loud, obnoxious

**Rubber** - condom, prophylactic.

**Rubber check** - a check not covered by a balance into a bank account; such a check is said to bounce.

## S

**Scoop** - gossip, recent news.

**Scope out** - to investigate; analyze.

**Scrounge** - someone who constantly borrows things, or dresses sloppily.

**See eye-to-eye** – to have the same opinion as someone else.

**Shit hits the fan\*** - when troubles or problems begin.

**Show** - a television program, movie, film or theater performance.

**Shush! or Hush!** - Be quiet, shut up\* (as a command).

**Significant other** - an intimate friend, usually one with whom a person has a romantic, committed relationship.

**Skinny-dip** - to swim in the nude.

**Slam** – to insult a person.

**Slob** - 1) a lazy, fat person; 2) a person who is not dressed neatly; 3) an untidy person.

**Smashed; Bombed; Polluted; Stoned; or Wasted** – not functioning properly because of drugs or alcohol.

**Snowed under** - to have an overabundance of work or responsibilities

**So what? What's the point?** - What does this have to do with me?

**Space cadet; or Space case** - a disoriented or not very bright person

**Spaced out** - unable to concentrate

**Speed freak** - a person who uses speed (amphetamines)

**Split** - leave.

**Stood up** - to be left waiting for a date who never arrives.

**Straight** - 1) heterosexual; 2) not under the influence of drugs or alcohol; 3) a person who is conservative regarding matters of drugs, alcohol, and sex.

**Stud** - a man who is considered sexually attractive and proficient.

**Sucks\*** - bad negative or unpleasant

**Sugarcoat** - to make something sound better than it really is.

## T

**Tacky** - in poor taste

**Take a chill pill** - calm down.

**Take a hike!** - Go a way and leave the person alone.

**To be crazy about** - to like someone or something very much

**To be into something** - to be very interested in or concerned with something

**Touch base** - 1) to verify information with someone; 2) contacting someone you have not talked to in a while.

**Trip** - effect of taking a drug; or to use drugs, particularly LSD.

**Tough Luck** – it's too bad that happened to you.

**Tough shit\*** - it's not so important; it's not a matter to be concerned about; used abrasively.

**TP** - toilet paper

**Turn on** - 1) to become interested or sexually excited; 2) to use drugs.

**Turned off** - 1) not sexually aroused; 2) feeling adverse to something or someone.

U

**Unreal** - unbelievable

**Uptight** – to be worried, tense

W

**Way to go!** - that's very good! Sometimes used sarcastically.

**Wimp** - weakling.

Z

**Zero in on** - to focus or concentrate on.

**Zonked or zonkered** - completely exhausted.