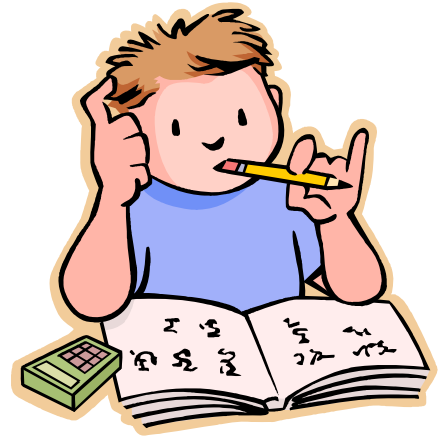


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# How Do I Maintain My Student Status

It is extremely important for a non-immigrant to maintain his or her status while in the United States. Failure to maintain the terms and conditions of non-immigrant status is a ground for removal from the United States.



## To maintain F-1 status you should:

- Report to the P/DSO for initial registration in SEVIS upon arriving at the school.
- Attend the authorized school on your Form I-20.
- Register for a full course of study-12 semester hours (except in your last term and official school breaks).
- Make normal academic progress towards completing your course of study by completing studies before the program completion date on the Form I-20.
- Depart from the U.S. on or before the sixty (60) day grace period, unless prior to completing your course of study you follow the procedures for applying for practical training, moving educational levels, or school transfer.
- Notify International Student Office (ISO) within 10 days of moving to a new address.
- Do not break the laws of the United States. Conviction may result in deportation.
- Not work, either on or off-campus without authorization

## When appropriate, file the following in a timely manner:

- Program Extension
- School Transfer

**It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students!**

# Program Extensions

**F-1 students are admitted to the United States for “duration of status” or “D/S”, which is defined as:**

- The time during which you are pursuing a full course of study and making normal progress toward the completion of your degree/certificate.
- The time you may be working in authorized practical training after completing your program of study.
- The time during which you prepare to depart from the US. (Within sixty days) after completing your program of study.

USCIS grants duration of status to F-1 students by entering the notation “D/S” on the Arrival/Departure Record (I-94)

## **Limitations on Duration of Status**

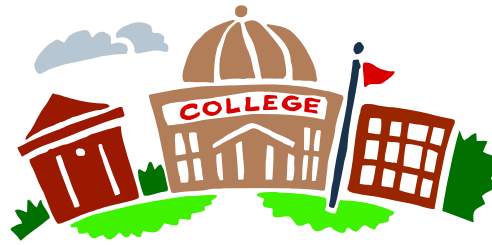
You should complete your academic program by the completion date on the Form I-20. If you are unable to complete your program of study by this date, consult with the ISO at least thirty (30) days **before** reaching the I-20 completion date. The ISO will provide the necessary forms required for a program extension.

## **You may apply for a program extension if:**

- Your most recently issued I-20 has **not** expired.
- You have continuously maintained lawful F-1 status.
- The delay in completing program requirements has been caused by compelling academic reasons, or compelling and documented medical reasons. Academic probation or suspension is not acceptable reasons for delay! Individuals who have not maintained status or who have delays due to academic probation or suspension **must apply for reinstatement.**

**If you fail to apply for a program extension in a timely manner, you will be in direct violation of your F-1 student status, even if you are enrolled full time!**

# School Transfers



An F-1 student who is maintaining status may transfer from one SEVIS approved school to another by following the “*transfer notification*” procedure. **An F-1 student who was not pursuing a full course of study at the school he or she was last authorized to attend is ineligible for school-transfer and must apply for reinstatement.**

## To transfer an F-1 Student must:

- Inform the ISO at the school you currently attend of two things:
  - Your intent to transfer *and*
  - The complete name of the school to which you will transfer
- Obtain a “Notification of Transfer” from the new school. This form will be completed by your current ISO to determine your eligibility for transfer.
- Report to the new school within 15 days of the program start date listed on the new I-20.
- Plan to enroll as a full-time student at the new school.

# Passports



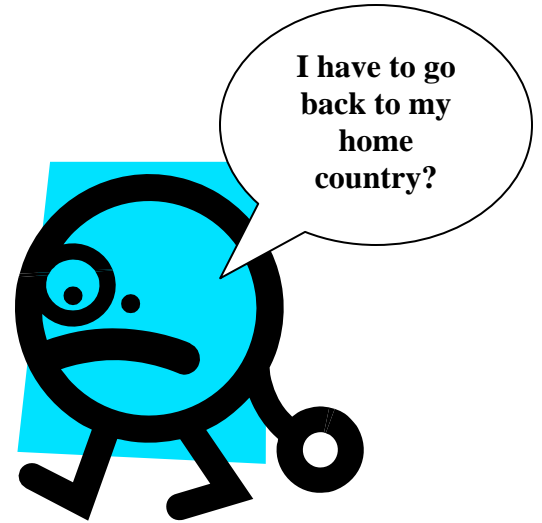
If your passport is within 6 months of expiration or is lost, please contact the nearest consulate or embassy to obtain information on how to renew, extend or replace your passport. For example, if you are a citizen of Canada and are carrying a passport issued by the Canadian government; you would need to contact the nearest General Consulate of Canada. You are **out-of-status** if you carry an expired passport.

For more information about the embassies and consulates in the United States go to

<http://www.embassiesabroad.com/embassies-in/UnitedStates>

# In-Status/Out-of-Status

- **In-status:** You are a lawful F-1 student if you follow the U.S. immigration regulations for students on F-1 visas at all times.
- **Out-of status:** You are NOT a lawful F-1 student; therefore, you are no longer eligible for F-1 benefits, such as class registration, work on campus, Curricular Practical Training or Optional Practical Training. In addition, you would need to apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for reinstatement.



## What should you do if you are out-of-status?

Contact the ISO immediately!

Students who have violated their status may still request a reinstatement to student status by filing an application with the USCIS District Office that has jurisdiction over the place of residence.

## Immigration regulations:

- Limit the time that a student can be out-of-status (**no more than 5 months**)
- Tighten the eligibility criteria; and
- Require the PDSO/DSO to recommend reinstatement

## Alternative to reinstatement:

In cases that have a poor likelihood of success, it may be more advisable to depart the country and re-enter with a new 1-20, rather than making the application for reinstatement; However, re-entry to the U.S. after a status violation is viewed as a new entry in F-1 status. As such, a student would be bound by restrictions placed on new students, such as the “full academic year” waiting period for eligibility for practical training or economic hardship employment authorization.

You are responsible for maintaining your F-1 status, and you will lose your F-1 benefits if you fall out-of-status. *Always* consult the ISO if you have any questions and/or concerns regarding immigration or academic issues. The USCIS/ICE officers will **NOT** accept statements such as, “I didn’t know that,” “No one told me,” or “I thought it was ok for me to do this because my friend did it before.”

**Please do not make assumptions based on your judgment or that of your friends!**

# EMPLOYMENT

An F-1 student may seek employment only after obtaining approval. Students, generally, are not permitted to be employed without special authorization from either the USCIS or your ISO. Because of revisions regarding employment, please check either your ISO for any updates or changes to immigration policies concerning employment.



The primary purpose of an F-1 non-immigrant is to be a student. Work must not interfere with that objective and is therefore limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session.

USCIS regulations divide employment of F-1 students into several categories:

- On-campus employment
- Off-campus employment
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)

## On-campus employment



F-1 students are permitted to accept on-campus employment at the institution he/she is authorized to attend. On-campus employment primarily means work performed on the school premises, which include employment with on-location commercial firms that provide services for students on campus such as the school bookstore or the cafeteria. It may also include work at an off-campus location which is educationally affiliated with the school.

On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session; the student must also maintain a full course of study. During the summer, and other vacation periods, students may work more than 20 hours per week provided he/she is eligible and intends to register as a full-time student for the next academic term.

On-campus employment is not permitted after completing a program of study, unless the student has been authorized for Optional Practical Training or has been issued a Form I-20 to begin a new program and intends to enroll for the next academic term.

**On-campus employment does not have to be related to your course of study.**

# Off-Campus Employment

An F-1 student may request off- campus employment work authorization based on economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond your control.

Circumstances may include:

- Severe, unforeseen economic necessity.
- Excessive increases in tuition and/or living costs.
- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's source of support.
- Medical bills or other substantial and unexpected expenses.



USCIS regulations mandate that you first make a good faith effort to locate employment on campus before applying to work off-campus based on economic hardship.

**To qualify for permission to accept off-campus employment you must:**

- Have been an F-1 student for one full academic year. Students are **not** eligible to work off-campus before the completion of one academic year.
- Be maintaining lawful F-1 status, i.e. full-time student in good academic standing, as determined by the ISO.
- Demonstrate that acceptance of employment will not interfere with a full course of study (twelve semester hours).
- Prove to USCIS that employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control.
- Off campus employment authorization is terminated when you transfer from one school to another, or when the need for employment ceases.

**The ruling of the Texas Service Center on all employment issues is final; no appeal shall lie from the decision to deny a request for employment authorization.**

# Curricular Practical Training



An F-1 student may be eligible to engage in temporary employment for practical training in their major field of study, both before and after completion of studies. Practical training *before* completion of studies is called Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Optional Practical Training (OPT) is available upon completion or graduation from the program of study. To be eligible for CPT or OPT, you must have been in lawful status for one full academic year.

An F-1 student may be authorized by the International Student Office (ISO) to participate in a Curricular Practical Training program if the employment is an integral part of an established curriculum.

Curricular Practical Training is defined as alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

To apply for Curricular Practical Training you must complete the following procedures:

- Enroll in the assigned course that qualifies for CPT;
- Get the letter of recommendation by the department advisor and/or instructor to do CPT ;
- Have a job offer from a company to do CPT;
- Get the CPT recommendation from the ISO;
- Receive a new SEVIS I-20 from the ISO **before** work begins;

**Use of full-time CPT for one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training.** Use of part-time CPT **does not** affect eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

The ISO will authorize curricular training upon verification that the student is enrolled full-time, is in good academic standing, and has been an F-1 student for at least one full academic year.

# Optional Practical Training



An F-1 student may apply to the Texas Service Center from OPT which is defined as temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. OPT is available upon completion or graduation from program of study.

You must be lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a DHS approved school for one full year before being eligible for OPT.

To be authorized to engage in practical training you must complete the application for OPT provided by the ISO.

The ISO must certify that the proposed employment is directly to the students field of study and commensurate with the students' educational level.

Application requirements must be completed within a period which begins 90 days **before** completion of studies.

All students interested in OPT must apply for and receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS before employment may begin. To be eligible for practical training students must be in lawful status for at least one full academic year.

Once you have been approved for OPT the EAD card will be mailed directly to your home address. After you receive your EAD may apply for a Social Security Number by completing a **Form SS-5**, application for a Social Security Card.

Optional Practical Training is limited to twelve months. A student seeking permission for OPT **may not** accept the employment until he/she has been issued an EAD by USCIS that indicates the practical training authorization and the authorized period employment.

# Consequences of Illegal Employment



As an international student you are subject to the complex federal regulations that govern your ability to maintain your status and to remain legally in the United States. The U.S. government places upon your shoulders the responsibility of knowing these regulations and complying with them. The consequences of violating your status can carry severe penalties for you and your dependants.

Most international students have a good understanding of the federal immigration regulations with which they must comply. But at one time or another, a student might wonder to him or herself “Would anyone find out if I worked off campus without authorization, or took a job under authorized practical training that was not related to my field of study?”

The short answer is YES, so don’t do it! –Here’s why:

Any employment that is in violation of your F-1 status is a deportable offense if it comes to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security.

Any employer who hires you for a position that does not comply with the limitations your employment authorization category may be subject to civil penalties and in some cases, criminal penalties. Employers are required to report your earnings to the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

If at some point in the future, you decide to apply for U.S. permanent residency (either through an employment petition, a petition filed by an immediate relative, or through the diversity visa lottery), you are required to submit copies of your past U.S. federal income tax returns as part of the application. If previous employment is indicated on your tax returns, the immigration officer can request that you present proof of work authorization for those jobs.

Regardless of whether you are applying for permanent residency or some other non-immigrant status such as (H-1B), you are required on your immigration paperwork (such as an endorsement for Optional Practical Training on an I-20, or some other evidence of authorization) the immigration officer adjudicating the new application may request specific information regarding the previous employment and its applicability for work authorization you held.

As students, you have worked very hard to achieve a U.S. college degree. Don’t risk all the time and money you have invested in that goal!

Ellen Badger, Director of International Students and scholar Services  
Bingham University

# Visits Abroad and Re-Entry in F-1 Status



Whenever F-1 students wish to leave the United States temporarily and return to continue studies at the institution in which they are enrolled, they must secure the necessary documents to:

- Permit entry to another country.
- Permit re-entry to the United States.

## Entry into another Country

Like the United States, other countries have rules and restrictions about who can enter their country, and how F-1 students who wish to visit their country of citizenship or permanent residence generally will be allowed to enter that country if they hold a valid passport or other travel documents issued by that country. For travel into any country other than their home country, students are encouraged to check with the Embassy of the country they would like to visit to inquire about specific entry procedures.

## Entry to Canada and Mexico

Since Mexico and Canada share land borders with the United States, many students may not think of inquiring about entry requirements far in advance. Mexico and Canada have distinct entry requirements, which should be investigated by F-1 students and their families just like any other country. The lack of a valid Form I-20 will not prevent the student's departure from the United States; it may, however, prevent the student from entering Canada or Mexico.

## Re-Entry to the United States

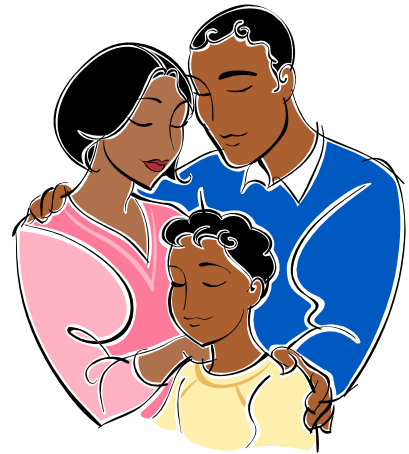
A student must be re-entering the United States to resume his or her program of study, to reenter the U.S. after a temporary absence, you must have (1) a valid passport or travel document (2) a valid F-1 visa (unless you are exempt from passport/visa requirements) and (3) a properly endorsed Form I-20.

If a student has completed his or her program of study, there is no basis for re-entry to the United States as an F-1 student *unless* he or she has either been admitted to a new program of study and has been issued the corresponding Form I-20 and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) at the Port of Entry (POE) to qualify for readmission to the United States. If an EAD has not been issued and the student has exceeded the "expected date of completion" (Form I-20, item 5), the student has no basis for being readmitted in F-1 status.

# F-2 Status

## Spouses and dependents in the F-2 status

Dependents in F-2 status are permitted to stay in the United States only to the extent that the F-1 student is authorized to stay. F-2 dependents maintain their status through the principal F-1 maintaining his or her status. Like F-1 students, F-2 dependents are required to keep their passports valid at least 6 months into the future.



F-2 dependents must terminate that status and depart from the United States upon the termination of the principle F-1 student.

## Employment by F-2 dependents

Individuals in F-2 status may **not** accept employment or engage in business under any circumstances!

## Study by F-2 dependents

F-2s may take courses under certain and very limited circumstances. F-2 children may only engage in full-time study if the study is an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through twelfth grade). The F-2 spouse or child may engage in study that is vocational or recreational in nature. USCIS provides the following guidance: “If a student engages in study to pursue a hobby or if the study is that of an occasional, casual, or recreational nature, such study may be considered as a vocational or recreational” If an F-2 wishes to engage in full-time study, or to pursue an educational objective (qualify for admission to a college or university) then the F-2 should apply for a change of status to F-1.

**Always check with the ISO first if you have questions or concerns regarding academic and immigration issues before it is too late!**

# After Completing Program of Study



After completing a program of study, an F-1 student has four immigration options:

Options		Procedure(s)
1.	Depart from the U.S. within 60 days*from completing program of study.	Depart from the U.S. no later than 60 days after completing program of study.
2.	Continue in F-1 status by pursuing further F-1 studies either at the same institution or another college/university.	Follow procedures for moving educational levels from one degree program to another at the same school <b>or</b> transfer from one service-approved school to another.
3.	Apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) <b>before</b> completing program of study	<b>Before</b> the program completion date, you must apply for OPT. See ISO for application.
4.	Apply to change status to another non-immigrant classification no later than 60 days after completing the program of study	<b>Must</b> qualify for change of status to a particular non-immigrant category, and follow change of status procedures specific to that category.

\* The 60-day grace period begins when you complete the full case study, so it is important to identify the exact day on which the full course of study is considered to have been completed.

Students who complete their program of study mid-year, but whose participation in graduation ceremonies are delayed until the spring, must understand that their completion of program date is the date of actual completion of all requirements for graduation.

If you do not choose one of these options after completing a course of study you will be considered **out-of-status**.

**Failure to depart within 60 days is considered a violation of status, which could result in deportation!**

# Department of Homeland Security



The United States is a country of laws. This simple statement can serve as an introduction to the complicated system of statutes, regulations, and interpretations that govern U.S. immigration and naturalization.

U.S. immigration functions are divided between three Bureaus of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

1. **USCIS:** *United States Citizenship and Immigration Service* (USCIS) is responsible for most application and petition adjudications (OPT, change-of-status, etc.).
2. **ICE:** *Immigration and Customs Enforcement* (ICE) is responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence, and SEVIS.
3. **CBP:** *Customs and Border Protection* (CBP) is responsible for immigration inspections at U.S. ports of entry, for the Border Patrol, and for the Customs Service.

## Immigration Web-Sites

- Immigration Forms, Fees and Fingerprints  
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/index.htm>
- U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE)  
<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/index.htm>

# Student Identification Card (SAC ID)

This card is required to use library, computer lab, physical education facilities, special events, etc. Cards may be obtained in the Fletcher Administrative Center (FAC) room 200.

You will need:

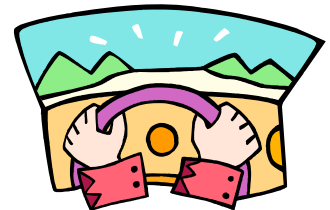
1. Any picture ID (passport, visa)
2. Proof of current registration (tuition bill).

# Parking Permit

To get a parking permit you may go to Fletcher Administration Center (FAC) room 201.

Information you will need at hand:

1. Make of vehicle
2. Year
3. Model
4. Body style
5. Plate number
6. State



# Texas ID/ Driver's License

You are advised to get a Texas ID or Driver's License as soon as possible so that you will not need to carry your passport for identification. These are issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) at:

## San Antonio Babcock

1258 Babcock Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 78201  
Phone # 210-737-1911

## San Antonio New Braunfels

6502 South New Braunfels Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78223  
Phone # 210-531-2241

## San Antonio Perrin-Beitel

9834 Perrin-Beitel  
San Antonio, TX 78217  
Phone # 210-655-8102

## San Antonio General McMullen

1803 south General McMullen  
San Antonio, TX 78226  
Phone # 210-436-6611

Documents needed:

1. Passport
2. F-1 Visa
3. I-20



## Student Bus Card (Via Pass)

Student half-price bus card may be obtained free of charge from the Office of Student Life in the Loftin Student Center (LFC).

Student Semester Pass (fare payment in advance, valid for one full semester) is available from the Bursar's Office in the Fletcher Administration Center (FAC) room 201 and in the Via Metro Center at 1021 San Pedro Ave. San Antonio, TX.

Documents needed:

1. SAC ID
2. Proof of current registration (tuition bill).

## Social Security Card

A social security number is only assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. The Social Security Administration will not issue you a number just to enroll in the school, rent an apartment, buy a car, etc. If you are requested to give a social security number for any service, please come by the office we will give you a letter explaining why you do not have a social security number.

If you want to get a job on campus, you may contact the International Students Office (ISO) and request authorization to work.



# Cultural Adjustment

When an individual leaves his or her own culture and goes into another, s/he naturally carries his/her own background of experience, sometimes called “cultural baggage.” People’s reactions to the new culture, and how well they adjust to living in it, are often a reflection of their own background and expectations.

Most international students go through a common and very normal set of four adjustment phases during their stay in the United States. It may help to describe these phases, but keep in mind that everyone is different and may experience some of the symptoms of “culture shock” in varying degrees and at different times.

“Culture shock” is not all “shocking,” it is a perfectly normal part of learning to live in a new cultural environment. Nearly everyone goes through it; different people experience some of the phases more intensely than others.

## The four phases of adjustment:

Generally many students feel euphoric (after jetlag has passed!) for some time after their arrival. This is the “honeymoon phase” when you are excited and fascinated by your new experience and the new environment.

When you reach stage #2 you are actually experiencing “culture shock.” The “honeymoon phase” is over and the realities of academic, social and everyday life might seem overwhelming. You might feel alienated, confused and depressed by the cultural differences between your home and the United States. In order to “survive” or negotiate this phase many students associate mainly with fellow international students. Often you may feel hostile and angry because you might think you are unable to solve the cultural dilemmas.

The third stage is marked by “recovery”. You find you can “read” cultural clues better, just as your English might have improved and you are “reading” your academic assignments better. Your attitude towards fellow American students and life in general improves; you might even find yourself laughing about stage two and the perceived “cultural dilemmas.”

This is the “autonomy” phase. Your anxiety is largely in the past and you find yourself in a stage of equilibrium. You feel comfortable enough to assess your host country objectively and you feel free to express both negative and positive opinions. You move more freely and confidently through the “cultural maze.” It is during this stage that many students acknowledge that surviving “culture shock” proved to be both a source of insight and growth. It also may lead to a renewed acceptance and appreciation of the own culture.

# Suggestions and Strategies to help you cope with Culture Shock



## **Listen and observe**

Since there are new rules, norms, and cues that may be unfamiliar, you need to listen and observe non-verbal communication carefully, trying to put it into proper context.

## **Learn the language by using it**

Language is key to involvement in your new culture. Even if you can't speak perfectly, your attempts to communicate in English will be appreciated. Remember, understanding others and making yourself understood in a new language requires more rephrasing, repeating, and rechecking than usual.

## **Ask questions and be honest**

You cannot assume that you always know what is going on, or that you always understand a particular communication. Most Americans will be very helpful if you need an explanation of something. You may need to re-phrase a question, check the meaning of something, or repeat what you have said in order to be clearly understood.

## **Try not to misjudge**

You will see many things that are different from your own culture. Don't label anything as "good" or "bad" in comparison to your own culture; most customs, habits, and ideas are simply different from the ones you're familiar with. You may also misunderstand some things; don't make judgments until you have complete information.

## **Try to empathize**

Try to put yourself in the other person's place, and look at the situation from his or her perspective. Culture influences how different people interpret the same situation.

## **Be open and curious**

Try new things, and discover how and why certain things are done. The more you explore, the more you'll learn.

## **Try to accept frustration**

Learning to function in a new culture is not easy, and it is natural to feel anxious and frustrated at times. Realize that these feelings are a normal part of the experience.

## Get involved

The more you put into the experience, the more you'll learn from it. Make an effort to meet people, form friendships, get involved in activities, and learn about the people and their culture.

## Conversation

Casual conversation between Americans can sometimes be confusing. "How are you?" does not necessarily mean the person wants to know how you are feeling. Rather, the person may simply be saying, "Good morning," or "Hello." In response, you may simply smile, nod and say "Fine," thank you. "How are you?" "See you later," "Drop by sometimes," or "Let's get together sometimes" are often meant as a friendly good-bye, rather than an actual invitation. When in doubt, do not be too shy to clarify whether it's an invitation or not.

## Social space

Some cultures tend to have a much closer conversational and "personal space" distance than does the US culture. Americans generally will keep their distance; they avoid contact with others.

## Informality among Americans

The emphasis on individual identity, responsibility, and tolerance produces a considerable degree of informality in dress, relationships between people, and methods of communication. A great deal of flexibility to express oneself is permitted as long as it does not infringe of the rights and comforts of others.

## Use of Names

First names are more readily used in the United States than in other countries. It is all right to use the first name of someone of approximately your age and status or someone younger.

A woman or man older yourself, including professor is often addressed as Dr., Ms, Mrs., or Mr. with the last name, until the individual request that you use his or her first name. Ms. ("miz") is used for both single and marriage women.

Americans are informal and some of your professor and staff and administrators may invite you to address them by their first name, if you feel awkward doing that, please don't feel uncomfortable in stating that fact; no one will be insulted!

## Invitations

Invitations are usually informal and most often verbal, **but specify time and place.** It is important that you keep the appointment and be punctual. If you receive a written invitation that says "RDVP" you should respond by letter or phone, telling you host whether your host or not you plan to attend.

## **Handshaking & Hugging**

Men usually shake hands at the time of their first meeting. Men and women also often shake hands; women often don't shake hands each other. Good friends often hug each other at meeting and parting times; this is mostly a feminine custom.

## **Concept of Time**

North Americans are usually time-conscious, and being on time is very important. When an appointment is made, you are expected to arrive within 5 minutes of the appointment time. Life in the U.S. may seem hectic because of this.

## **Being Asked Questions**

Americans generally are not well versed in geography, so some of the questions you will be asked may appear ridiculous, informed, and elementary, but try to be patient in answering them.

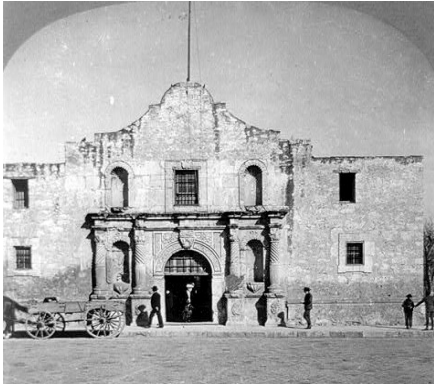
## **Friendship**

Friendship between U.S. and international students may be confusing since definitions and expectations of friendships differ from one culture to another. In the U.S. friendships may seem to develop more quickly and seem more casual than in many other cultures. International students are sometimes struck by how warm and friendly people seem from the start. Yet, soon they observe that while Americans seem warm at a first meeting, they later may seem remote. It is important to remember that these are generalizations and that there are many exceptions to them.

**(Adapted from American Ways, by Gary Althen, Intercultural, 1988)**

# San Antonio Attractions

The **Greater San Antonio** area is full of attractions for all ages. Apart from being the “Remember the Alamo” rallying point of the Texan revolution against Mexico, much of San Antonio’s identity comes from Spanish origins. Yet San Antonio’s action-packed history has evolved under six flags: French, Spanish, Mexican, Republic of Texas, Confederate, and the Stars and Stripes. Accordingly, San Antonio captures the spirit of Texas with flavors of Native Americans, Spaniards, Germans, Old Mexico, the Wild West, and the Deep South. Founding came in 1718, when Father Antonio Olivares established Mission San Antonio de Valero, etched in history as the site where, in 1836, a paltry 189 defenders held the old mission against nearly 5,000 Mexican troops



for 13 days. The Alamo remains as a shrine and museum and a downtown tour uncovers centuries of history along with the largest Mexican marketplace outside Mexico. Sequestered 20 feet below street, the Paseo del Rio River Walk --- runs some 2.5 miles from the Municipal Auditorium on the north to the King William Historic District on the south, quiet and park-like in some stretches, abuzz elsewhere with sidewalk cafes, boutiques, clubs and hotels. The first public golf course in Texas was built in San Antonio in 1916, and golfers have flocked here ever since. Texas Hill Country Rivers, forming an arc around the northern edge of town, provide for canoeing, tubing and white-water rafting. Area lakes attract anglers and sailing enthusiasts. Working ranches provide hunting leases for wild game, dude ranches offer horseback riding, and hill Country state parks have hiking trails. San Antonio dining options vary from fine French cuisine to Chinese, Cajun and Soul, but the big magnet is a passion for Tex-Mex, helping San Antonio attract nearly eight millions visitors a year with a hearty “howdy and ya’all come back” style welcome.

Below is a list of some suggested things to do in San Antonio Metropolitan Area, with links to more details when available.

## **The Alamo**

Here lies the most famous spot in Texas, if not the entire Wild West, where the 189 defenders including Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie finally fell on March 6, 1836, after repeated attacks by Mexican General Santa Anna’s army. The oft-photographed chapel and the Long Barracks are all that remain of the original fort. The relic-filled museum offers narration on all that led up to the slogan “Remember the Alamo.”  
300 Alamo Plaza. (210) 225-1391

## **Buckhorn Saloon & Museum**

Jammed with cowboy memorabilia and such oddments as a two-headed calf and an eight-legged lamb, the Buckhorn Saloon history is ever more of a grabber, dating to 1881 when Albert Friedrich opened on Dolorosa Street. Some of the region’s biggest cattle deals unfolded at the Buckhorn, and by 1890 some 10 million Texas longhorns had been driven up to Kansas. Teddy

Roosevelt (bunking nearby at historic Menger Hotel) recruited Rough Riders at the Buckhorn, where it's also believed Pancho Villa hashed over plans for the Mexican Revolution of 1910 while downing a few. In 1922, when Prohibition was dusting over most saloons, Friedrich moved the Buckhorn to the corner of Houston and South Flores streets and proceeded to offset losses in liquor revenue by peddling lunch along with armadillo baskets and rattlesnake ties. A friend of Mrs. Friedrich, W.S. Porter (writing under the O. Henry pen name), modeled some of his characters after Buckhorn regulars. Still embellishing the Buckhorn are the bar with the original brass foot rail, a 1909 gas chandelier and the 1913 cash register maxing out at \$6.99, from when beer sold for a nickel.  
318 East Houston. (210) 247-4000

### **Casa Navarro State Historical Park**

The home of Jose Antonio Navarro (1795-1871), a Texas legislator under Mexico, the republic of Texas, and the U.S., illustrates the state's rich tapestry of Mexican history. The park includes Navarro's furnished house, first residence, and store.  
228 South Laredo Street. (210) 226-4801

### **Guenther House**

Carl Hilmar Guenther, founder of Pioneer Flour Mills, built this elegant home in 1860. The restored house includes a museum displaying mill memorabilia along with Dresden china anniversary plates made in Germany until WWII.  
205 East Guenther. (210) 227-1061

### **Guinness Book of World Records and Ripley's Haunted Adventure**

Opening in late June, 2003 across from the Alamo, the Guinness museum provides interactive exploration of world records for categories such as travel, including the longest taxi ride (London to Cape Town and back, June 3 to Oct. 17, 1994). Ripley's Haunted Adventure allows visitors to live out bone-chilling fears at the abandoned warehouse of San Antonio's Grimsby & Streaper Casket Co., known for its raised-coffin engineering wizardry. Due to a periodic need for cash, the son of the now deceased night watchman offers tours. Combination tickets are available.  
329 Alamo Plaza. (210) 226-2828

### **Japanese Tea Garden**

Winding pebble walkways and stone bridges highlight this lush garden brimming with photo opportunities contained within Brackenridge Park, covering nearly 350 acres and also housing the Pioneer Memorial Hall, a zoo and an aquarium.  
3800 North St. Mary's Street. (210) 821-3120

### **King William Historic Area**

In the late 1800s, this 25-block area near downtown and originally settled by prominent German merchants, was the most elegant residential area in the city. As the state's first zoned historic district, it includes many attractions and is once again a fashionable residential neighborhood.  
South Bank of San Antonio River.

### **La Villita**

La Villita, one of the original civil settlement areas with old adobe buildings and vine-covered stone walls, and fountains, is an arts and crafts community with shops, working artists, restaurants and a post office. The Old San Antonio Exhibit (in Bolivar Hall) has artifacts and symbols relevant to city history.  
418 Villita. (210) 207-8610

### **Majestic Theater**

One of the few remaining vintage, atmospheric vaudeville movie palaces, the Majestic Theater is home to the San Antonio Symphony.  
224 East Houston. (210) 226-5700

**Market Square - El Mercado**

Patterned after an authentic Mexican market, El Mercado pulses with activity at nearly three dozen shops. In addition, there are 80 specialty shops in Farmers Market Plaza. Market Square hosts frequent Hispanic festivals dispensing food and beverage near Guadalajara lamps with mariachi bands providing music for dancing.

514 West Commerce. (210) 207-8600

**Mission Trails**

The San Antonio Missions National Historic Park, beginning at the Alamo, winds southward along a nine-mile stretch of the San Antonio River and includes Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Mission San Francisco, Mission San Juan, Los Compadres, Mission Espada, Mission Labores, Esada Aqueduct and History of the Missions. Admission-free, donations are accepted.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, 2202 Roosevelt Avenue. (210) 534-1540

**Plaza Wax Museum & Ripley's Believe It Or Not**

Just across the street from Alamo Plaza and the River Walk, the Plaza Wax Museum has themed sections reflecting Hollywood, Freedom's Journey, Horror, History, and Religion, including the Last Supper. Ripley's Believe It Or Not deals in one-of-a-kind curiosities and illusions with more than 500 exhibits and odditorium presentations including Chinese governor born with double pupils in each eye, and more.

301 Alamo Plaza. (210) 224-9299

**River Walk**

The Paseo del Rio, centerpiece of downtown, has lush landscaping lining river banks and cobblestone walkways leading to restaurants and shops. The historic river surfaces on grounds of the University of the Incarnate Word, threading its way downtown. Along the horseshoe-shaped bend, the river is shaded by towering cypresses, oaks, and willows and bordered by gardens of flowering ornamental plants. River boats, including Yanaguana Cruises (315 E. Commerce Street, (210) 244-5700), travel River Walk with narrated cruises, dinner cruises, and transportation back to hotels.

454 Soledad River.

**San Antonio Botanical Garden, Lucile Halsell Conservatory**

Modernistic glass pyramids and a log cabin are part of this 33-acre living museum with a forest walk, and exotic plant specimens. Highlights include the Old Fashioned Perennial Garden and native collections representing Hill Country, East Texas and Southwest Texas. The futuristic Lucile Halsell Conservatory includes the Palm House, Fern Grotto, with the Aquatic Garden Pool.

555 Funston Place. (210) 207-3255

**San Antonio Museum of Art**

SAMA's castle-like building, housing collections ranging from ancient to modern art, is the original home of the Lone Star Brewing Company. The museum is noted for its Mexican folk art, pre-Columbian art, Spanish colonial art and the 30,000 square foot Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Latin American Arts.

200 West Jones Avenue. (210) 978-8158

**San Antonio Zoological Gardens and Aquarium**

With a naked mole rat among 3,500 animals of 751 species spread out over 35 landscaped acres, the zoo has a Gibbon Forest exhibit and one of the world's largest bird collections, including the endangered whooping crane.

3903 North St. Mary's Street. (210) 734-7183

**SeaWorld San Antonio**

The world's largest marine life adventure park presents a splashy line-up of more than 25 shows, thrilling rides, animal attractions and educational experiences. As a four-in-one park – a show park, a rides and slides park, a water park, and an animal park, SeaWorld San Antonio has 250 acres of fun.

10500 SeaWorld Drive. (210) 523-3000.

**Six Flags Fiesta**

The Superman Krypton Roller Coaster, one of America's newest, rounds out other coaster thrillers including the twisted-track Poltergeist coaster, the forward-backward-looping Boomerang coaster, the Rattler wooden coaster, and Scream, involving a 20-story free fall. Within the flume line-up are the Texas Tumble, the Blow Out, the Triple Dipper and the Mine Shaft.

17000 I-10 West. (210) 697-5000

**Spanish Governor's Palace**

Labeled the "most beautiful building in San Antonio" by the National Geographic Society, this national historic landmark once housed the officials of the Spanish Province of Texas. Over the entrance is the original keystone containing the carved double-headed eagle of the Hapsburg coat-of-arms and the inscription, in Spanish, "finished in 1749."

105 Plaza De Armas. (210) 224-0601.

**Steves Homestead Museum**

This three-story Victorian French Second Empire design was built for Edward Steves, founder of Steves Lumber Company, in 1876 and furnished in a late 19th century style. The single-story brick River House served as San Antonio's first inside swimming pool. The two-story frame Carriage House, built in 1875, was used for storage, and servants quarters were built around 1877. The Steves Homestead has been maintained since 1954 as a historic house museum.

509 King William. (210) 227-9160

**Streetcars**

Getting around downtown can be a snap with VIA Streetcar, an open-air authentic reproduction of rail streetcars traveling San Antonio byways more than a half century ago. Five routes lead to downtown locations including The Alamo, La Villita, Market Square, Sunset Station, the King William Historic District and more. Horse-drawn carriages and bicycle rickshaws are alternative options for travel downtown.

(210) 362-2020

**Sunset Station**

Set in the historic backdrop of a turn-of-the-century train station, food, entertainment and shopping are abundantly available here.

1174 East Commerce. (210) 222-9481

**Texas Adventure – Alamo Special Effects Theater**

This special effects theater, employing the "Encountarium F/X Theatre" format, portrays Texas Independence with the Alamo drama as its centerpiece. The Cactus Cantina and a retail store round out the adventure experience.

307 Alamo Plaza. (210) 227-8224

**Texas Air Museum- Stinson Chapter**

The Texas Air Museum was founded in 1985 in Rio Hondo, Texas, and subsequent branches opened in Slayton in 1990 and Stinson Field in 1999. Promoting education through preservation and restoration of aircraft and artifacts, the Stinson chapter presents the history of flight, emphasizing San Antonio aviation. Aircraft include the extremely rare German WWII Focke-Wulf FW-190.

8406 Cadmus. (210) 977-9885

**Tower of the Americas**

Glass-walled elevators ascending more than 500 feet to the restaurant and observation level provide a panoramic view of San Antonio environs. The Tower stands as an 80-ton reminder of its role as the theme structure for the 1968 HemisFair, Texas' World's Fair, and is still one of Western Hemisphere's tallest freestanding structures. Rising 750 feet to the antenna tip, the Tower is 87 feet higher than Seattle's Space Needle, 67 feet higher than the Washington Monument and 52 feet higher than the San Jacinto Monument.  
600 HemisFair Park. (210) 207-8615

**Vietnam War Memorial**

Created by combat artist Austin Deuel, "Hill 811 S" depicts a marine holding a wounded comrade while looking skyward for an evacuation helicopter.  
Hill 811 South, Veterans Memorial Plaza.

**Witte Museum**

With an extensive collection, acclaimed traveling exhibits, the H-E-B Science Treehouse and beautiful grounds where historic home and log cabins reside, the San Antonio's premier museum brings history, science and culture to life.  
3801 Broadway. (210) 357-1866

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The International Students Office is located in the basement of the Moody Learning Center, room 142.

We can be reached at:

210-733-2306  
1-800-554-5796  
E-mail: [sac-iso@mail.accd.edu](mailto:sac-iso@mail.accd.edu)

The International Students Office hours are:

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm  
Friday 8:30 am to 2:00 pm

The Staff:

Suzanna Borawski, M.ED., Counselor/Coordinator

Christi Wise, M.A., Part-time Counselor

Rosa G. Robles, Assistant to the Coordinator

