ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) SERVICES
Vision and Mission Statement

VISION
To change the world through exemplary English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher training

MISSION
To offer the highest quality ESL instruction that supports current and potential university students, visiting scholars, and international student and scholar dependents at the University of Texas (UT); to provide EFL teacher training programs to the UT community and beyond; and to extend the reach and impact of the University of Texas at Austin to the world through our programs.

WE STRIVE TO FULFILL OUR MISSION BY...
• Offering a variety of program options to meet individual needs
• Hiring exceptionally qualified ESL educators and providing them the technology, funding, and professional development opportunities necessary to offer our programs
• Providing pre-arrival, new-student, and current-student orientation materials, immigration advising, and workshops to help students navigate our program, prepare for university culture, and adjust to life in the U.S.
• Organizing a variety of social activities to help participants improve their language skills, create an ESL community, and learn about US culture

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD
Welcome!

Welcome to ESL (English as a Second Language) Services at The University of Texas at Austin. Our mission is to offer the highest quality ESL Instruction that supports current and potential university students, visiting scholars, and international student and scholar dependents at the University of Texas; to provide EFL Teacher training programs to the community and beyond; and to extend the reach and impact of the University of Texas at Austin to the world through our programs. Located on one of the largest university campuses in the nation, we provide access to a vast array of facilities and resources available at UT, while offering small, highly interactive, and culturally diverse classes taught by caring professionals.

This handbook contains useful information to help you get acquainted with the University and the city of Austin. If there is something that you do not understand, or if you have additional questions, please ask for assistance at the Student Orientation session held at the beginning of each semester. For additional assistance, you may also visit the ESL Services main office at 2400 Nueces Street, Second Floor Austin, Texas 78705, or ESL Classrooms at 811 W. 24th St. between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Please bring this Handbook with you to Orientation!

Contact Information

Telephone: (512) 471-2480
Fax: (512) 475-6810
Email: esl@austin.utexas.edu
Web: http://world.utexas.edu/esl

Mailing Address:
ESL Services
International Office
PO Box A, University Station
Austin, Texas 78713-8901
USA

Campus Address:
(Send express mail documents to this address)
ESL Services
International Office
2400 Nueces Street, Second Floor
Austin, Texas 78705
USA
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ESL Services and International Office Staff

ESL Services is part of the International Office at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). Located at 2400 Nueces Street, Second Floor, the International Office (IO) provides a number of useful services for international students. We encourage you to get to know our staff and make the International Office your home away from home!

ESL Services Administration

Telephone: 512-471-2480

Department email (general questions & requests):

esl@austin.utexas.edu

Director
Michael T. Smith

mikesmith@austin.utexas.edu

Assistant Director
Teresa Baker

tm-baker@austin.utexas.edu

AEP Coordinator
Ellen Butki

ekbutki@austin.utexas.edu

ELP Coordinator
Fotini Terzi

fterzi@austin.utexas.edu

Sponsored Student & Special Programs Coordinator
Rachelle Bumgardner

rachelleb@austin.utexas.edu

Accounting & Business Services

Telephone: 512-471-0017

Accountant II
Nisma Bahaji Azami

nisma@austin.utexas.edu

Insurance Advising

Telephone: 512-471-8025

Support Services Advisor
Anna Beal

insuranceadvisor@austin.utexas.edu
ESL Services and International Office Facilities

During ESL registration, you will have an opportunity to tour our building and the UT Austin campus. We strongly recommend you take the tours to get familiar with our facilities.

**Building Hours:** The International Office (IO) is open from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. These are the regular business hours for most university offices.

**Located at 2400 Nueces Street, Second Floor:**

**ESL Main Office:** If you have a question or a problem, this is usually a good place to start. Ask the front desk staff for assistance.

**Immigration and Insurance Services:** To see an immigration advisor or an insurance advisor, check in at the front desk on the first floor. For advising hours or to schedule an appointment online see: [http://world.utexas.edu/isss/advising](http://world.utexas.edu/isss/advising)

**Located at 811 West 24th Street:**

**ESL Faculty Offices:** On the first day of classes, you will receive an information sheet from each teacher listing his or her office number and office hours. To meet with a teacher, check in at the front desk at the faculty office.

**ESL Classrooms:** We have a several classrooms in this building. Your classes may be here or in other buildings around campus.

**Computer Labs:** There are two computer labs that are used for classes and placement testing.

**Located at 713 West 23rd Street:**

**Student Programming Area (SPA):** This room is often used for classes, presentations such as admission workshops, and student colloquia. Check your calendar and email for announcements of events.
ESL Services Program Policies

Placement
1. New students are placed in ESL classes based on our placement test, which consists of an oral interview, a writing sample, and a multiple-choice exam on listening, grammar, and reading.
2. Continuing students are placed in classes based on completion of student learning outcomes the previous semester.
3. If students feel mis-placed, they should talk to the teacher(s) as soon as possible and fill out a class change request form the Friday of the first week of classes. The AEP and ELP coordinators will review all class change requests, discuss anonymous requests with teachers, and decide if the student’s placement should be adjusted. Students MUST attend class to be considered for a class change. The program coordinator will notify the student whether the change request has been accepted.

Attendance
1. Attendance in all classes is required of all students. All absences are counted; none are excused.
2. Students who miss the first week of classes will be dropped from their classes. For students on F-1 visas or ESL-issued J-1 visas, this may result in the loss of legal immigration status.
3. Three (3) times late counts as one (1) absence.
4. 90% attendance overall is required to receive a program certificate.
5. 75% attendance is required to take the Institutional TOEFL Exam.
6. 75% attendance overall is required to maintain F-1 or ESL-issued J-1 immigration status.
7. At midterm, students with less than 50% overall attendance may be dismissed from the program. For students on F-1 visas or ESL-issued J-1 visas, this may result in the loss of legal immigration status.
8. At the end of the semester, students with less than 75% attendance overall may not be allowed to continue in the program the next semester. In rare cases, the Director of ESL Services may grant readmission; however, an application for reinstatement of immigration status will be required for F-1/J-1 students, and the students may be placed on academic probation.

Student Conduct
1. Students are expected to (a) attend all classes on time, (b) show respect to teachers and classmates in words and actions, (c) participate in all classroom activities in a friendly manner, and (d) do all homework assignments.
   Violation of these standards of conduct may result in being dismissed from the program and/or not being allowed to continue in a subsequent semester.
2. Students are expected to speak only English in the classroom, and are strongly encouraged to speak only English with their classmates at all times.
3. Students must buy textbooks during the first week of class, and bring them to class daily. Textbooks must be in new or like-new condition. Students who do not have their textbooks by the second week of class will not be allowed to attend classes.
**Grading**

Students receive grades of A, B, C, D, or F. Grades are based on completion of student learning outcomes, as measured by homework, quizzes, tests, and other assignments. At the end of the semester, we will review final grades for all students who plan to continue their studies with us; any students with final grades of D or F will be required to conference with an administrator, and may be dismissed or placed on academic probation the next semester, without advancement to the next level.

**Explanation of Grades**

*Move to the next level*
- **A**: Excellent control of Student Learning Outcomes.
- **B**: Good control of Student Learning Outcomes.
- **C**: Satisfactory control of Student Learning Outcomes.

*Repeat the same level*
- **D**: Insufficient control of Student Learning Outcomes.
- **F**: Failure to demonstrate control of Student Learning Outcomes.

**Advancement**

*English Language Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades in Courses at End of Semester</th>
<th>Level Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade of D or F in a course</td>
<td>Repeat the same level for that skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- (70%) or better in a course</td>
<td>Move up one level in that skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least A- in 3 or 4 courses and no grade lower than a C-.</td>
<td><em>Option to test to move up more than one ELP level in the courses where As were earned.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Academic English Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades in Courses at End of Semester</th>
<th>Level Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 courses with grades of D or F</td>
<td>Repeat the same level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- or better in at least 3 courses and no grade below D. (60%)</td>
<td>Move up one AEP level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least A- in all 4 courses.</td>
<td>*Option to test to move up more than one AEP level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students who receive 4 As or A-s will receive an email from the ESL Office between semesters to let them know that they have the opportunity to test during registration week. If their test scores place them up two levels, they may skip a level.*

**Part-Time Students Changing Skills**
Part-time students who change skills from one semester to the next, e.g., changing from a listening/speaking class to writing class, will be placed in their new skill area based on their placement test from the previous semester.

Students Returning to Program After a Break in Study

If a student returns after being away for one or more semesters, he/she will retake the placement test.

Health Insurance

Health insurance through The University of Texas at Austin is required for all students on F-1/F-2 or J-1/J-2 visas, unless they submit a completed waiver form proving they have an equivalent private policy.

Payment and Refund Policy

Payment in full is due at registration. Here is the refund policy for the University:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official withdrawal date (Fall &amp; Spring)</th>
<th>Percentage refunded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the first day of class</td>
<td>100% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the first week of classes</td>
<td>80% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the second week of classes</td>
<td>70% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the third week of classes</td>
<td>50% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the fourth week of classes</td>
<td>25% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the fourth week of classes</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official withdrawal date (Summer)</th>
<th>Percentage refunded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the first class day</td>
<td>100% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the first, second, or third class day</td>
<td>80% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the fourth, fifth, or sixth class day</td>
<td>50% less non-refundable deposit/SEVIS fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the sixth class day</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There are no refunds for elective courses after the first week of class, and no refunds of the Institutional TOEFL fee. The last day to request a refund of student health insurance is the 12th class day of Fall or Spring semesters (4th class day for Summer). Class days are defined as days when classes are in session at the University, regardless of whether your particular class meets on those days.

Privacy policy

We keep your information confidential, but we use your name, email address, country, and major in order to make class lists and rosters.

Complaints

We hope that you will enjoy your studies with us. If you have a complaint, please visit our office to
speak with a member of our administrative team and fill out a student complaint form. The Assistant Director and Director will review all complaints, will meet with you about your concerns, and will take corrective action if appropriate.
## ESL Classes: Level Descriptions

Each of the 7 levels of the English Language Program (ELP) and 4 levels of the Academic English Program (AEP) correspond to a proficiency level. Following are the levels, a short description of proficiencies, and their relation to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). For more detailed CEFR descriptions, go to [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Key_reference/Overview_CEFRscales_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Key_reference/Overview_CEFRscales_EN.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP</th>
<th>AEP</th>
<th>AEP_ELP Descriptors</th>
<th>CEFR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Beginning:</strong> A student at this level can communicate on topics such as personal interests, daily routine, family, and likes/dislikes using words, phrases, and short sentences.</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>High Beginning:</strong> A student at this level can initiate and maintain communication on topics related to daily life and can provide information in phrases, simple sentences, and short compound sentences.</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Low Intermediate:</strong> A student at this level can communicate on familiar topics and provide information with some success. Uses a limited range of vocabulary and structures.</td>
<td>A2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Mid Intermediate:</strong> A student at this level can express and support opinion and can handle a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks successfully.</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>High Intermediate:</strong> A student at this level can handle a variety of communicative tasks with success, although errors may be evident.</td>
<td>B1+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Low Advanced:</strong> A student at this level can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics. Can communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and if miscommunication occur, can repair them.</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Advanced:</strong> A student at this level can handle a variety of communicative tasks with ease and confidence. Can almost always be understood with little effort by the general public.</td>
<td>B2+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Class Cancellations**

ESL classes are held daily on The University of Texas at Austin campus. ESL classes are generally not cancelled. If your teacher is sick or away, you will have a substitute teacher. There may be exceptions for AEP colloquia (which may replace a listening/speaking class), student-teacher conferences or faculty workshops.

**If the University is closed**, ESL Services will also be closed. There are no ESL classes on University holidays. See the “Holidays in the United States” section of this handbook (p. 49) for more information. ESL classes cancelled because of a University closure will not be made up.

**In case of emergencies**, watch the news on TV, on the computer, or listen to it on the radio to find out if the University is closed. It is also vital to sign up for the UT emergency text alert system. Use your EID to log in to [https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/csas/text/main/](https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/csas/text/main/) and enter your number to sign up for these text alerts. You can also call UT Austin Information at (512) 471-3434 to find out if the University is closed.

**Religious holidays policy**: A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holiday should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

There are 3 parts to this policy:

1) Students may miss class to observe a religious holiday; however, it is still counted as an absence (notice the last word in the policy). For international students, this is an immigration requirement.
2) Students should let their teachers know in advance that they will miss class. If you do not notify your teachers at least one class in advance before you miss, the teachers are under no obligation to allow you to make up work.
3) Teachers will allow the students who contact them the opportunity to make up missed homework, quizzes, or tests within a "reasonable time" after the absence. Teachers can decide what that time period is.

Although you will be marked absent, this absence will not count against you for the program certificate.
Holidays in the United States

Following is a list of some of the holidays observed in the United States. Holidays marked with an * are days when most schools, banks, businesses, and government offices are closed. The University of Texas at Austin is closed on some of these holidays, but remains open on others. For example, the university does not close on President’s Day, but other local, state, and federal offices do. Check the official university calendar for holiday information: [http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/cals.html](http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/cals.html)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holiday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* January 1</td>
<td>New Year’s Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Third Monday in January</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Groundhog Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>St. Valentine’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Third Monday in February</td>
<td>President’s Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>April Fools’ Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday before Easter</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday in late March/early April</td>
<td>Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Sunday in May</td>
<td>Mother’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Last Monday in May</td>
<td>Memorial Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sunday in June</td>
<td>Father’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* July 4</td>
<td>Independence Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* First Monday in September</td>
<td>Labor Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Third Thursday in November</td>
<td>Thanksgiving*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* December 25</td>
<td>Christmas Day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Sunday in March</td>
<td>Beginning of Daylight Savings Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<em>Set clock forward one hour at 2:00 a.m.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Deadline to file U.S. Federal Income Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Sunday in November</td>
<td>End of Daylight Savings Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<em>Set clock back one hour at 2:00 a.m.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Tuesday in November</td>
<td>Election Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigration Information

Keep proof of your immigration status with you at all times, even if you are traveling within the United States.

The immigration advisors do not work for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), but they do have to report status issues to USCIS. The immigration advisors work for the University of Texas at Austin and are here to help you understand the immigration regulations, so please feel free to ask them if you have any immigration-related questions.

Keep your documents valid. Talk to the immigration advisor if you see that your documents will expire in the near future.

Maintaining Your Immigration Status

F-1/J-1 Student Visa
1. You must attend class full-time. If you do not attend at least 75% of your classes, you could lose your legal immigration status in the US.
2. You must update your local address using your EID through UTDirect, and notify ESL Services within 10 days of any change of local address.
3. See the immigration advisor for approval if you will miss several classes due to illness or an emergency, or if you plan to withdraw from the ESL program.
4. Inform ESL Services before registering concurrently at another institution or enrolling in UT Extension Courses. You must remain enrolled in these courses throughout the semester and receive a grade of “D” or higher in each class. The courses MUST be completed by the end date of the same semester enrolled. Auditing a course or taking it credit/no credit does not count toward the full-time enrollment requirement.
5. Apply for a program extension before the expiration date on your I-20/DS-2019, if you plan to continue studying in the ESL program.
6. Before the end of your last semester in attendance, inform the immigration advisor of any intent to transfer to another institution.
7. No off-campus employment is allowed for F-1 students on an I-20 issued for the ESL program. You can work on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the fall or spring semesters. You can work more than 20 hours per week in the summer only if you are enrolled in the summer or will be a continuing student in the fall.
8. All F-1 students have a 60-day grace period to remain in the US after they complete the ESL program (if final attendance is 75% or higher).
9. All J-1 students have a 30-day grace period to remain in the US after they complete the ESL program (if final attendance is 75% or higher).
10. You must read and comply with the instructions stated on page 2 of the Form I-20/DS-2019.
**F-2/J-2 and Other Dependent Visa Categories:**
1. Your status depends on the primary (F-1, J-1, etc.) visa holder. If the F-1/J-1 student is not in status or has left the U.S., you lose your legal immigration status.
2. F-2, H-4, etc. are not allowed to work on or off campus. Only individuals in J-2 or L-2 status with a valid employment authorization document may work.
3. F-2 dependents can enroll part-time in a program of study but cannot take courses toward a degree. Full-time enrollment is a violation of F-2 status. J-2 dependents, however, can study full-time.
4. Contact an immigration advisor if you want to be a full-time student and would like to change your status to F-1.

**B-2 Visitor Visa:**
1. Immigration regulations prohibit individuals in B-2 status from enrolling in a course of study. One English language course does not constitute a course of study, as long as it is not the primary purpose of the visit to the United States.
2. If you would like to take more than one class as a B-2, please talk to an immigration advisor about the possible consequences and discuss any options that might be available.

**Travel Reminders**

**Documents required to re-enter the United States***
1. Valid passport
2. Valid visa stamp in your passport
3. Valid I-20 or DS-2019 signed by an immigration advisor in the preceding 6 months. Each dependent must have his or her own I-20 or DS-2019, even if traveling with the primary visa holder.

**Additional documents recommended for travel**
1. Letter from ESL Services verifying enrollment (if traveling in the middle of the semester)
2. Evidence of adequate financial support
3. Valid visa for third country, if required

***Anytime you travel outside of Austin, make sure you take all original immigration documents with you, even if you are not leaving the United States.

For additional immigration questions, please contact ESL Services at 512-471-2480 or email esl@austin.utexas.edu.
Employment and Taxes

Immigration Restrictions on Employment

F-1 Visa Holders
Students may work only on campus for up to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Full-time employment (21-40 hours per week) is allowed during vacation periods and summer for enrolled or continuing students. No special permission is necessary; however, a valid I-20 issued by The University of Texas at Austin is required.

J-1 Visa Holders
If the DS-2019 is issued by The University of Texas at Austin, then the ability to work on campus is the same as for F-1 visa holders. However, if the DS-2019 is issued by another agency, then there must be written authorization from the program sponsor in order to work on campus.

Finding a Job
On-campus employment takes place on the school’s premises, and the paycheck is issued by The University of Texas at Austin. If you are applying for a job on campus and you learn that an entity other than the University is going to pay you, please check with an immigration advisor before accepting the job.

UT Austin Job Search is the overall job applicant service for The University of Texas at Austin. As an international student, you should only be looking for jobs that are for 20 hours per week or less. Open positions are listed on the web at http://utdirect.utexas.edu/jobs/

Ask about job openings at the following offices on campus:
1. The Texas Union
2. University Housing and Food Services
3. The University Co-op (although this bookstore is physically across the street from the UT Austin campus, it is considered on-campus employment)

Note: ESL students are not eligible for “student” title positions. Check with an immigration advisor in the International Office and the hiring department regarding your employment eligibility.

Electronic Funds Transfer
You should arrange for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) if you work on campus or receive scholarship payment. Before you can establish EFT, you need to open an account at a local bank. To arrange for EFT, please access the following web site: http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/sar/stdpubs.html
APPLYING FOR A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

F-1 and J-1 students are not eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN) unless they have been offered employment. If you are an F-1 or J-1 student and have been offered a job, follow these steps to apply for a Social Security Number:

1. Visit International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) for an Employment Verification Letter, or download the letter from http://world.utexas.edu/io
2. Take the letter to your new employer and ask him/her to fill in your employment information.
3. Have the letter signed by an Immigration Advisor in ISSS.
4. Take the completed letter to the Social Security Administration Office along with your passport, visa, I-20, and I-94 card.

You must wait at least 10 days after your entry to the United States before you apply for a Social Security Number. Be sure to ask for a receipt from the Social Security Administration office. It usually takes about 2-4 weeks to receive your Social Security card in the mail. Not having an SSN does not prevent you from starting employment, as long as you are eligible to work on campus. A handout with more details and directions to the Social Security office is available in the International Office lobby.

Note: If you have already obtained a SSN from a previous visit to the U.S., you will not have to re-apply for the number unless you have lost your original Social Security card.

TAX INFORMATION

Do I need to File an Income Tax Return?

Yes! All international students must file an income tax return by April 15th each year, even if they have no U.S. income. Income tax regulations are governed and enforced by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The following brochures published by the IRS will help you understand your tax liabilities and benefits:

- Publication 513: “Tax Information for Visitors to the United States”
- Publication 519: “U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens”
- Publication 520: “Scholarships and Fellowships”
- Publication 901: “U.S. Tax Treaties”

These publications are updated each year and may be obtained by calling 1-800-829-3676. Tax forms and publications are also available online at the IRS website: http://www.irs.treas.gov/formspubs/
University policy prohibits its administrative offices from providing income tax service during regular working hours. However, the International Office is a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site, offering help by appointment on specific evenings during February, March, and the first part of April. Before making an appointment to see a VITA volunteer, check the International Office’s tax website first at [http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/](http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/) You must have your tax forms completed as much as possible before seeing the VITA volunteer. Limited walk-in service is available; check the tax website for the current schedule.

**Filing an Income Tax Return**

F-1 and J-1 students are considered “non-residents for tax purposes” for the first five years of their studies. All persons in F or J status (F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2) must file Form 8843, “Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition,” even if they have no U.S. source income. If students have worked while in the United States, they will most likely have to file IRS Form 1040-NR or 1040-NR-EZ in addition to Form 8843. After five years, F-1 and J-1 students may qualify as “residents for tax purposes” and then would file an income tax return using IRS Forms 1040, 1040-A, or 1040-EZ. **Remember: the deadline for filing income tax returns is April 15**th. Check the website above to find out which income tax forms you need to file and whether you are eligible to file your tax return online.
**Introduction to Austin and the University**

**Austin Facts**

Austin, the capital of the state of Texas, is situated on the banks of the Colorado River in the part of central Texas known as the Hill Country. The first settlers from the United States arrived in this area in the 1830's and built a village they called “Waterloo” along the river. After the founding of the Republic of Texas in 1836, Waterloo was chosen as the capital and renamed Austin in honor of the “Father of Texas”, Stephen F. Austin.

Today, Austin is the eleventh largest city in the United States with a population of approximately 842,592 within the 600 square kilometer (232 sq. mi.) city limits. An additional 850,000 persons live within the Austin metropolitan area. While having the amenities of a large North American city, Austin, especially the university area, retains the atmosphere of a much smaller town.

The natural beauty of Austin has been preserved in 17,000 acres (68 sq. km) of green space and 220 parks offer a wealth of settings for swimming, cycling, hiking, and other outdoor activities. Austin is also known as the “Live Music Capital of the World.” There are over 150 live music venues in and around Austin, featuring every type of music imaginable.

Austin has a varied climate characterized by hot summers and mild winters. Summer days are humid and often reach temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit), and winter days may fall below freezing. Students will need warm jackets for winter and lightweight clothing for summer. Austin is in the Central Time Zone. The telephone area code is 512.

**University Facts**

Founded in 1883, The University of Texas at Austin is one of the largest public universities in the United States. The university has grown from a single building, eight teachers, two departments and 221 students to a 350-acre (1.4 sq. km.) main campus with 21,000 faculty and staff, 17 colleges and schools and almost 50,000 students from all 50 states and over 100 countries.

The University of Texas at Austin is dedicated to improving the quality of life of the people of Texas and the world. It is a leading provider of education and research with a depth and diversity of resources unmatched by other public universities. As an enduring symbol of the spirit of Texas - big, ambitious and bold - the university drives economic and social progress and serves as a leading center of knowledge and creativity. What starts here changes the world.

For more information about the university, visit:

[http://world.utexas.edu/esl/about/new-students](http://world.utexas.edu/esl/about/new-students)
Student Services at The University of Texas at Austin

As a student of ESL Services, you have access to many of the services available to students enrolled in degree programs. Some of the services available to you are listed below. If you have questions about any other services, please ask at the ESL Services office.

ID Cards and ID Numbers

You have two ID cards—an orange card and a photo ID card.

Your orange ID card lists your name, EID (Electronic Identifier), and the current semester dates. If you have purchased our student health insurance, your EID is also your insurance ID. You will receive a orange ID card at the beginning of the first semester of ESL study. If you lose this card, come to the ESL Services office for a free replacement.

Your University of Texas at Austin photo ID card lists your name and university affiliation. Your EID is not listed on this card, but is coded into the magnetic stripe on the back. You can use the same photo ID card for every semester of ESL study; you do not need a new one each semester. ESL Services will pay for your first photo ID card, but if your card is lost or stolen, you must pay the charge for a replacement ($10 as of August 2015). The card is issued at:

   ID Center, FAC 102 (first floor of the Flawn Academic Center)
   Hours of operation: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
   http://www.utexas.edu/its/idcenter/

You are required to have your UT photo ID card with you anytime you are on UT property.

What can you use your ID cards for? *

• Use of UT Austin libraries and computer labs
• Free use of UT Austin shuttle buses and Capital Metro buses
• Purchase of a Reesports pass
• Purchase of a campus parking permit
• Use of University Health Services (if you’ve paid the UHS Medical Services Fee)
• Discounted student prices for sport event tickets

* You may not be able to access campus services during ESL Registration week, while your record is being updated and activated in the University’s computer system. If a staff member has trouble finding your record in the computer system, be sure to tell them that you are an ESL student. Visit us in the ESL Services office if you have any trouble using your ID cards after the first week of classes.
EID
The EID (electronic identifier) is used to log onto University online services, such as library research databases and UT Direct (see page 19). Your EID is printed on your orange ID card. If you want to change your EID password, or you have forgotten it, visit: http://www.utexas.edu/eid/
You may also visit the ESL Services office for help.

COMPUTER/INTERNET ACCESS
ESL Services students have several options for computer/Internet access on campus:

STUDENT MICROCOMPUTER FACILITY (SMF)
The Student Microcomputer Facility is one of the largest computer labs on campus. The SMF is located on the second floor of the Flawn Academic Center (FAC 212).

OTHER COMPUTER LABS
Numerous computer labs are available on the UT Austin campus. Some labs set aside certain hours for their department’s students but are open to use by all students at other times. For a complete list of computer labs and hours visit: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/computing

The Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL) has computers available for general use and printing. To print at the PCL, you must purchase a copy card for $1.00. You can then add money to the rechargeable card for printing. For more information, check the website: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/copyprint/

Canvas (LMS-Learning Management System)
All ESL students will have a Canvas account. Your Canvas account login will be your EID@utaustinesl.org. Our ESL teachers use Canvas to record attendance, deliver content, collect assignments, track grades and many other activities. You may access ESL Services Canvas at https://utaustinesl.instructure.com.

STUDENT E-MAIL ACCOUNTS
If you are a new student, we will create an email account for you EID@utaustinesl.org. You can access this account through Gmail. If you forget your password and have trouble resetting it on your own, visit the ESL desk in the International Office for help.

ESL Services students are also eligible to receive an email account from the University Mail Box Service (UMBS). To activate this account and select a username and password, go to the UMBS webpage at http://utmail.utexas.edu/

You can access this account using email software such as Outlook or Mail. You can also access it through a web browser. For more information about how to do this, see the UMBS webpage listed above.
ESL Email List

All ESL students with email addresses are subscribed to an email list, <eslstudents@utlists.utexas.edu>. Please check your email often while you are studying with us. This list is used to send announcements about classes, activities and events. You can also use this email list to contact other ESL students.

To post a message to the list, send your email to <eslstudents@utlists.utexas.edu>. Note: This email list is rated 'G'--that means no bad messages are allowed! If you send an email that is insulting or inappropriate, you will be removed from the list.

If you use an email account with junk mail protection, you may need to modify your account so it will not categorize email from the ESL Mail List as junk mail. Once you have added the ESL Mail List address to your safe list of addresses, all ESL Mail List messages will go to your Inbox.

We will send messages to the list every few days. If you are not receiving our emails, please send an email to our office at <esl@austin.utexas.edu>.

UT Direct

UT Direct is an interactive website that provides students with access to University information and applications anytime, anywhere. You may use UT Direct to update your contact information, apply to UT Austin degree programs, or to access your student e-mail account. For more information go to: http://utdirect.utexas.edu

University Libraries

The University of Texas at Austin has the fifth largest academic library system in the nation, with over eight million items in its collection, spread across 17 different libraries.

ESL Services students have access to all of the University’s libraries. Each library has an online catalog (UTCAT) that enables you to search for a particular book, magazine, or other types of materials.

The main library is the Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL), located at 21st Street and Speedway. They offer free library tours and classes.

One useful library is the Audio-Visual Library, located within the Fine Arts Library (DFA 3.200). Here you can borrow CDs, DVDs, audio and videocassettes as well as cameras and camcorders.

To check out items, take them to the circulation desk. Be sure to have your UT Austin photo ID card with you. Initially, you can check out materials for two weeks. If you have any questions, ask the librarian at the circulation desk or refer to: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/
SPORTS AND FITNESS CENTERS (RecSports)
RecSports offers six major program areas: intramural activities, sports clubs, outdoor recreation, fitness/wellness programs, informal recreation and instructional programs.

RecSports manages 10 facilities both on and off campus. Some of these are: Gregory Gym, the RecSports Center, and the Intramural Fields.

To use these facilities, ESL Services students must buy a membership. All ESL students qualify for the Student rate. Fees are prorated on the first of each month once the semester begins.

Visit the RecSports Membership office in Gregory Gym for the most current prices. To get more information about facilities, hours, and services, check the website: [http://www.utrecsports.org](http://www.utrecsports.org) or call 471-3116.

WHITAKER FIELDS (GUADALUPE & 51ST)
This multipurpose turf area accommodates up to 18 football/soccer fields or 12 softball diamonds; an all-purpose/all-weather field is available for soccer, softball, or tennis.

ESL Services can reserve fields upon request, subject to availability.

No membership is required to use these fields. To get more information about facilities, hours, and services, check the website: [http://www.utrecsports.org/facilities](http://www.utrecsports.org/facilities)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
The University of Texas at Austin has student organizations representing most geographic regions of the world. More information is available at the Campus and Community Involvement Area of the Office of the Dean of Students, located in the Student Services Building (SSB), Room 4.104. Check this website for the list of student organizations: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sald/studentorgs/index.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sald/studentorgs/index.php)

The PALS (Partnerships to Advance Language Study and Culture Exchange) program is designed to bring international and American students together for cultural exchange and to practice English conversational skills. PALS also hosts social activities that provide opportunities for you to meet other people and get to know what Austin has to offer. If you are interested email: pals@austin.utexas.edu
UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

Note: For severe or potentially life-threatening medical or mental health emergencies call 911 or go to a local hospital emergency room. Do not try to make an appointment to see a doctor.

University Health Services (UHS), located in the Student Services Building (SSB), provides medical care and patient education to students at The University of Texas at Austin. All students on F or J visas are required to be insured.

To make an appointment at UHS, call 471-4955. Appointments are required for all non-urgent medical conditions.

UHS has a Nurse Advice Line, which you can call anytime (24 hours a day, every day of the year) for guidance on how to care for an illness or injury. The number is 475-6877. If the problem requires medical attention, the nurse will set up an appointment for you to see a doctor. Visit UHS online at: http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

The University of Texas at Austin offers health insurance for students underwritten by Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare. For more information about this insurance plan, visit the website at: https://utexas.myahpcare.com/benefits.

The provider network for this plan is the BCBSTX BlueChoice® PPO Network.

If you need to go outside UHS for medical care, you are responsible for paying the deductible per policy year before the insurance starts to pay its share. After the deductible is satisfied ($500 for Network/$1000 for Out-of-Network), benefits will be paid based on the selected provider. Benefits will be paid at 80% of the Allowable Amount for services rendered by Network Providers in the BCBSTX BlueChoice® PPO Network, unless otherwise specified in the policy. Out-of-Network Providers (any provider outside the BCBSTX BlueChoice® PPO Network) will be paid at 60% of the Allowable Amount, unless otherwise specified in the policy.

OUT-OF-POCKET MAXIMUM means the maximum liability that may be incurred by a Covered Person in a benefit period for covered services, under the terms of a coverage plan. Once the Out-of-Pocket Maximum has been satisfied, Covered Expenses will be payable at 100% for the remainder of the policy year, up to any maximum that may apply.

This insurance does not include vision or dental coverage.

Dental coverage is available to students and their spouse. Students are required to be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan to be eligible to enroll in the dental coverage. If the student chooses to purchase dental coverage for the spouse, it must be purchased at the same time as the student coverage. The spouse must have the same coverage as the student. The
student and spouse may enroll online for dental coverage, or they may download the dental enrollment form at utsystem.myahpcare.com, complete the form and mail it along with premium to Academic HealthPlans.

**Vision coverage** discounts are available through Davis Vision: 888-897-9350, http://www.davisvision.com/. For a list of Davis Vision providers near you, go to bcbstx.com, click Find a Doctor then select Find a Vision Provider. The Davis Vision network consists of major national and regional retail locations as well as independent ophthalmologists and optometrists.

A list of Preferred Providers in the Austin area is available at: https://utexas.myahpcare.com/benefits Click on “Find a Doctor or Hospital” and enter your search criteria. You may search by location, doctor’s name, or medical specialty. You may also call the insurance company at the toll free number listed on your insurance ID card and ask for the name of Preferred Providers.

**Disclaimer:** This is only a brief overview of the BCBSTX BlueChoice PPO insurance plan. We do not guarantee that it is complete, comprehensive, accurate, or up to date. Please refer to the policy brochure at: https://utexas.myahpcare.com/benefits for complete information.

If you receive medical treatment outside of University Health Services, you may be required to pay for the medical services you receive. Before you pay:

- Inform the doctor’s office that you have UT Austin student insurance and show your insurance ID card
- Ask the doctor’s office to bill the insurance company directly. The address is on your ID card.
- If they ask you to pay immediately, ask them to make sure you have received the Preferred Provider (PPO) discount before you pay the bill.

If you have paid a medical bill yourself:

- Make a copy of the bill and keep this copy for your records/reference.
- Write a letter to the insurance company, including your name, EID, and policy number.
- Send the original doctor’s bill and the letter to the insurance company.

If you are admitted to the hospital in an emergency, **you or a friend must call the insurance company to notify them that you are in the hospital.**

If you go to the hospital in an emergency and are not admitted to the hospital, **you do not have to notify the insurance company.**
Parking

There are a number of options for parking near The University of Texas at Austin. A few of these options are free, but most involve paying. Generally, parking becomes more challenging and more expensive the closer to campus you are. Be sure to obey all instructional signs in parking areas as the rules are strictly enforced. Your car may be ticketed or towed if it is parked illegally.

Parking Permits

ESL students are eligible to buy a Class “C” or Class “N” parking permit from Parking & Transportation Services. With the “C” permit, you may park in designated Class “C” permit parking areas Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. - 4:00 a.m. You may also park in designated “Any UT Permit” parking areas. Please note, the “C” permit does not guarantee you a parking spot. Class “N” permits grant access to eight university garages Monday-Friday, 5:45 p.m.- 7:30 a.m. and on weekends from Friday at 5:45 p.m. to Monday at 7:30 a.m., as well as in "Longhorn Lots” on campus, unless otherwise designated by signs.

Class “C” Permits cost $120 per year (permit dates are from September 1 – August 31 each school year). Class “N+” permits costs $60 per year. A “C+” permit (a combination of “C” and “N+” permits”) costs $180 per year. You can purchase parking permits at the Parking & Transportation Services office located in the Trinity Parking Garage (TRG), 1815 Trinity Street. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Cashier office hours are 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

For more information on parking permits, visit the Parking & Transportation Services office or check their website: http://www.utexas.edu/parking/student/

Parking Garages

There are eight parking garages on the UT Austin campus. Anyone may park in these garages on a daily paid basis. The parking garage closest to the International Office is the San Antonio Garage (SAG) at 2420 San Antonio Street (between 24th and 25th Streets). The cost to park in the UT Austin garages ranges from $3 to $18, depending on the length of time you stay. Check the Parking & Transportation Services website for more information about parking in these garages:
http://www.utexas.edu/parking/visitor/

Students may also use the UT Towers parking garage on Pearl St. between 22nd St. and 23rd St. for pricing options please contact their office at 512-265-7687 or visit their website:
http://universitytowers.com/parking-2/

Parking Meters

There are a limited number of parking meters on 25th, Nueces, and San Antonio Streets. These meters all have time limits, so you will have to keep adding money or risk getting a parking ticket. This parking is controlled by the City of Austin.

Private Lots

There are private paid parking lots located near campus as well. Rates vary; be sure to check the signs posted in each lot for rates and restrictions.
**Free Parking**
The area immediately north of the UT Austin campus has limited free street parking. This parking is located in the area between 27th, 30th, Guadalupe and Duval Streets. It will take about 10 minutes to walk to campus from this area. Remember to look for signs that tell you when it is NOT okay to park on the street.

More street parking is available in the neighborhood north of 30th Street. This area is known as Hyde Park. You may park there and take the Intramural Fields (IF) shuttle to campus. The IF shuttle stops on 26th Street. There are also two church lots available for parking, if you arrive early. Both are on Speedway. One is on the east side, just south of 39th St. The other is on the west side just north of 40th St. If there is no space in the lot, drive around the corner and park on the street. Be sure to look for “No Parking” signs.

**Shuttles**
The UT Austin Shuttle System provides an easy way to access campus. Students, faculty, and staff may ride the shuttles at no charge with a valid UT Austin photo ID. For route information: 

**Park & Ride Lots**
Capital Metro has several Park & Ride locations that offer a convenient, secure place to park your car while you ride the bus to campus. For more information and lot locations:

**If Your Vehicle is Disabled on Campus**
Call Parking & Transportation Services at (512) 471-4441 and let them know that your vehicle is disabled. If your battery is dead, or if you are locked out of your car, one of their parking enforcement attendants can come help you. If you need to have your car towed to a repair shop, the parking enforcement attendant will put a disabled vehicle notice on your vehicle that is valid for 24 hours. The vehicle must be removed from campus during that time period. Without a valid disabled vehicle notice, disabled vehicles on campus will be ticketed.
Setting Up House in Austin

Housing Options
For a list of short-term and long-term housing options, as well as advice on renting, please consult The ESL Services Welcome Guide, which you should have received with your acceptance letter or visit http://world.utexas.edu/esl/about/new-students#housing for a list of on-campus and off-campus housing options. If you need another copy of the welcome guide, you can request one at the ESL Services office.

You can rent apartments that are furnished or unfurnished. Furnished apartments will be more expensive than unfurnished ones. If you rent an unfurnished apartment, you will need to buy basic furniture such as a bed, dresser, nightstand, couch and desk. Before you sign a lease, check to see what appliances are included with the apartment. Most apartments will come with a refrigerator/freezer, dishwasher, and stove.

An overview of your rights as a tenant is available from the Texas Attorney General's Office. You can download it from: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cpd/tenant-rights

Finding a Roommate
A person living alone in an apartment will spend an average of $1375 per month for rent, utility bills, and food. Sharing an apartment with a roommate can significantly lower these costs.

Here are some ways to find a roommate:
- Check the “Classified” section of the Daily Texan at http://www.dailytexanonline.com/
- Check the “Classified” section of the Austin Chronicle:
  - http://www.austinchronicle.com/
- Use RoommateService at http://www.roommates.com/
- Check the bulletin boards in the Texas Union near the food court area
- Check the bulletin boards around campus
- Check the bulletin board at the ESL Classrooms [announcements must be approved to post]

Furnishing Your Apartment

Retail Stores
Relatively inexpensive new furniture and other items are available at many stores. Please check the following stores’ websites to find locations in your area:

- Target
  - various locations
  - http://www.target.com
- Wal-Mart
  - various locations
  - http://www.walmart.com
- Sears
  - various locations
  - http://www.sears.com
- Barton Creek Mall
  - 2901 S. Capital of TX Hwy
  - http://www.simon.com
- Domain
  - 11410 Century Oaks
  - http://www.simon.com
Thrift Stores and Used Furniture Dealers

- Goodwill Industries  various locations  http://www.goodwill.org
- It's New to Me  7719 Burnet Road  (512)451-0388
- Others stores can be found online under “Furniture Dealers—Used.”

Classified Ads

Furniture and other items for sale by individuals are listed in the classified advertisements in the Austin American Statesman (http://www.statesman.com/) and in the Austin Chronicle (http://www.austinchronicle.com/) under ‘classifieds’ click buy/sell link. The Greensheet newspaper, found at local convenience and grocery stores, also lists inexpensive items for sale by individuals.

Garage Sales and Yard Sales

A garage sale is a sale of household items, clothes, furniture & personal items at a person’s home. It may be held in the garage or in the front yard. Garage sales and yard sales are sometimes advertised in the newspaper (Austin American Statesman and Austin Chronicle) or by signs posted near the location of the sale. Go early on the first day to see the largest selection of items. You can sometimes offer a price lower than what the seller has marked. The seller will let you know if the price you offer is too low. Plan on buying items with cash.

University Area Grocery Stores

- Wheatsville Co-op  3101 Guadalupe, 478-2667  http://www.wheatsville.com/
- Natural Grocers  3901 Guadalupe, 323-5100  http://www.naturalgrocers.com/
- Central Market  4001 N. Lamar, 206-1000  http://www.centralmarket.com
- HEB  1000 E. 41st Street, 459-6513  https://www.heb.com/

Utilities

Electricity and Water

Electricity and water services are connected through the City of Austin. Renters and homeowners are usually required to pay a $200 deposit to establish a utility account. There is also a $20 initiation fee to connect the service. This service also includes garbage collection for detached homes.

Contact your apartment manager for information on how to get your utilities connected. Sometimes the manager will arrange utility connections for you. If not, new service can be established over the phone at 512-494-9400. During the call, you will need: your name & Social Security Number *, address where utilities will be connected, billing address (if different), photo ID (Texas driver’s license or passport) and a copy of your lease (if available).

After making arrangements by phone, you will have 2-4 weeks to mail in the deposit, which will be included on your first bill.

Contact information: City of Austin Utilities  512-494-9400  http://www.coautilities.com
*Only people who are employed in the United States can apply for a Social Security Number. If you do not have a Social Security Number you can have electric and water utilities connected, but you must visit this office in person to establish service:

Rosewood Zaragoza Community Center
2802 Webberville Road (at the corner of Webberville Road and Pleasant Valley)
512-494-9400.

Office hours are Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Take your passport and a copy of your apartment lease agreement. Tell the staff that you do not have a Social Security Number. You may be required to pay a $200 cash deposit.

**Natural Gas**
Natural Gas is provided by the Texas Gas Service. To establish new service, call 1-800-700-2443. You will need: the address where connection will be made, home telephone number, names and Social Security Numbers (or passport numbers) of adults living in the home, emergency contact information, and billing address (if different than service address). A deposit is required. This deposit, as well as a connection fee, will appear on your first bill.

**Contact information:** Texas Gas Service 800-700-2443 [https://www.texasgasservice.com/](https://www.texasgasservice.com/)

**Cable Television**
Some apartment complexes include free basic cable television. If your apartment complex does not do this, you may want to subscribe to cable yourself. To set up service, search for cable providers online and contact them. Your complex may have a list of recommended providers for your area. Many cable providers offer digital phone and internet service in addition to cable service.
**Telephone Service**

**Home telephone service** in the Austin area is available from various following providers:

The standard service price includes an unlimited number of local calls each month. Long distance service is not included; you have a choice of several service providers for long distance (see below).

To order home telephone service, contact one of the many providers listed when performing a search on any Internet search engine (ex: Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.). You will need the following information:

- the complete address where your telephone service will be connected
- the billing address (if different from service address)
- the name of your preferred long distance carrier

Have your passport number and your US visa number ready, and tell the operator that you are not eligible to apply for a Social Security Number.

You will be offered many optional services such as caller ID and call waiting for additional fees. A security deposit or advance payment may be required to establish service.

**Long distance service** is available from several service providers. Do a search on the internet with key words “Telephone-Long Distance Service Companies” for contact information for long distance service providers. Long distance and international phone rates are highly competitive. You should compare rates of different companies before you select a long distance carrier. If you do not like your current phone company, you can switch companies any time you wish. Buying a phone card is another option if you do not wish to commit to a specific long distance provider.

**Cellular phones** may be an option if you do not want to have a phone installed in your apartment. Calling plans vary from company to company, so check out their web sites to determine the best plan for you. Many plans include international calling plans. Some providers offer student discounts.

**Questions to ask when setting up phone service:**

- What is the basic rate?
- Is there a monthly service charge?
- What is the connection charge and is there a disconnection charge?
- Can I have an access code if I have a roommate, so that our calls will be billed separately?
- Will I receive a detailed bill showing the number I called, how long I talked, and the charge for the call?
- Is this plan an international plan?
- How do I get the lowest rate to my country? When is this rate applicable?
- What are the rates during other time periods?
- What method of payment can I use?
- Is a calling card available?
- What are the rates and corresponding time periods on the calling card?
- Is the calling card international, so that I can use my calling card from my home country or elsewhere?
Media Sources

NEWSPAPERS
The *Austin-American Statesman* is the daily city newspaper. You can find it at stores and newspaper boxes around town, or you can subscribe for home delivery. To subscribe to the Statesman, call the Subscription Department at (512) 445-4040 or check out their subscription plans on the web at [http://www.statesman.com](http://www.statesman.com).

The *Austin Chronicle* is a free weekly newspaper published every Thursday. The Chronicle can be picked up at stores and businesses all over Austin and is online at: [http://www.austinchronicle.com](http://www.austinchronicle.com).

Students at The University of Texas at Austin also publish a free newspaper for the campus community. The *Daily Texan* is published Monday through Friday when classes are in session. Copies of the Daily Texan can be found around campus in newspaper boxes. The Daily Texan can also be read online at [http://www.dailytexanonline.com](http://www.dailytexanonline.com).

TELEVISION
Austin has a number of local television stations that are affiliates of national broadcast networks. Each of the five main networks—ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, and PBS—has affiliates in Austin. These stations (except for PBS) all feature local news and weather programs. The PBS affiliate is owned and operated by The University of Texas at Austin. Consult each station’s website for specific programs and broadcast times:

- KTBC 7 (FOX) [http://www.ktbc.com](http://www.ktbc.com)
- KLRU 18 (PBS) [http://www.klru.org](http://www.klru.org)
- KVUE 24 (ABC) [http://www.kvue.com](http://www.kvue.com)
- KXAN 36 (NBC) [http://www.kxan.com](http://www.kxan.com)
- KEYE 42 (CBS) [http://www.keyetv.com](http://www.keyetv.com)
**Radio**
Austin has a wide variety of radio stations. In addition to music stations, there are also several stations that feature talk show programs throughout the day. Many stations have websites with a listing of their programming. The local National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate, KUT, broadcasts from The University of Texas at Austin and is useful to practice your English listening skills.

**Austin Area Radio Stations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KMFA</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>Classical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kmfa.org">http://www.kmfa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTSW</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>College alternative</td>
<td><a href="http://ktsw.txstate.edu/">http://ktsw.txstate.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUT</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>NPR</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kut.org">http://www.kut.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KVRX</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>College Radio</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kvrx.org">http://www.kvrx.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGSR</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>Radio Austin</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kgsr.com">http://www.kgsr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLBJ</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>Rock and Roll</td>
<td><a href="http://www.klbjfm.com">http://www.klbjfm.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMX</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mix947.com">http://www.mix947.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKMJ</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>Soft Rock</td>
<td><a href="http://www.majic.com">http://www.majic.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KHFI</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>Current Hits</td>
<td><a href="http://www.967kissfm.com">http://www.967kissfm.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KVET</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kvet.com">http://www.kvet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASE</td>
<td>100.7</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kase101.com">http://www.kase101.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROX</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>Alt Rock</td>
<td><a href="http://www.101x.com">http://www.101x.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLBJ</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>News, talk</td>
<td><a href="http://www.590klbj.com">http://www.590klbj.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KVET</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sportsradio1300.com">http://www.sportsradio1300.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJCE</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>Talk</td>
<td><a href="http://www.talk1370.com">http://www.talk1370.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZNX</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Banking Information

Student banking is pretty easy! To find a list of banks that are convenient to you, do a web search for “Austin bank” or pick up the banking information sheet available in the International Office lobby.

It is usually necessary to go to the bank to open an account. The following are questions to consider when opening an account at a bank or credit union:

• How much is the minimum deposit to open an account?
• Are there monthly service charges?
• What do I need to bring to open an account?
• What are the bank's business hours?
• Are there banks and ATMs near the UT Austin campus?
• What checking and saving options do you offer?
• Is there a charge for checks and traveler’s checks?
• Do you offer telephone and/or Internet banking?
• Do you offer international exchange for my currency?

The following banks are located near campus. These banks do not require a Social Security Number to open an account. However, you will need your passport or other photo identification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chase Bank</td>
<td>1904 Guadalupe St.</td>
<td>236-3070</td>
<td><a href="http://www.chase.com">http://www.chase.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2414 Guadalupe St.</td>
<td>476-8644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compass Bank</td>
<td>321 W. 6th St.</td>
<td>421-5761</td>
<td><a href="http://www.compassweb.com">http://www.compassweb.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Federal</td>
<td>2244 Guadalupe St.</td>
<td>467-8080</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ufcu.org">http://www.ufcu.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Fargo</td>
<td>2354 Guadalupe St.</td>
<td>236-1250</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wellsfargo.com">http://www.wellsfargo.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** If you ever lose or have your checkbook or debit/credit card stolen, you should contact your bank or credit card company **immediately.** This will limit your liability for any charges made to your account by another person.
Transportation Around Austin

**Capital Metro Bus System**
Capital Metro operates the city bus system offering inexpensive and efficient transportation all around the city of Austin. You can ride the bus free with your UT Austin photo ID card. If you do not have your ID card with you, the bus fare is $1.25 for a one-way trip. A day pass, good for 24 hours, is available for $2.50.

Most Capital Metro buses run from 5 a.m. until midnight, though not all routes will start that early or run that late. There are limited “Night Owl” routes for late night travel. Buses run less frequently on weekends than on weekdays and may have reduced service on official holidays. Check the schedule on the Capital Metro website [http://www.capmetro.org](http://www.capmetro.org) or add the CapMetro App to your smartphone: [http://www.capmetro.org/app/](http://www.capmetro.org/app/) for the most current route information.

Bus stops are marked with route numbers of the buses that serve the location. Buses will display their route numbers, names, and their final destination in a lighted sign above the windshield. Signal the bus driver to stop by standing or waving as the bus approaches. All full-sized Capital Metro buses feature bicycle racks on the front.

You can plan your trip using the online route planner at: [http://www.capmetro.org/planner/](http://www.capmetro.org/planner/) All you need is the address of where you are, the address of where you want to go and when you wish to arrive. You may also call the Capital Metro GO Line at 474-1200 for assistance. All route information is available in Capital Metro schedule books, which are available for $3 at the Capital Metro Transit Store at 209 West 9th Street. PDF files for each of the pages from the schedule book are available for free at the Capital Metro website: [http://www.capmetro.org](http://www.capmetro.org)

**Capital MetroRail**
Capital MetroRail is Central Texas’ newest way to commute. The 32-mile (51.5 km) Red Line offers service weekday mornings and afternoons from Leander to Downtown Austin. Whether you are commuting to work downtown, headed to the university or moving between any of the nine stations on the line, Capital MetroRail is a comfortable and reliable way to get there. For more information: [http://www.capmetro.org/MetroRail/](http://www.capmetro.org/MetroRail/)

**UT Austin Shuttles**
The UT Austin Shuttle System is the largest university shuttle system in the country, with 14 routes and over 7.5 million passengers annually. The shuttle system provides an easy and cost effective way to access the UT Austin campus. Shuttle routes are designated with two or three letters. Students, faculty, and staff may ride the shuttles at no charge with a valid UT Austin photo ID. Without an ID, the charge is $1.25. For route information: [http://www.utexas.edu/parking/transportation/shuttle/index.html](http://www.utexas.edu/parking/transportation/shuttle/index.html)
TAXIS/RISE SHARE SERVICES

A taxi can take you to almost any destination in the Austin area, 24 hours a day, but it is more expensive than other forms of transportation. If you are downtown, taxis can usually be hired on the street by signaling the driver by raising your hand and waving it. Otherwise, you should call one of the numbers listed below. Be prepared to give your current location and the time you want to be picked up.

The fare for a taxi is based on the distance traveled and the number of passengers. There may be an initial pick-up charge in addition to the distance charge. Yellow Cab Austin offers a fare estimator on their website. The fare is shown on the meter in the front of the cab. It is customary to tip the driver 10% of the total fare if the service is good.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Austin Cab 512-478-2222  http://www.austincab.com
- Yellow Cab 512-434-7714  http://www.yellowcabaustin.com
- UBER a phone app  https://www.uber.com
- Lyft A phone app  https://www.lyft.com/cities/austin

BICYCLES

Bicyclists must obey the same traffic rules as drivers, including stopping at stop signs. Adults are not required by law to wear a helmet. Children under the age of 18 are required by law to wear a helmet.

Note: Wearing a bicycle helmet is strongly recommended for protection in case of an accident.

If you plan on riding your bike on campus, you are required to register your bike with the University. You can register your bike online at the website below, or in person at the Trinity Garage (TRG) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. When registering a bike, please provide all the requested information, including the manufacturer's serial number and your EID. To prevent theft, bicycles should be secured with a strong U-lock or stored indoors when not being ridden.

UT Austin Bicycle Registration:
http://www.utexas.edu/parking/transportation/biking/index.html

Bicycle rental: Austin has one of the most successful bike-sharing programs in the country. Currently there are over 40 B-cycle stations around Austin. For more information on pricing and locations, visit: https://austin.bcycle.com/

CARS (AUTOMOBILES)

There are advantages and disadvantages to owning a car. Convenience is the primary advantage. However, owning a car can be quite expensive. The financial burden of a car, items such as insurance, gasoline, parking fees and maintenance costs, should be considered before purchase.
**PURCHASING AN AUTOMOBILE**
New cars are sold by authorized dealers. Used cars are sold by dealers as well as by individuals. It is advisable that you hire a mechanic to check a used car and give you an opinion on its overall condition before you purchase it. This “buyer's check” will cost $50-$75, but may save you from purchasing a defective car or “lemon.”

Helpful information for purchasing a car is available from the Texas Attorney General’s Office: http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/buying_car.shtml

**AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE**
Texas law requires that automobile drivers be able to pay for damages resulting from accidents they may cause. Most drivers do this by buying automobile liability insurance. Liability insurance pays to repair or replace the other driver’s car and pays other people’s medical expenses. It does not pay to repair or replace your car or for your injuries. The penalty for driving without insurance is severe; no vehicle should be driven without liability insurance.

Consult the Texas Department of Insurance “Automobile Insurance Made Easy” website for more information: http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/pubs/consumer/cb020.html Compare the rates and coverage limits of several insurance companies before buying a policy. Ask about payment options.

**TITLE TRANSFER**
All motor vehicles have a “title” or certificate of vehicle ownership. The title must be transferred from the previous owner to the buyer. To transfer a Texas Certificate of Title you need:

- **Certificate of Title:** Seller signs and dates the title on the back. To avoid penalty, the title must be filed within 20 business days;
- **Liability Insurance:** You must provide proof of liability insurance at the time of title transfer;
- **Application for Texas Title:** Seller and Buyer sign and date the transfer application form
  - VTR-130-U available at the website below;
- **Emission Control Test:** Bring proof of emissions control test.

Take these documents to:

Travis County Tax Office
5501 Airport Boulevard
Austin, Texas 78751-1410
Phone: (512) 854-9473
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Title transfer fees include: 6.25% sales tax on the purchase price of the vehicle and a $33 title and registration fee. Complete vehicle title transfer information is available at: http://www.traviscountytax.org/goVehiclesTitleTransfers.do
**VEHICLE REGISTRATION**
All automobiles in Texas must have a current registration sticker. Automobile registration stickers are issued by the county tax office and must be renewed every year. Fees vary, depending on the age of your car. Register your car at:

Travis County Tax Office  
5501 Airport Boulevard  
Austin, Texas 78751-1410  
Phone: (512) 854-9473  
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday  
[http://www.traviscountytax.org](http://www.traviscountytax.org)

Renewal notices are usually sent by mail, but if the driver does not receive a renewal notice, it is still their responsibility to renew the registration sticker. Owners may also renew their registration online at: [http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol](http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol)

**SAFETY INSPECTION AND EMISSIONS TEST**
All vehicles in Texas must pass an annual safety inspection. Cars registered in Travis County must also pass an emissions test. These must be done at an Official Inspection Station, which can be found at the website below or online under “Auto Inspection Stations.”

Official Inspection Station locator: [http://dps.texas.gov/rsd/vi/VIactiveStationLocator/](http://dps.texas.gov/rsd/vi/VIactiveStationLocator/)

**MOTORCYCLES**
Motorcyclists in Texas must hold a valid motorcycle (Class M) driver license. This requirement also applies to operators of motor-driven cycles and mopeds. To receive a Class M license, you must pass a vision test and written exam at the Department of Public Safety Driver License office. Information about the test and written exam can be found on the DPS website below.

Motorcyclists must obey the same rules as automobile drivers, including the purchase of liability insurance. Riders over the age of 21 are not required to wear a helmet as long as they have completed a motorcycle operator training and safety course through the Department of Public Safety OR have $10,000 of accident insurance.

Motorcycle Safety Unit (DPS): [http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/msb/](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/msb/)  
**Applying for a Texas Driver License or Texas ID Card**

F-1/J-1 students who plan to drive a car and who have an immigration document for 6 months into the future should obtain a Texas Driver License from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Students who do not plan to drive a car, but still have an immigration document for 6-months in to the future, may apply for a Texas Identification Card at the DPS.

**Note:** A person 18 to 75 years of age with a valid out-of-country driver license in their possession may drive a car for up to one year from the date of entry into the US if there is an international reciprocity agreement for driver licensing with the US and the country that issued the drivers license.

Please take the following steps to apply for a Texas Driver License or follow Step 3 to apply for Texas ID card:

2. Take the written and in-car exam for driving at any DPS office. If you do not have a driver license from another state, you must take both a written and a driving test. There is $25.00 fee, valid for three opportunities to take the test within a 90-day period.
3. You will need the following documents to apply for the Texas Driver License OR Texas ID card: Passport, Visa, I-20 or DS-2019 *with a program end date of at least 6 months in to the future*, I-94 card, current enrollment letter from ESL Services, and Social Security Card. If you are NOT eligible for a Social Security Number, you will need to sign a “Social Security Affidavit” at the DPS office when applying for your Texas Driver License. There is $16 fee for the Texas ID card.

Dependents can also apply for Texas Driver License or Texas ID Card. Dependents follow steps 1-3 above and provide primary visa holders current enrollment letter, and copies of primary visa holders immigration documents.

**Texas Department of Public Safety Offices**

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

- 5805 North Lamar Blvd. 512-424-2000
- 13730 Research Blvd. 512-424-2600
- 6425 South I-H 35 Ste. 180 512-444-5241

[http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/)

**Renewing Your Driver License**

If you have a current Texas driver license, it can be renewed online through the TexasOnline website. The fee is $25 and must be paid with a credit card.

[http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol](http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol)
**If You Are Involved In An Accident**

If you are driving a vehicle that is involved in an accident, you must immediately stop as close as possible to the scene of the crash. Try not to obstruct traffic any more than is necessary. The police should be contacted immediately if anyone is injured or if the vehicles involved cannot be driven safely.

Remain at the scene of the crash until you:
- Give your name, address, vehicle registration number, and insurance information to anyone who was involved in the crash;
- Record the name, address, vehicle registration number and insurance information of other driver(s) involved in the crash;
- Show your driver license to any person injured or the other driver(s) involved in the crash; and
- Provide reasonable assistance to any person injured. This includes transporting or making arrangement for transporting the person to a doctor or hospital for medical treatment.

**Note:** Failure to stop and comply with the above requirements is a very serious offense!

If you are involved in a crash where the other driver does not stop (hit and run), report this incident to the police as soon as possible.

If you are driving a vehicle that collides with and damages an unattended vehicle, you must immediately stop and:
- Attempt to locate the owner of the unattended vehicle and give that person your name and address or,
- Leave a written note giving your name and address and the circumstances of the collision. Securely attach this note to the damaged vehicle in a plainly visible location.

**If You Are Stopped By The Police**

- Move your vehicle safely to the right edge of the road as soon as possible and stop.
- Turn the engine off, and activate the hazard warning lights.
- Remain in the vehicle and lower the driver’s window.
- **WAIT FOR THE OFFICER TO ISSUE FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.**
- **FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE OFFICER.**
- Require all occupants to remain in the vehicle unless otherwise instructed by the officer.
- Give the appropriate signals and safely return to the proper lane of traffic when released by the officer.

**Note:** It is an offense to give a false or fictitious name to a police officer if you have been lawfully arrested or detained.
Culture and Education in the United States

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

CULTURE SHOCK
Living in another country can be very challenging. Almost everyone experiences “culture shock” to some degree. Culture shock is a feeling of dislocation that affects people in a new place or country. It is caused by unfamiliarity with the new country, by not being able to speak the language fluently or understand the many new idioms, and by not knowing how to behave in an unfamiliar culture.

Many who experience culture shock do not realize that they are suffering from it - all they know is that everything is very difficult in their new home. Not only is the language different, but gestures, facial expressions, and, traditions are also different. Newcomers sometimes feel like children because they cannot understand all these new things at once.

STAGES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT
There are four stages of cultural adjustment. Each stage lasts a different length of time for every individual who experiences it. In general, the stages are:

Stage 1: Excitement! During this stage, visitors often feel excited. The new country is interesting, the people are friendly and helpful, and the future looks promising.

Stage 2: Problems! School, language, shopping—everything is difficult. Things that were simple back home require more effort in the new country. It seems hard to make friends, and at this point, visitors may begin to believe that the local people are unfriendly. Homesickness begins, and, along with it, complaints about the new country. This is the stage we refer to as “culture shock.”

Stage 3: Recovery. The visitor begins to use the language more fluently, so communication with locals becomes easier. Customs and traditions become clearer, and slowly the situation passes from impossible to hopeful. Minor misunderstandings that were stressful in Stage 2 become manageable.

Stage 4: Stability. Eventually visitors begin to feel more at home in the new country. Things they might not like about their new country no longer make them so dissatisfied and unhappy. Life has settled down, and they are now able to find humor in the situations in which they find themselves.

Request a Study Abroad Cultural Analysis Toolkit to help you with the cultural adjustment. As cited on The University of Texas at Austin McCombs Business School website, “Dr. Deirdre Mendez has developed a set of materials students can use while abroad to perform a self-guided cultural assessment of a new environment. The materials help them anticipate problems they will face in the new context, solve problems that arise while abroad, and learn from the experience. The toolkit can be deployed with minimal introduction and no in-country supervision. It is suitable for study tours and short-term, semester and year-long programs. It is designed to be used by students from any cultural environment going to any destination, and is available for education and training purposes at no cost.” https://www.mccombs.utexas.edu/Centers/CIBER/Study-Abroad-Toolkit-Download
**Getting Used to a New Country Quickly and Comfortably**

**Explore - get a sense for the physical environment.**
- Go on campus and Austin walking tours.
- Talk to people in your department.
- Try to find a student to show you around.
- Read the *Daily Texan* and go to “brown bag” seminars.
- Find a friend and do your own walking tour.

**Get a sense for norms of behavior.**
- Watch people’s behaviors. (Keep a journal of what you observe!)
- How do people greet each other?
- How do they line up, how do they seat themselves on a bus?
- How do people behave in offices?
- How do people behave while walking on the street?

**Be slow to judge.**
*Observe first,* then find a “cultural interpreter” (someone who knows the culture) and ask. Be sure to ask why people do what they do. A good place to find cultural informants is at the International Office. While you are observing behavior, you might think about what people would do in the same situation in your country. That way you will learn about your own culture as well and have a basis of comparison.

**Go to events where you can meet people over time.**
- Join the PALS program and a language circle
- Participate in RecSports
- Join student organizations

**Read, listen, and watch.**
- Read local newspapers such as The Austin American Statesman and The Austin Chronicle.
- Check out books about American culture.
- Listen to KUT-FM (90.5), the UT Austin operated radio station.
- Watch KLRU-TV (Channel 18), Austin’s affiliate of the Public Broadcasting System.

**Relax, take it slowly, and keep your sense of humor!**

---Adapted from Kay Clifford / University of Michigan at Ann Arbor
U.S. Cultural Values

- **Personal Control over the Environment**: People control their own environment, destiny, and future. This results in an energetic and goal-oriented society.

- **Change / Mobility**: Change is seen as positive and as an indication of progress/growth. It is therefore common for many people to move to various cities during their lives.

- **Time and Its Control**: Time is considered valuable, as its productive use results in achievement of goals. This may result in progress at the expense of personal relations.

- **Equality**: People have equal opportunities and are important for who they are, not for their family background or the status they might hold.

- **Individualism, Independence, and Privacy**: People are seen as separate individuals and need time to be alone. As a result, Americans might be seen as self-centered and isolated.

- **Action and Work Orientation**: Americans believe that work is morally right, and that it is immoral to waste time, so they may be perceived as giving much emphasis to “doing.”

- **Competition and Free Enterprise**: Americans believe competition brings out the best in people and leads to success, so there is more emphasis on competition than cooperation.

- **Materialism**: Material goods are seen as the rewards of hard work. For this reason Americans may be seen as caring more for things than people or relationships.

- **Practicality**: This is an important consideration when decisions are made, and this may lead to less emphasis given to the subjective or the emotional aspect involved.

- **Future Orientation / Optimism**: It is believed that regardless of past events, the future will be better. This may lead to less value given to the past and more to “tomorrow.”

--Adapted from Robert Kohls, *The Values Americans Live By*

Characteristics of the U.S. Academic Environment

The values listed above shape the academic environment in the following ways:

1. **Active classroom participation** is expected.

2. **Time pressure** is high, and **time management** is an important skill to develop.

3. **Critical thinking** must be developed.

4. **Independent thinking** is highly valued.

5. **Presenting ideas** articulately in class is expected.

6. **Assignments** (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.

7. **Competition** is a normal part of most students’ thinking.

8. **Achievement** and **hard work** are highly valued: the finished product is most important.
9. **Self-reliance** - students must be responsible for themselves.
10. **Equality** - all students should be treated equally.
11. **Informality** is normal.
12. **Direct and straightforward communication** is expected.
13. **Friendship** is usually based on doing things in common -- sports, studying, etc.
14. **Combining theory and practice** - the practical application of ideas is emphasized.
15. **Problem-solving orientation** - “If it’s broken, we ought to be able to fix it!”
16. The **scientific method** and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.

--Developed by Dr. R.M. Paige and S.L. Smith, University of Minnesota, October 1988

### Differences in Educational Systems and Academic Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Cultures</th>
<th>US Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May have special treatment or make exceptions, usually for foreigners. May have special classes, exams, or easier requirements than local students.</td>
<td>Little special treatment for foreigners, graded exactly like others. May offer extra time during exams or to finish assignments. Often do not offer assistance if students know English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study may be relaxed throughout semester with heavy concentration study at end of second (academic) term and before finals. Exams are of primary importance and sometimes the only form of evaluation.</td>
<td>Heavy and constant work from the first day of class. Getting behind is a disaster as it is hard to catch up. Emphasis on writing skills, debate, and discussion or readings. Students may be graded on class participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework and schedules are often preprogrammed by the institution. Students know what they will take and when they will take it for the entire degree program.</td>
<td>Students choose classes by individual preference within requirements. Undergraduates take a number of courses within their area of interest during junior and senior years. Graduates and undergrads choose elective classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students either often study in groups or are assigned to groups with whom they stay with for their entire program.</td>
<td>Students choose classes individually. May find other students to study with on an individual basis. Professors may assign group projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually stay in one field of interest. In many countries, specialization begins at the pre-university level.</td>
<td>US considers breadth of understanding of greatest importance. Specialization begins during the junior year of the undergraduate degree and may continue at the graduate level, although some departments specialize earlier (such as music or engineering).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Differences in Learning Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Cultures</th>
<th>US Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture customary. May not view personal experience as relevant or as having educational value.</td>
<td>Lecture and experiential both accepted as legitimate learning. Accept personal experience as relevant and having educational value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May not expect to be called upon unless hand is raised. This may result in embarrassment.</td>
<td>Anticipate being called upon. May not feel ashamed if do not know answer or are not prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students often assist each other, may study in groups.</td>
<td>Students often compete. May work in groups but will do certain parts individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are often formal with professors.</td>
<td>Students are often informal with professors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may wait 10 to 30 seconds after another speaker before starting to speak. May see interrupting as rude.</td>
<td>Students may interrupt each other and professor (this may not be viewed as interrupting). Usual turn-taking is 10 seconds or less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization, problem solving, intense discussion may be expected.</td>
<td>Memorization, problem solving, creativity may be expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may be passive. Students may not speak if they agree. Students may not speak or offer an opinion if they do not know answer.</td>
<td>Students may be active. Students may speak if they agree or disagree. Students may speak or offer an opinion even if they do not know the answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may be relationally oriented.</td>
<td>Students may be goal-oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May dress formally for class; may not eat, drink, or put feet on desk. May not eat in front of anyone unless could offer to everyone.</td>
<td>May dress informally for class, may eat, drink, or put feet on desk. May not offer everyone food and drink.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---Copyright Kay Clifford, The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor."
PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The value of a degree or certificate from The University of Texas at Austin is largely related to the good reputation of The University. Incidents of academic dishonesty reflect poorly on the institution’s integrity and lessen the worth of the education attained by all university students. Academic dishonesty is broadly defined on this campus as: ANY ACT DESIGNED TO GAIN AN UNFAIR ACADEMIC ADVANTAGE.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY
Acts of scholastic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

• **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism includes submitting someone else’s work as your own, which may occur unintentionally by not properly crediting sources.

• **Collusion.** Collusion includes unapproved collaboration with others on assignments (such as lab reports, papers, or group projects) or tests (take-home or in class). This violation also includes allowing another person to copy from your assignment or test paper.

• **Copying.** Copying from someone else’s paper or test is strictly forbidden. You should avoid even looking at another student’s test. It is also advised that you avoid sitting next to a friend or study partner when taking a test.

• **Possession of unauthorized materials during a test.** This includes possessing unauthorized notes, textbooks, or information stored electronically, such as in a calculator.

• **Failure to comply with instructions during a test.** Instructions often vary. Be sure to follow whatever instructions you receive for a specific test.

• **Falsifying academic records.** This includes altering graded tests, falsifying lab reports or papers, and misrepresenting facts on applications for admission or residency questionnaires.

THE COSTS OF SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY CAN BE SEVERE.
You may see or hear of others cheating. If so, don’t assume that it is tolerated! Students can be suspended or expelled permanently from The University for scholastic dishonesty. A failing grade in the course is also a common sanction. In addition, scholastic dishonesty generally leads to the creation of a disciplinary record that may impact future employment and educational opportunities. In short, scholastic dishonesty is simply not worth the risks.

AVOIDING SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY
Know what your instructor expects. Always seek clarification from the instructor — don’t rely on fellow students for information. For example: To what extent is working together allowed? Know exactly what is and what is not allowed. What type of citations is expected on a paper?
Remember:

- Desperation clouds judgment and leads to poor decision-making. Don’t allow yourself to feel desperate in a course.
- Don’t put off to the last minute completing a paper or project or studying for an exam.
- What you may see as a “shortcut” could actually be scholastic dishonesty.
- Don’t allow yourself to think the risks are worth it. That’s gambling with your future!
- If you think you might need some help in a course, get tutoring early. Planning ahead will help you be more adequately prepared.

Understand that the rules that govern scholastic dishonesty in the United States may be more absolute than what some international students are accustomed to in their own culture. Some students may also assume that they can negotiate themselves out of a difficult situation after a violation has occurred, but at that point it may be too late to avoid what are often serious consequences.

Know the Rules
For the official university policy, see Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities in the General Information Catalog. The Catalog can be purchased at bookstores near campus, and copies of the excerpted Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities can be obtained at Student Judicial Services of the Office of the Dean of Students, Room 4.104 of the Student Services Building (SSB).

View Chapter 11 of the Catalog at: [http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information](http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information)
View General Information 2014-2015 website at: [http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information](http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information)

--Adapted from Kevin Price, Office of the Dean of Students, The University of Texas at Austin.
Dealing with Organizations in the United States

We have all experienced frustration in dealing with organizations. When this frustration is combined with international students’ perceptions about the roles of office personnel in the United States, there can be serious misunderstandings. This can lead to anger, hurt feelings, and even greater difficulties in getting what you need. These important guidelines can help you to have positive, productive interactions.

**Guidelines for Getting Things Done**

- First, be respectful of all employees. In the United States, secretaries and receptionists are important people. They often have power to make decisions, and they may have the information you need.
- Second, remember that in the United States rules are often strictly followed, and procedures may not be negotiable. Arguing or demanding to see someone “in charge” will not often lead to success. It is more effective to explain exactly what you need or what kind of problem you have, and ask, “What do I do now?” or “Is there someone who could help me?” Even though employees usually can’t “bend the rules” if they like you, they may put a little extra energy into solving your problem if you are polite.
- Third, if you follow procedures and instructions carefully, you can save a lot of time and energy. Many business procedures are done over the phone or via the Internet, making a personal visit unnecessary. Take the names and phone numbers of people you talk to, in case some delay or complication arises and you need further help.

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Adapted from *American Ways* by Gary Althen, University of Iowa. Excerpted from the Handbook of The University of Minnesota.
Friendship in the United States

You may find that Americans have very different ideas than you do about making friends. Until you get used to it, American friendliness (such as smiling and being sociable or helpful) can be confused with an invitation for a friendship.

This does not necessarily mean that Americans do not want to be friends with you. However, they are much slower to form deep relationships than first impressions may indicate. Respect for your privacy and concern about making you uncomfortable can make many Americans shy with international students, so you may have to make the first move.

Because Americans are “doers,” it is helpful when trying to make friends to ask someone to do something with you: go out for a meal, to a movie, shopping, bowling, to a ball game, etc.


**Perspectives on Friendship:**

**United States and Contrasting Viewpoints**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Contrasting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A friend is anyone from a passing acquaintance to a lifetime intimate.</td>
<td>A friend is someone with whom one is very close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends are often limited to an area of common interest, such as work, school, or recreation.</td>
<td>A friendship embraces the whole person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends gather to enjoy an activity together.</td>
<td>Friends gather just to be together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone has a problem, it is acceptable to go to a professional (i.e. counselor) for help.</td>
<td>Someone with a problem goes to a friend or family member for help at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends are changed if they do not live up to our expectations or standards of behavior.</td>
<td>One tolerates a lot from someone who is a friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships cross genders.</td>
<td>Friendships are only with the same gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships cross generations.</td>
<td>Friendships are with people of the same age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One schedules time to see friends.</td>
<td>Friends are available at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans act friendly and informally with almost everyone.</td>
<td>People who don’t know each other maintain a formal relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Safety in the United States

The majority of people in the US live peaceful lives and never experience violence, and Austin is, generally, a very safe city. We have included this information to help you be safe while living in the US. You do not need to be afraid, but you do need to be cautious.

**General Health Issues**

- **In an emergency, call 911.** A dispatcher will ask for your name and location, and then contact the police, fire department, or ambulance service for you, as appropriate. **Do not call this number for non-emergency situations.**
- Know the locations of medical centers near you and carry your student insurance card with you at all times.
- Tell any doctor you see about all the medications you take, even if you do not think it is related to that visit. Mixing medications can be very dangerous.

**Personal Safety**

- Carry a personal alarm or cell phone when walking on campus or downtown, especially after dark. Avoid walking alone as much as possible. Do not walk alone at night.
- Walk confidently and be aware of your surroundings. Avoid isolated or poorly lit areas.
- If you need police assistance, you can contact University police (UTPD) by using one of the yellow outdoor emergency phones located around campus.
- Carry your keys in your hand, to seem as if you are almost to your destination.
- If you have children, give them a code word that another person must know to be considered safe. Teach them that if someone talks to them who does not know this code word, they should find another adult and say loudly “a stranger is bothering me.”
- If you do not know someone well but would like to get together again, do not give out your address. Instead, make plans to meet in a safe, public location.
- Take a self-defense class. Many are offered by the university, through RecSports or the university police.

**Auto and Bike Safety**

- Park in well lit areas after dark. Avoid isolated areas.
- If you have a bicycle, a U-shaped lock is the best lock to use. Lock your bike securely to a post or bicycle rack. Lock the bike frame and tires together. Wear a helmet when riding, and register your bicycle with the university.
- Keep car doors locked at all times. When walking to your car, especially at night, have your car key in your hand, ready to unlock the door. Do not leave items anywhere they can be seen from outside.
- Keep proof of insurance in your vehicle at all times. Consider comprehensive insurance coverage if you have a newer vehicle. Be sure you have medical benefits on your auto insurance policy.
Austin Area Points of Interest

DOWNTOWN

**Austin Museum of Art**, 700 Congress Avenue, (512) 453-5312. This museum exhibits art from a variety of periods and cultures, with an emphasis on the art of the twentieth century to the present. Visit the website for a listing of current exhibits. [http://www.amoa.org](http://www.amoa.org)

**Bremond Block**, between 7th and 8th Streets and between San Antonio and Guadalupe Streets. This collection of 11 houses, built between 1850 and 1877, illustrates early Austin at its finest. Though none of the structures are open to the public, a stroll around this elegant tree-shaded block reveals the lifestyle of a bygone era. [https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ghb02](https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ghb02)

**Congress Avenue**, Austin’s main street is enjoying a lively revitalization as high-rise complexes are built next to nineteenth-century buildings. Listed on the national Register of Historic Places, the street took on even greater historical significance in 1984, when mastodon bones were unearthed at a construction site in the 300 block, indicating that prehistoric elephants roamed here some ten thousand years ago. The Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge, which stretches across the Colorado River south of downtown, is home to 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats from mid-March until November. The bats emerge every evening at dusk to feast on pesky flying insects.

**The Driskill Hotel**, 604 Brazos Street, (512) 439-1234. Built in 1886 by cattle baron Jesse Driskill, Austin’s oldest hotel has remained a popular gathering spot for politicians and socialites. The Driskill recently underwent a major remodeling, costing around 30 million dollars. Presidents and other celebrities have stayed in the Oil Barons Suite at this historic hotel. [http://www.driskillhotel.com/](http://www.driskillhotel.com/)

**Texas Governor’s Mansion**, 1010 Colorado Street, (512) 463-0063. Recognized as one of the finest examples of nineteenth-century Greek Revival architecture, the mansion has been the home of every Texas governor since 1856. Free guided tours of the Texas Governor's Mansion are available Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and select Saturdays, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tours last 30 minutes and are subject to availability. Reservations are required for tours and must be made at least one week in advance. There are no walk-up tours. Visitors may call (512) 305-8524 for tour reservations, or email [mansion.tours@tspb.state.tx.us](mailto:mansion.tours@tspb.state.tx.us). For more information, please visit Texas Governor’s Mansion website at [http://www.txfgm.org/](http://www.txfgm.org/).

**Old Bakery and Emporium**, 1006 Congress Avenue, (512) 974-1300. Built as a bakery in 1876 by Swedish immigrant Karl Lundberg, the building now houses a craft shop selling handcrafted items and home-baked goods made by Austin senior citizens.
Old Pecan Street/ Sixth Street. Before the Capitol was built, Old Pecan Street served as Austin’s main street. The seven-block area is a popular destination, with over 70 restaurants, clubs, and shops to enjoy. On weekend nights, Old Pecan Street takes on a festive atmosphere as thousands gather to enjoy the nightlife, street performers, and live entertainment. Weekend parking is limited, so take a taxi or use a nearby parking lot. Each fall and spring, the street is closed off for the Old Pecan Street Festival, where artists gather to sell their handicrafts.

The Paramount Theater, 713 Congress Avenue, (512) 472-5470. The Paramount Theatre has stood on Congress Avenue in the heart of downtown Austin for 100 years. As Austin’s oldest surviving theatre (built in 1915), the Paramount has a long history of entertaining Central Texas audiences. Originally conceived as a Vaudeville and variety house, the Paramount continues to bring comedy, drama, music, dance, spoken word, and films to its stage. [http://www.austintheatre.org/](http://www.austintheatre.org/)

Texas Capitol Building, 11th and Congress, (512) 305-8400. Completed in 1888 as the winning design from a national competition, the Texas Capitol is widely recognized as one of the nation's most distinguished state capitol buildings. Located on one of Austin's highest points, the Capitol building anchors the north end of the downtown district. The Texas Capitol is the largest in area of all the state capitol buildings. The Texas Capitol is 308 feet (94 meters) tall and surpasses the National Capitol in height, rising almost 15 feet (4.5 meters) above its Washington D.C. counterpart. Free guided tours of the rotunda are offered daily 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., but call ahead for the tour schedule. [http://www.tspb.state.tx.us/](http://www.tspb.state.tx.us/)

**Campus Area**

The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave, (512) 936-8746. The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum tells the “Story of Texas” with three floors of interactive exhibits, a special effects show, and Austin's only IMAX Theatre. A 35-foot (10.7 meters) tall bronze Lone Star sculpture greets visitors in front of the Museum, and a colorful terrazzo floor in the Museum's rotunda features scenes from Texas' past. The Museum also has a Cafe with indoor and outdoor seating. [http://www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)

The Blanton Museum of Art, 200 East MLK, (512) 471-7324. The Blanton Museum of Art is the art museum of The University of Texas at Austin. It is closed Mondays, open from 1-5 on Sundays, and open 10-5 on other days. Free to UT Austin students.

The Drag/Guad. Guadalupe Street from Martin Luther King Blvd. to Dean Keeton (26th Street). The Drag/Guad runs along the western edge of the UT Austin main campus, and is a popular retail and gathering place for students and visitors.

Littlefield Fountain, West 21st Street and University Avenue. A favorite setting for photographers, the Littlefield Fountain was erected in 1932 as a memorial to students who served in the armed forces during World War I.
The Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, 2313 Red River, (512) 721-0200. The University of Texas at Austin is one of two university campuses to house a Presidential Library. Displays include a replica of the Oval Office, biographical glimpses of President Johnson and his Great Society Programs, and gifts presented to the President while he was in office. The Library also contains the papers of the Johnson administration. Free Admission. http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu

Texas Performing Arts (PAC), 23rd Street and Robert Dedman Drive, (512) 471-1444. The Texas Performing Arts complex includes the 3,000-seat Bass Concert Hall and 5 other state-of-the-art theaters. Texas Performing Arts also hosts a wide variety of performing groups and ensembles from around the world. http://www.utpac.org

Santa Rita No. 1, Martin Luther King Blvd. and San Jacinto. The first drilling rig to strike oil on University land in west Texas has been preserved on the main campus. The oil discovery resulted in the creation of a permanent building fund for The University’s statewide network of campuses.

Texas Memorial Museum, 2400 Trinity Street, (512) 471-1604. The Texas Memorial Museum is the exhibit hall of the Texas Natural Science Center. Displays include native wildlife, dinosaurs, Native American exhibits, gems, minerals and more. Free Admission. http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/

University of Texas Tower, Main Building (MAI). The 307-foot (93.5 meters) tall UT Austin Tower was completed in 1937. Through the years, the Tower has served as the University’s most distinguishing landmark. The observation deck of the Tower offers a spectacular view of the University campus and the Austin area in all directions. The observation deck has recently been remodeled and reopened to the public for the first time in nearly three decades. As a part of the renovation process, persons with disabilities now also have access to this monumental view.

Observation deck tours are available by reservation only through the Texas Union Information Center. For information on availability and the schedule of tour reservations, call (512) 475-6636.

You can view images of various buildings and historical landmarks on the UT Austin campus at: http://maps.utexas.edu/ or for a virtual tour visit: https://www.utexas.edu/tours/top/
AROUND AUSTIN

Barton Springs Pool, 2201 Barton Springs Road, (512) 867-3080. Open April-October. Within Zilker Park’s 351 acres (1.41 sq. km.), lies one of the crown jewels of Austin, Barton Springs Pool. Three acres (12,140 sq. meters) in size, the pool is fed from underground springs and is on average 68 degrees *F (20 degrees *C) year round.  
http://www.austintexas.gov/department/barton-springs-pool

Camp Mabry Military History Museum, West 35th Street and Mopac Expressway. The home of the Texas National Guard, Camp Mabry was established in 1890 as a summer encampment for the Texas Volunteer Guard. Although Camp Mabry is closed to casual traffic, the Military History Museum is still open for business. Exhibits cover the complete history of the Texas Military from the Texas Revolution to present day. The museum is open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Free Tours of the museum may be scheduled by calling (512) 782-5659 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
http://www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org/

Elizabet Ney Museum, 304 East 44th Street, (512) 458-2255. The Elisabet Ney Museum is the former studio and portrait collection created by nineteenth-century sculptor Elisabet Ney, one of the most colorful and influential women in early Texas history. One of the oldest museums in Texas, the Elisabet Ney Museum offers visitors a glimpse into early Texas history and into the life of a creative and spirited woman. Ney’s sculptures of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin are on display in the Texas State Capitol. Free Admission.  
http://www.austintexas.gov/Elisabetney

French Legation Museum, 802 San Marcos (at East 7th Street), (512) 472-8180. This French Provincial style cottage was built in 1841 for the French charge d’affairs (ambassador) to the Republic of Texas. Museum hours are 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Sunday. The last tour begins at 4 p.m.  
http://www.frenchlegationmuseum.org

George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, 1165 Angelina Street, 472-4809. The museum opened in 1980 as the first African-American neighborhood museum in Texas. George Washington Carver was a well-known educator and agriculturalist. He developed many innovative uses for peanuts while studying and teaching at Iowa State University and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Free Admission.  
http://www.austintexas.gov/carver-museum

Austin Museum of Art-Laguna Gloria, 3809 West 35th Street, (512) 458-8191. Located in a Mediterranean villa on Lake Austin, Laguna Gloria is noted for its changing exhibits of twentieth-century art. The beautiful grounds also house the Texas Fine Arts Association and Fiesta Laguna Gloria each May.  
http://www.amoa.org
Mount Bonnell Park, This park features a natural limestone formation that stands about 200 feet (60 meters) above the surrounding area. Mount Bonnell offers breathtaking views of the Austin skyline and Lake Austin. [http://www.austincityguide.com/content/mt-bonnell-austin.asp](http://www.austincityguide.com/content/mt-bonnell-austin.asp)

Neil-Cochran Museum, 2310 San Gabriel Street, (512) 478-2335. Built in 1855 by Abner Cook, the architect of the Governor's Mansion. The museum building is a striking blend of native Texas materials and Greek Revival Architecture. Open 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday - Friday. $5 admission with student ID.

O. Henry Home and Museum, 409 East 5th Street, (512) 472-1903. Hours: 12:00 noon-5:00 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday. The O. Henry Museum offers a look into the life of William Sidney Porter, the man who became famous under the pen name O. Henry. Known as "the master of the short story," Porter lived in this 1886 Queen Anne-style cottage from 1893 to 1895. His home has since been restored and now contains artifacts and memorabilia from Porter's life in Austin. One of Austin's funniest events, the O. Henry Pun-Off, takes place on the lawn of the museum on the first Sunday in May. [http://www.austintexas.gov/department/o-henry-museum](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/o-henry-museum)

Symphony Square, Red River at 11th Street, (512) 974-6700. This unique complex of historic limestone buildings features a 500-seat amphitheater. Its stage and seating area are bisected by Waller Creek. Varied weekend entertainment takes place during the spring and summer months. [http://www.austinsymphony.org/visitor/symphony-square-events/](http://www.austinsymphony.org/visitor/symphony-square-events/)

Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail, north and south shores of Lady Bird Lake. The product of Lady Bird Johnson’s beautification efforts, this 8.5-mile (13.7 km.) lakeside route is the most popular of Austin’s eight hike and bike trails. Parking is available at several places along the trail. Boat and canoe rentals are available at Zilker Park (512-478-3852); other hike and bike information is available from the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (512-974-6700).


Zilker Botanical Garden, 2200 Barton Springs Road, 477-8672. Open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. everyday March through November, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. November through March. Located on the north side of Zilker Park, attractions include rose, cactus, flower and herb gardens, the Taniguchi Japanese garden, escarpment trail, and the Austin Area Garden Center. [http://www.zilkergarden.org/](http://www.zilkergarden.org/)

Zilker Metropolitan Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road. Zilker Metropolitan Park is often considered Austin's most beautiful park. This 351-acre (1.41 sq. km.) natural area is home to a variety of recreation opportunities and special events. Zilker Park offers the spring-fed Barton Springs Pool, numerous sports fields, shaded picnic areas, a playscape for youngsters, a miniature train, and the Zilker Hillside Theater.
