

2025 - 2026





WELCOME

Dear visiting scholars,

Welcome to Texas State! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our academic community and bring your expertise, perspective, and esteemed company to our campus. As International scholars, researchers and professors, you play a vital role in shaping the global outlook of our institution. Whether you're here for a short stay or settling in for the next few years, we are committed to supporting your success both professionally and personally.

This orientation guide was created to help you navigate life at Texas State, the surrounding community, and the practical steps needed to get your bearings here in the USA. Inside, you'll find important information about visa requirements, university resources, cultural tips, health and safety, and more!

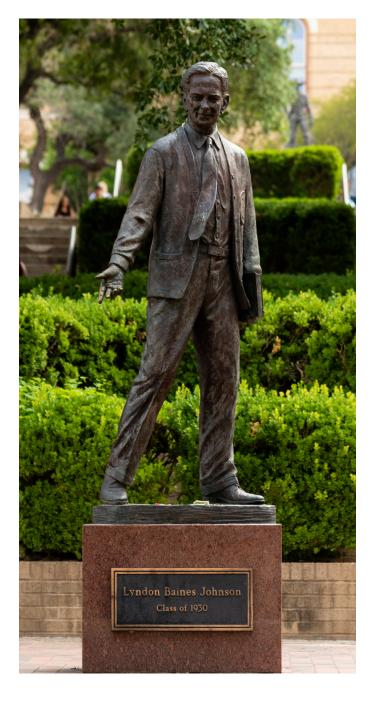
As your J-1 advisor, I am here to assist you throughout your stay. Please don't hesitate to reach out or stop by to see me in J.C Kellam Administration Building, room 314B if you have questions, need support, or simply want to connect. I look forward to getting to know you and hope this experience will be rewarding and enriching in every way.

Once again, welcome and thank you for being a part of our bobcat community.

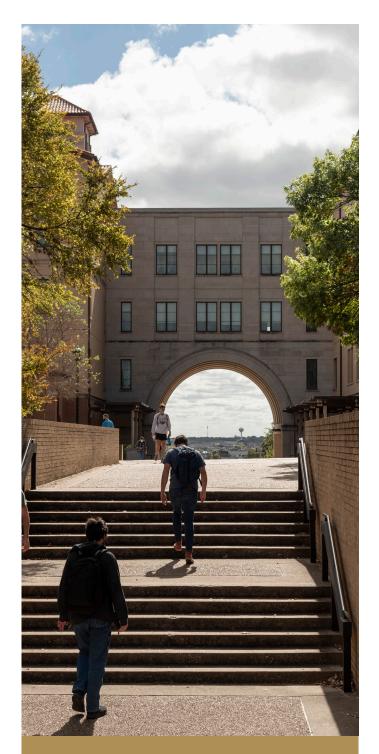
Warm regards,

Sarah Cates Tunnell, RO International Student Support Specialist and J-1 Advisor

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Visiting TXST as a J-1 scholar was an incredibly valuable experience, both personally and professionally. The research exchange allowed me to collaborate with experts in my field, access advanced lab facilities and gain new perspectives that have strengthened my academic work.

ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

☐ SECURE HOUSING

- If you have not done so already, please secure housing ASAP. An internet search for "homes for rent - 78666" will lead to to many helpful websites.
- For housing assistance please contact offcampusliving@txstate.edu or vis- it Texas State's off-campus housing self-service site.

☐ SECURE TRANSPORT (p16)

- The bobcat shuttle is free for students & staff, and local buses (CARTS) or rideshares are available.
- If cycling, skateboarding or scootering, be prepared for hills and hot weather.
- Parking permits are required if utilizing a motor vehicle. Please note, you will be required to obtain a US operators license if you plan on driving here for more than 30 days.

☐ SET UP LIVING ESSENTIALS

- Get local cell phone or SIM
- Open a local bank account
- Set up internet, utilities, waste and mail service (if not provided by landlord)
- Locate supermarkets and home goods stores to set up house (p16)
- Explore local and campus resources (pages 7-18)

□ COMPLETE J-1 ORIENTATION

- Please note this is a Visa Requirement, if you do not attend your arrival verification cannot be certified.
- Visit the TXST J-1 Arrival Orientation page, create an account and complete all required materials (including reviewing this guide).



ONE

COMPLETE J1 IMMIGRATION CHECK IN

Report your arrival to the ISSS Office:

- 1. Meet your Responsible Officer (RO)
- 2. Confirm completion of required J-1 Orientation
- 3. Submit I-94 and stamped passport
- 4. Sign arrival verification

TWO

VISIT HOSTING DEPARTMENT

- 1. Meet your sponsor
- 2. Tour department and facilities
- 3. Confirm schedule, office space, and work details.
- 4. Ensure human resources has all necessary info to activate university accounts.

THREE

COMPLETE ONBOARDING

- 1. If you have not already, complete any general onboarding requirements for your employment or internship, this may include setting up direct deposit, making healthcare elections, taking welcome courses and trainings, etc.
- 2. Access TXST email, student or staff portal, sharepoints, accounts, and softwares
- 3. Obtain TXST ID from ID Services (LBJ 203)

FOUR

START PROGRAM!

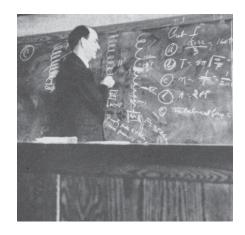


INTRO TO: TXST

Texas State University is a public, student-centered research institution guided by our unwavering belief in the power of education to transform communities, power economies, and reimagine the world. Our students come from every walk of life, from across Texas, the nation, and the world.

While Texas State was originally renowned for preparing public school teachers, today it has grown into a major institution of higher education and an emerging research university.





HISTORY

TXST has been serving its mission as a public, student-centered reserach institution since it first opened it's doors in 1903, as the Southwest Texas State Normal School. As Texas State's student population has grown — from 303 in 1903 to more than 40,678 in 2024 — the campuses (San Marcos and Round Rock), too, have expanded and today Texas State is the seventh largest public university in the state.



RECOGNITION

2 out of 3 bachelor's degrees at TXST are awarded to at-risk students.

1 of only 4 Texas universities recognized for social impact. Times Higher Education

Top Performer in social mobility U.S. News and World Report

2024 Fulbright Hispanic Serving Institution Leader USDOS Bureau of Educational & Cultural affairs



DEMOGRAPHICS

TXST's study body is made up of **36,000+** undergraduate and **4,000+** graduate students from **50** states, and **93** countries.

42% of TXST students are the first in their families to attend college.

60% of TXST students are women, compared to **40%** men.

40% latinx, **37%** White, **11%** Black **2.9%** Asian, **0.3%** indigenous & **3.7%** International.

YOUR LIFELINES



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

The International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS) office is located in the J.C Kellam Administration building on the third floor, room 314. This is your hub for everything related to visas, immigration, US residency, travel, and cultural exchange.

Our team is here M-F from 8 AM - 5 PM to assist you with your questions and concerns, as well as offer referrals to campus and community services to promote your success and overall well-being during your stay in the US.

Stop by to check-in once you've arrived, obtain travel signatures, learn about international campus events, or simply connect with a friendly face in your new home.

HUMAN RESOURCES

If you are joining our campus as part of an employment contract, the **Human Resources** office will be coordinating your benefits (including health insurance if it was part of your offer), activation and access to University systems, payroll and tax information, sick leave and vacation, employee assistance and discount programs. As such, they will be a critical contact in your early days on campus, as well as for any ongoing inquiries.

hr@txstate.edu +1 (512) 245-2557 231 N Guadalupe St, San Marcos, TX 78666 Monday-Friday 8 AM to 5 PM



J.C Kellam Administration Building 601 University Dr, San Marcos TX, 78666

STUDENT SERVICES

If you are joining our campus as a student intern, your lifelines will be TXST One Stop and the LBJ Student Student Center.

TXST One Stop is located on the second floor of the J.C Kellam Administration Building, and includes Financial Aid and Scholarships, the University Registrar, Student Business Services and Undergraduate Admissions.

The LBJ Student Center includes ID services, dining and shopping options, career services, the counseling center, disability services, legal services and meeting or event spaces.

CAMPUS AMENITIES 🍣

BOOKSTORE

Buy / Sell Textbooks
Stationary & Office Supplies
University Merchandise
Limited Home Goods
Personal Hygiene Products
Gifts & Care Packages
Music & Games
Art Materials
Electronics

DINING

2 Dining Halls 4 Food Trucks 3 Restaurant Food Courts 2 Markets 3 Cafés / Lounges

RECREATION

Gym/Weight Room
Group Exercise
Natatorium/Aquatics Center
Trainings & Certifications
Fitness Assessments
Personal Training
Climbing Center
Sports Facilities

SLAC

Tutoring
Writing Center
Supplemental Instruction
Success Coaching
Veteran Academic Success
Study Skills



RESOURCE LINKS

- Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC)
- TSIE English Language Intensives
- Division of Research
- Meal Plans (Students, Faculty & Staff)
- Outdoor Center
- Recreation Center (Gym)
- Career Services (Can assist J-2 Dependents!)
- Disability Services
- Bookstore
- Child Development Center
- Pregnancy Support



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My time at TXST left me with not only meaningful scientific outcomes, but also lasting friendships and unforgettable memories.



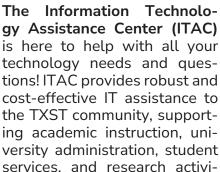
ALKEK LIBRARY

Albert B. Alkek Library is the most important information resource of the TXST community. The mission of the library is to help patrons succeed by providing high quality services and information to support the university's teaching and research programs.



CAMPUS EVENTS

Campus events are a big part of university life in the U.S. They include social gatherings, cultural celebrations, performances, and activities. <u>ISSS</u> events are a great way to share your culture, learn about others, and feel more connected to the campus community.



ITAC offers over 150 services, including in-person and online tech support. Visit one of ITAC's Campus Service Centers or contact them directly through phone or LiveChat.

ties.



BOBCAT PRIDE

At TXST our mascot—a symbolic animal or character that represents school spirit, pride, and tradition—is the Bobcat. Bobcats are known for being strong, fast, and smart—just like our students! You'll see this symbol at sports games, campus events, and celebrations.

HEALTH & SAFETY



Your health and well-being are vital to a successful and fulfilling exchange experience. As a J-1 exchange visitor, adjusting to a new environment—whether culturally, socially, or physically—can be both exciting and challenging. We encourage you to prioritize self-care and reach out for support when needed.

TXST provides a range of resources to help scholars and students stay healthy and safe during your stay, including access to health-care, mental health counseling, wellness programs, and emergency support services. Whether you're feeling under the weather, navigating stress, or simply need guidance on staying well in a new environment, you're not alone—we're here to support you.

Please take time to learn about the services available to you and don't hesitate to ask questions. Caring for your mental and physical health is not just important for your academic or professional success, but for making the most of your time in the U.S.

Depending on your J-1 category, where and how you access services may vary, please be sure to check eligibility criteria when planning.



The Texas State Student Health Center provides primary care, urgent care, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, sports medicine and travel health services to university students. Services are available by appointment. Faculty and staff are eligible for limited services including travel health and immunizations.

Scholars, Short-term Researchers and Professors will need to utilize their required insurance plans to access care from local physicians and urgent care centers.

MENTAL HEALTH



The Counseling Center supports the wellbeing and resiliency of **students** as they navigate life while enrolled at TXST. Services include consultation, crisis response, brief counseling, prevention activities and educational workshops/webinars.

Bobcat Balance is the Employee Assistance Program offering free counseling, work-life solutions, legal and financial consultations for **Scholars, Short-term Researchers and Professors**. Please note that local mental health providers may not accept insurance.

Though Insurance is one of your visa requirements, utilizing it is not always straightforward. In fact, accessing healthcare in the US can be confusing and difficult - even for those born and raised here. This info sheet offers some basic guidance to help get you started, and includes important reminders to keep you on track.



PRIVATE & FOR PROFIT

Healthcare services are not provided by the goverment, but by a network of hospitals, clinics and doctors.



INSURANCE ≠ FREE

Even with insurance, you must pay for most services (called a co-pay or deductable).



IN NETWORK / OUT OF NETWORK

Not all doctors, clinics, hospitals & pharmacies will accept your insurance. You must ensure they are in network.



DENTAL AND VISION

Dental and vision is not included unless you have requested and enrolled in a plan (often at greater cost).



PHARMACIES & PRESCRIPTIONS

There is almost always a fee for prescriptions, and some can be very expensive.





The San Marcos Police Department is a full-service agency providing 24/7 service to the local community. They provide 24/7 emergency dispatch services for police, fire, and EMS within the city of San Marcos. They accomplish their goals through the deployment of 106 officers and 52 support staff into several specialized divisions including uniformed patrol, criminal investigations, emergency communications, community services, K9 operations, traffic enforcement, narcotics investigations, and school resource services.

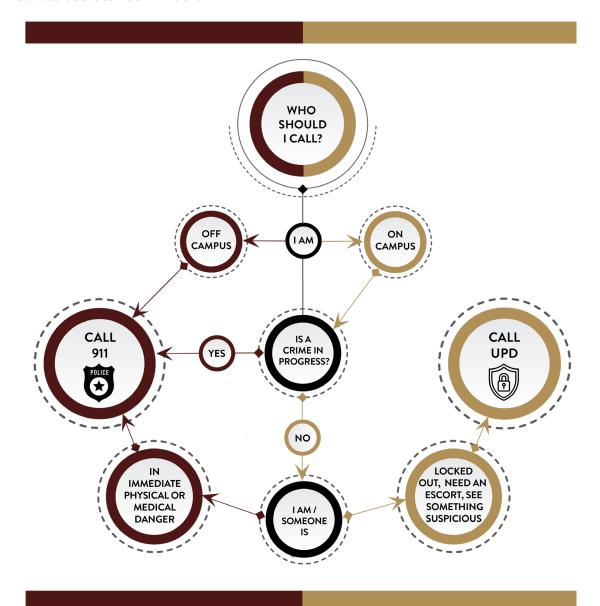
For immediate assistance - Dial: 911

UNIVERSITY PD



The University Police Department serves an integral role in campus life as TXST's main provider of safety and security for our faculty, staff, students, and visitors. They are dedicated to maintaining TXST's legacy as a healthy and enriched educational environment.

Among the resources offered by UPD are Lost & Found, Emergency Preparedness & Safety Training Classes, Facility Access Requests, and Daily Crime & Fire Logs. Blue Emergency Call Boxes are posted throughout campus for immediate assistance.



INTRO TO: SAN MARCOS

Welcome to San Marcos, Texas vour new home nestled between Austin and San Antonio, where natural beauty and vibrant culture meet. Known for its crystal-clear river, warm hospitality, and lively downtown, San Marcos offers a unique blend of outdoor adventure and small-town charm. With a population of more than 71,569, San Marcos boasts a unique multicultural heritage where Hispanic, African-American, German, Anglo and other cultural influences are a part of everyday life. We hope vou quickly feel a part of this welcoming and diverse community!





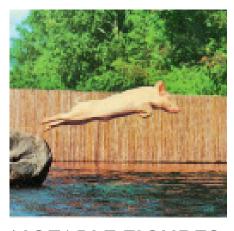
HISTORY

San Marcos has been a favorite destination for more than 12,000 years! An underwater archeological dig in Spring Lake at the Headwaters of the San Marcos River uncovered Indian artifacts dating back over 12,000 years to the Clovis Indians, the oldest known inhabitants of the western hemisphere. This is reportedly the longest continuously inhabited site in North America. according to underwater archeologist Dr. Joel Shiner.



CLIMATE

Central Texas weather is known for its unpredictability, with hot, humid summers, mild winters, and frequent temperature swings in between. Spring often brings thunderstorms, hail, and the occasional tornado, while fall offers brief but pleasant relief from the heat. Expect rapid changes in conditions—sunny mornings can turn into stormy afternoons with little warning. Campus is quite hilly, so be sure to carry water on hot days.



NOTABLE FIGURES

Lyndon B. Johnson: The 36th President of the United States George Strait: Country music

superstar

Charles Austin: 1996 US Olympic Gold Medalist

Eddie Durham: Pioneer Ameri-

can jazz composer

Tomas Rivera: Internationally known Chicano author

Terri Hendrix: Award winning

Folk artist

Ralph the Swimming Pig: International tourism sensation.

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PARKS

849+ hectares of hiking and bike trails, natural areas with riverfront access, and children's, skate, and dog parks.

Spring Lake Natural Area Purgatory Creek Natural Area Rio Vista Park San Marcos City Park Dog Park



SHOPPING

Don your comfiest athleisure and start hydrating now, it's time to shop! From one of the largest outlet shopping centers in the country to quirky boutiques filled with things you can't find anywhere else, San Marcos is THE place to find just the right thing. Shop Guide



FOOD

You'll always find something to satisfy your apetite in San Marcos— From the historic charm of Gil's Broiler, to the innovative flavors at North Street Curry Shop. Don't forget to check out local favorites like Garcia's, Palmers, Root Cellar Café, Herbert's, Don Japanese Kitchen, Blue Dahlia and Italian Garden.



ACTIVITIES

San Marcos offers a delightful blend of local culture, outdoor adventures, and family-friendly attractions. Begin your day with a visit to Wonder World Cave & Adventure Park, the nation's only earthquake-formed cave open to the public. For nature enthusiasts, the Meadows Center provides unique glass-bottom boat tours over the crystal-clear waters of Spring Lake, offering a glimpse into the area's rich ecosystem. As evening approaches, immerse yourself in the local arts scene by visiting the San Marcos Art Center, or stop in at **EVO** Entertainment, for movies, arcades and bowling!

JUST DOWN THE ROAD:









AUSTIN

Austin offers a dynamic mix of cultural sights, music, and outdoor experiences perfect for a day trip. Visitors can tour the Texas State Capitol, stroll through Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake, or dive into Barton Springs Pool. Known as the "Live Music Capital of the World," Austin's South Congress district and Rainey Street are packed with live performances, food trucks, and a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere that captures the spirit of Texas.

SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio offers a vibrant mix of history, adventure, and natural beauty, just an hour down the road from San Marcos. Whether sightseeing with friends or family, you'll find plenty to entertain your group: Stroll along the scenic River Walk; visit cultural landmarks like the Alamo; get an adrenaline rush at Six Flags Fiesta Texas; explore the underground wonders of Natural Bridge Caverns; or visit the San Antonio Zoo and

NEW BRAUNFELS

New Braunfels is a vibrant destination blending thrilling attractions with rich cultural heritage. Visitors can enjoy the world's longest water ride at Schlitterbahn Waterpark, or explore 19th-century German architecture and artifacts from the area's early settlers in the Historic Old Town. For a taste of local festivities, the annual Folk Fest celebrates with music, food, and traditional dances, while Armadillo races at Krause's cafe add a unique twist to the town's lively events calendar.

WIMBERLY

Nestled in the heart of Texas Hill Country, Wimberley is a picturesque town renowned for its natural beauty and artistic charm. Visitors can explore the serene Blue Hole Regional Park and Jacob's Well, both offering refreshing swimming experiences. The town's vibrant arts scene, historic downtown, and monthly Market Days make it a perfect destination for those seeking relaxation and creativity in a small-town setting.

LOCAL RESOURCES





GROCERIES

Stores: HEB, Walmart, Target, Sam's, Poco Loco

Delivery: Instacart, Favor, Doordash, Grubhub, Caviar, Uber eats

Markets: Saturday Market San Marcos, New Braunfels Farmer's Market, Cuevas Produce, QC Meat Market, BonTon Meat Market

International: International Foods, MT Supermarket, H Mart Austin. 99 Ranch Market

Emergency: Hays County Food Bank

CLOTHING

Affordable: Tanger Outlets, Walmart, Target, Sam's

Luxury: Premium Outlets

Thrift Stores: Uptown Cheapskate, Vagabond, Rhinestone Cowboy, Old Soul Exchange, Love Buzz, Shop 1983, Two Chicas, KnD's

Donated: Good Will, Salvation Army, Grace Lutheran Church, Twice Blessed, CHRISTUS Hospice



TRANSPORT

Local: Bobcat Shuttle, CARTS, Uber/Lyft

Inter-City Buses: <u>Greyhound Bus</u>, <u>Flixbus</u>, <u>Kerrville Bus Company</u>

Vehicle Rental: Zipcar, Hertz, Enterprise, Turo

Eco-Friendly: Bike Cave, Trek Bicycle, Galaxy Bi-

cycles, Spin Electric Scooter Rental,

Trains: Amtrak - extremely limited service

Airport: Austin, San Antonio



CHILDREN & FAMILY

Childcare: TXST Child Development Center, Giggle and Grow, First Step School, Lil Bobcats Learning Center, Pregnant Student Support

Schools: SMCISD, Texas Baptist Academcy

Summer Camp: Summer Fun - City of San Marcos, Camp Minnehaha - City of New Braunfels-Camp Lone Star, T Bar M Christian Camp

After School: Sunset After School, Girl scouts, Boy scouts, Boys and Girls Club of Central Texas, Lion's Club Cub & Youth Programs

HEALTH



The best way to find a doctor or specialist is to ask for recommendations from those you trust, but to find a good doctor online, start by checking reputable review platforms like Health-grades, Zocdoc, or Yitals, which offer patient feedback, credentials, and availability. You can always cross-reference results with state medical board websites to verify licenses and any disciplinary actions for added peace of mind.

Blue Cross Blue Shield In-Network Providers

Community Health Resources Available to All Residents:

AIDS Services: 512-392-1161

Cenikor (Substance Abuse): 512-396-7633

Communicare Dental in Kyle: 512-268-8900

Communicare San Marcos: 512-268-8900

Community Action of Central TX: 512-392-1161

Dental Center of Seguin: 830-875-6603

Dept of Health & Human Services: 512-753-2201

South Community Center: 512-392-6694

Hays County Health Department: 512-393-5520

Hill Country Mental Health: 512-392-7151

Medical Closet: 512-749-1097

MLK Community Health Services: 512-392-5816

Prescription Assistance Program: 512-392-1161

HHSC, Healthy Texas Women: 877-541-7905

United Way: 512-393-1420

EMPLOYMENT



Easterseals of Central Texas: 512-392-5062

Hands of Hope: 512-618-0723

San Marcos Public Library: 512-393-8200

Workforce Solutions: 512-392-1291

LEGAL & FINANCE



Austin Tenant's Council: 512-474-1961

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid: 956-447-4800

Volunteer Free Legal Aid: 512-476-5550

Texas Fair Defense Project: 512-637-5220

Barnabas Connection: 512-842-9674

Being a J1 visitor at TXST allowe me to gain various perspectives while working with a diverse community. Professionally, working independently with resources has been useful, personally it gave me confidence to work and progress in my career.



SOCIAL RESOURCES

211 Texas (Local Information) 877-541-7905

Any Baby Can 512-454-3743

ARCIL Disability Services 512-396-5790

Area Agency on Aging 512-916-6062

Aunt Bertha Social Care Network

Austin Disaster Relief Network 512-428-6322

BR3T Recovery Team 512-677-9701

CASA of Central Texas 512-392-3578

ECI Homespun 512-558-2024

Greater San Marcos Youth Council 512-754-0500

Hays-Caldwell Women's Shelter 512-396-4357

Hill Country Crisis Hotline 877-466-0660

H.O.M.E. Center 512-270-8433

Online AA Meetings

San Marcos Activity Center 512-393-8280

San Marcos Public Library 512-393-8200

San Marcos Senior Citizen Center 512-392-2427

Samaritan Center 512-451-7337

Southside Community Center 512-392-6694

St. Vincent DePaul Society 512-396-4357

LOCAL ORDINANCES

- Smoking Ordinance: The use of smoking products, e-cigarettes and other inhaled vapor devices is prohibited inside all City facilities, as well as outdoor at City parks & athletic facilities.
- Hands Free Ordinance: It is be against the law to use a cell phone or other handheld device while driving a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle in TX unless a "handsfree" mode is engaged on the device.
- **Driving Laws**: Persons must be 16 years of age or older to obtain a valid Texas Driver License. Texas state law requires seat belts be worn by every person sitting in the front seat of a vehicle.
- **Liquor Laws:** The legal drinking age is 21. Some bars choose to remain open until 2 a.m. Liquor stores are closed on Sundays and major holidays. Beer and wine is sold in stores after 12 p.m. on Sundays.
- **Firearm Carry**: Texas law permits individuals aged 21 and over to carry both long guns and handguns in public spaces—openly or concealed —without a license, though it should be holstered when not in use.
- Firearms on Campus: Individuals with a valid License to Carry (LTC) are permitted to carry concealed handguns on TXST campuses, including in classrooms and buildings, subject to certain restrictions. TXST has established specific rules and regulations to ensure safety and compliance with state law. Open carry is prohibited.

LIVING IN THE USA

Embarking on a journey to live and learn in the United States is an exciting step toward personal and professional growth. As a J-1 exchange visitor, you're joining a long tradition of curious, motivated individuals who bring fresh perspectives and a spirit of exploration. This new chapter will likely introduce you to unfamiliar customs, ideas, and ways of life—but with an open mind and a sense of curiosity, it can be a deeply rewarding experience.

American culture is incredibly diverse and dynamic. Rather than being defined by a single identity, it reflects a wide range of influences from around the world. No two regions, cities, or communities are exactly alike. You may find certain aspects of daily life very different from what you're used to, while others might feel surprisingly familiar. Whether you're visiting a big city like Austin or strolling the quaint streets around our campus, you'll have opportunities to connect with people from many backgrounds and share your own.

Adjusting to a new environment always comes with challenges, but it also provides a chance to grow in ways you might not expect. By learning more about the culture around you—and about yourself in the process—you'll gain valuable insights that will stay with you long after your exchange experience ends.

STATS

Capital City - Washington, D.C.

National Anthem - "The Star-Spangled Banner" – Composed by Francis Scott Key during the War of 1812, it was officially adopted in 1931.

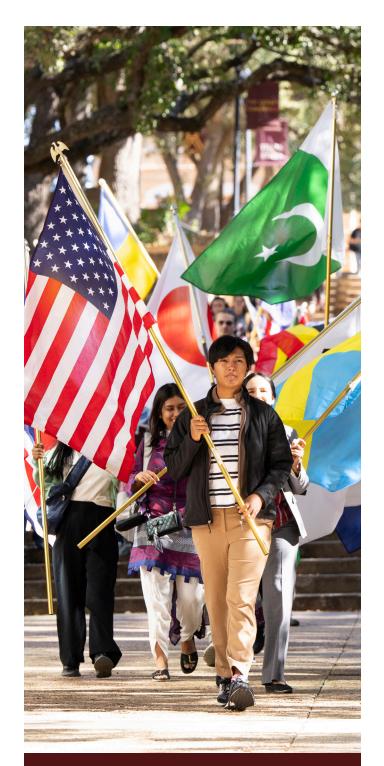
Population - 347.3 million – As of 2025, the U.S. ranks 3rd globally in population

Time Zones -

Eastern (ET): New York, Washington, D.C. Central (CT): Chicago, Houston, San Marcos

Mountain (MT): Denver, Phoenix

Pacific (PT): Los Angeles, San Francisco



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If we were meant to stay
in one place, we'd have
roots instead of feet
- Rachel Wolchin



Government:

Federal Republic – A constitutional democracy with three branches: Executive (President), Legislative (Congress), and Judicial (Supreme Court).

Languages:

English – The de facto national language; with 245.4 Million monolingual speakers.

Spanish – The 2nd most spoken language. 41.2 million speakers.

Mandarin – The 3rd most spoken language with 3.4 million speakers.



Demographics:

White (Non-Hispanic): 58.4%

Latinx: 19%

Black / African American: 13%

Asian: 6.4%

Two or More Races: 3.1%

Indigenous: 1.3% Pacific Islander: 0.3%

Men: 49.5% Women: 50.5% Children: 21.7%

Veterans: 4.8%

Foreign Born Residents: 13.9% 2nd Generation immigrants: 27% Naturalized Citizens: 0.23%

Urbanization: 83.6% Median Age: 38.5 years



Currency:

U.S. Dollar (USD)

National Animal:

American Bald Eagle – Symbolizes freedom and strength; the national bird and emblem of the U.S.

National Flower:

Rose – Designated in 1986, representing love and beauty.

Flag: The "Stars and Stripes"

13 red and white stripes representing the original colonies and 50 white stars on a blue field symbolizing the 50 states.



Religion

The US is home to a variety of religious beliefs and practices. Christianity remains the most widely practiced faith (66%), with smaller populations of Agnostics and Athiests (29%), Jews, (2%), Muslims (1.34%), Buddhists (1%), and Hindus (0.9%). The U.S. is officially secular, but religion is prominent in public life. "In God We Trust" is on the dollar and overnment sessions often begin with prayer. Christian symbols like the 10 commandments are often visible in civic spaces - including courthouses and schools.

EVERYDAY LIFE & PRACTICAL ADJUSTMENTS

Standards:

Be prepared for differences in national standards, such as measurement systems and road orientation. In the US drivers sit on the left side of the car, and drive on the right side of the road. This is especially important to remember if you are a pedestrian coming from a country where cars travel on the left — always look **both** ways before stepping into the street! The U.S. also uses the Imperial system (miles, pounds, Fahrenheit) in every day life, and a twelve hour clock — please familiarize yourself with these standards to avoid confusion and miscommunication.

UNIT OF MEASUREMENT

	ENGTH		WEI	WEIGHT TEMPERATURE SPE		EED			
INCHES	DECIMAL	мм	IMPERIAL	METRIC		FAHRENHEI	T CELSIUS	MPH	KM/H
1/16	0,06	1,59	1/2 oz	15 g		5°F	-15 °C	5	8
1/8	0,13	3,18	1 oz	29 g		10 °F	-12 °C	10	16
3/16	0,19	4,76	2 oz	57 g		25 °F	-4 °C	15	24
1/4	0,25	6,35	3 oz	85 g		50 °F	10 °C	20	32
5/16	0,31	7,94	4 oz	113 g		100 °F	37 °C	25	40
3/8	0,38	9,53	5 oz	141 g		150 °F	65 °C	35	56
7/16	0,44	11,11	6 oz	170 g		200 °F	93 °C	50	80
1/2	0,50	12,70	8 oz	227 g		250 °F	121 °C	65	105
9/16	0,56	14,29	10 oz	283 g		300 °F	150 °C	80	128
5/8	0,63	15,88	12 oz	340 g		325 °F	160°C	100	160
11/16	0,69	17,46	14 oz	397 g		350 °F	180°C	125	200
3/4	0,75	19,05	15 oz	425 g		400 °F	200°C	150	241
13/16	0,81	20,64	1 lb	453 g		425 °F	220°C	200	320
7/8	0,88	22,23	11/2 lb	680 g		450 °F	230°C	250	400
1	1,00	25,40	2,2 lb	1 kg		500 °F	260 °C	300	480

At Home

Air conditioning is common and often used heavily indoors.

Drinking water from the tap is generally safe.

Dishwashers are very common and preferred for water efficiency. Never use regular dish soap.

Microwaves are frequently used instead of ovens or electric appliances like kettles.

Toilet paper is always flushed in the U.S. and seats are intended for sitting, never as a balance for a squat. Home bathrooms are almost always more private than public ones, where large gaps are often between stalls.

In Public

Avoid playing loud music/videos in public without headphones - this is considered very rude.

Queues (lines) are expected and enforced.

Jaywalking is illegal and can be fined.

Private property is sacred. Don't take shortcuts across private land and take 'no trespassing' signs seriously, Texas has 'stand your ground' laws.

Hold doors open for others.

Do not pet others' animals without asking.

Use polite, non-invasive small talk; avoid asking about family or personal matters early on.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL NORMS



CLASS & IDENTITY

Despite what is represented in the media, only 18% of households fit the traditional nuclear family model.

Communal or multigenerational family structures are rare, extended family live in their own homes.

Wealth disparities are stark: high-income areas and poverty can be in close proximity, though visitors from highly stratified societies may be surprised by the visible privilege across all classes.

Members of all genders and races are theoretically equal in US society and law. In practice, however, the country remains marked by persistent disparities in areas such as pay, leadership representation, caregiving expectations, and workplace dynamics.

Dining & Food Culture

Tipping is expected: 15–20% at restaurants. **Splitting the bill** at group meals is standard. **Ice** is served in most beverages.

Doggie bags (takeout containers) are common and encouraged.

U.S. grocery stores can be overwhelming due to their size and the variety of options.

Dinner is early, lunch may be skipped or rushed.

Eating is informal and fast-paced — expect servers to move you through your meal. Eating while walking or in class is common (if permitted); but do not eat smelly food on public transport.

Communication & Behavior

Informality in social life but formality in education/professional settings (e.g., don't call professors by first name unless invited).

People are friendly but may use false politeness or empty offers, especially in the South ("Let's get together!" doesn't always mean it).

Individualism is strong — actively building your support system is advised; it won't always form naturally. People may seem private, formal, or distant, especially compared to more communal cultures.

UNWRITTEN RULES

Small talk is expected, even with strangers.

Avoid **interrupting** others — particularly in academic or professional settings.

Political correctness is expected in most public and workplace settings.

Avoid **commenting** on others' appearance, age, marital status, or personal choices.

Avoid expensive or overly personal gifts unless you're close to the recipient.

Though class, gender and racial/ethnic disparities are common and visible, they are rarely acknowledged or discussed. Be very cautious when, how, and with whom you discuss these matters — especially in the South. Try to eserve such conversations for those you know and trust.



GET A SSN



Address: Social Security Office 900 Bugg Lane Suite 200, San Marcos, TX. 78666 Phone: 1-866-388-8515

To apply for a Social Security card, you will need to take the following documents with you to the Social Security Office: the hiring letter from your department, your **DS-2019**, **I-94**, and passport (including visa).

OPEN A US BANK ACCOUNT

To open a US Bank Account you will need your passport (including visa), funds for an initial deposit (amount decided by bank), proof of address, and a second form of identification (TXST or national ID card)

GET A US PHONE NUMBER

To enroll in a phone plan with a major carrier (as opposed to using prepaid phones or SIM cards, you will need your passport (including visa) and social security number.

GET A US DRIVER'S LICENSE



Address: TX Dept of Public Safety 1400 North IH-35 San Marcos TX, 78666 Phone: 512-353-2770

To get a Texas driver's license, you will need to take with you to the Texas Department of Public Safety: your invitation letter, DS-2019, I-94, passport (including visa) and \$35.

UNDERSTAND MY TAX RESPONSIBILITIES



Payroll and Tax Compliance Office JCK 582 – 5th floor **Call:** 512-245-9292

All visitors employed by TXST must comply with U.S. tax laws. The Payroll and Tax Compliance Office can help you determine your correct tax status for federal Income tax purposes, complete your W-4 form, and determine eligibility for possible Tax Treaty Benefits.

KEY DOCUMENTS



PASSPORT

DS-2019



1-94



INVITE LETTER



W-4

Including US Visa

Must be current!

Your entry record

From your sponsor

From TXST

ADJUSTMENT TIMELINE

Adjusting to your new home takes time, and you should expect to experience a range of emotions, including culture shock. No matter how experienced a traveler, every culture is different, and everyone adjusts differently—the stages outlined below are not always linear.

HONEYMOON



Excitement, curiosity, enthusiasm Everything feels new, interesting, even magical

Jet lag, initial disorientation Language barriers may appear

- Explore local areas
- Take time to rest & adjust
- Keep a first impressions journal
- Don't overcommit too early—ease into routines

1-3 **WEEKS**

WEEKS

CULTURE SHOCK

Frustration, homesickness, loneliness, confusion, overwhelm from cultural differences

Missing home, feeling isolated Misunderstanding social cues or

- ☐ Connect with other J-1 visitors or expats
- Learn and ask questions
- Create a routine
- Stay Busy
- Reach out to ISSS
- Limit negative comparisons with your home culture

ADJUSTMENT



Gradual improvement Better understanding of norms Increasing confidence in language & tasks

Lingering homesickness Still occasionally feeling "different"

- Celebrate small wins Continue learning the local customs
- Join clubs or activities to build relationships
- Stay in contact with those back home—but not too much

2-4 **MONTHS**



Sense of belonging & comfort Balanced perspective of host & home cultures Stronger relationships & independence Don't want to leave

ADAPTATION

- □ Reflect
- □ Start documenting lessons learned or things to bring home
- ☐ Give back by mentoring new visitors
- ☐ Make the most of your time—travel, engage, experience

MONTHS

RETURN HOME



Lots of mixed emotions Missing the life you built abroad Reverse culture shock may occur

Embrace home through fresh eyes Stay connected & share your experiences with loved ones

- ☐ Don't expect things to return to 'normal' too fast
- ☐ Take your time
- ☐ Use your experience as a springboard for future goals

US HOLIDAYS

2025 - 2026



RELIGIOUS

HANUKKAH

DEC 14-22

CHRISTMAS

DEC 25

RAMADAN

FEB 17-MAR 19

HOLI

MAR 4

PASSOVER

APRIL 1-9

EASTER

APRII 5

EID AL-ADHA

MAY 26-27

DIWALI

8 VON



CIVIC

MLK DAY JAN 19

PRESIDENTS DAY

FEB 16

MEMORIAL DAY

MAY 25

JUNETEENTH

JUNE 19

4TH OF JULY

JULY 4

LABOR DAY

SFP₁

INDIGENOUS DAY

OCT 13

VETERANS DAY

NOV 11



CULTURAL

NEW YEARS

JAN 1

VALENTINES

FEB 14

LUNAR NEW YEAR

FEB 27

ST PATRICK'S

MAR 17

APRIL FOOLS

APRIL 1

CINCO DE MAYO

MAY 5

HALLOWEEN

OCT 31

THANKSGIVING

NOVE 27

MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

BLACK HISTORY FEB
WOMEN'S HISTORY MAR
DISABILITY AWARENESS MAR
AAPI HERITAGE MAY
JEWISH HERITAGE MAY
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MAY

JUNE CARIBBEAN HERITAGE
APRIL ARAB HERITAGE
SEPT - OCT HISPANIC HERITAGE
OCT HINDU HERITAGE
OCT BREAST CANCER
NOV INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

2025 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Holidays

Class Days

Final Exams

Commencement

Reading Day

Grades Available

Ī	September 2025										
I	Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
l		1	2	3	4	5	6				
l	7	8	9	10	11	12	13				
I	14	15	16	17	18	19	20				
I	21	22	23	24	25	26	27				
	28	29	30								

	June 2025										
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
29	30										

	October 2025									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
			1	2	З	4				
5	6	7	8	9	10	11				
12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25				
26	27	28	29	30	31					

July 2025										
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
		1	2	3	4	5				
		8	9	10	11	12				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26				
27	28	29	30	31						

	November 2025									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29				
30										

	August 2025									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
31										

	December 2025									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
	1	2	3	4	5	6				
7	8	9	10	11	12	13				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27				
28	29	30	31							

SUMMER 2025

5/28 First Class Day (10W/1st 5W)

6/19 Juneteenth

6/28 Last Class Day (1st 5W)

6/28 Final Exams (1st 5W)

7/1 First Class Day (2nd 5W)

7/4 July 4th

8/1 Last Class Day (10W/2nd 5W)

8/2 Final Exams (10W/2nd 5W)

8/3 Commencement

FALL 2025

8/25 First Class Day

9/1 Labor Day

11/26-11/28 Thanksgiving Break

12/4 Last Class Day

12/5 Reading Day

12/8-12/11 Final Exams

12/12-12/13 Commencement

2026 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

	January 2026									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
				1	2	3				
4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
11	12	13	14	15	16	17				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31				

	February 2026										
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28					

	March 2026										
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
29	30	31									

	April 2026									
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa				
			1	2	З	4				
5	6	7	8	9	10	11				
12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25				
26	27	28	29	30						

May 2026						
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SPRING 2026					
1/20	First Class Day				
3/15-3/22	Spring Break				
5/4	Last Class Day				
5/5	Reading Day				
5/6- 5 /13	Final Exams				
5/14-5/16	Commencement				

Separate SMII last class/final and Commencement is on Saturday



STAYING J-1 COMPLIANT

J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS

KEY REGULATIONS

This section is a summary of important J-1 regulations and procedures. For more information refer to the Key Regulations website here:

https://www.international. txstate.edu/departments/ J1-Visa-Status-/j1-key-regulations.html.

If you need further information about any of the items or other J-1 regulation questions, make an appointment to meet with an international advisor at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS).

1. The Exchange Visitor Program

The Exchange Visitor Program provides opportunities for internationals to come to the US for a variety of educational and cultural exchange purposes under the sponsorship of a school, an agency, or an organization that has been designated as an exchange visitor sponsor by the US Department of State (DOS).

2. Employment

"Employment" is any type of work performed, or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, or for any other benefit. If you receive no pay or other compensation for work performed, the activity is not defined as "employment, but is considered to be volunteer work."

The exchange visitor may receive compensation from the sponsor when the activities are part of the visitor's program. To work for any employer other than the school named on the DS2019, you should make an appointment to see your RO. The employment must be directly related to your program objectives, incidental to your program activities, and should not delay completion of your program. In addition, it must be approved by your department head or supervisor.

With the sponsor's permission, professors and research scholars may participate in occasional lectures and short-term consultations. These activities must be directly related to the objectives of the exchange visitor program, incidental to the exchange visitor's primary program activities, and not delay the completion date of the exchange visitor's program.

The exchange visitor is prohibited from engaging in unauthorized employment as this is in violation of the regulations and subjects the exchange visitor to termination from the program. One form of unauthorized employment is working or continuing to work after a DS-2019 has expired is unauthorized.

3. Program Length

The maximum program length differs per J-1 category. In general, professor and research scholar categories are limited to a maximum of 5 years. A short-term scholar category is limited to 6 months. Please note that J-1 Exchange Visitors are required to leave the US within 30 days of the date your department indicates you have completed your program, even if the period on your DS-2019 is longer.

4. Program Extensions within the 5-year program length

Requests for extensions are initiated by having your department complete and submit a new DS-2019 request form to ISSS. You should begin this process at least two months prior to the end date on your current DS-2019.

5. Travel Outside the United States During Your Stay

Traveling outside the U.S. with the intent to return in your current program status requires a signature from your RO. If you plan to travel outside the US please notify ISSS at least three weeks before you plan to leave to ensure there will be enough time to process the request. When you travel outside the US and you plan to return to the US during the time of your J-1 program, you must take a properly endorsed DS2019 with you. Under some circumstances it will be necessary for you to obtain a new DS2019.

6. Transfer to Another Program

An exchange visitor may transfer from one program sponsor to another if the purpose of the transfer is to complete the objective for which he or she was admitted to exchange visitor status and if the exchange visitor remains in the same category. The transfer is accomplished through correspondence between the two Responsible Officers and notification to the U.S. DOS. It is recommended that the exchange visitor begin the transfer process at least 60 days prior to the proposed starting date with the new sponsor to allow for processing of paperwork. Any employment under the new sponsor may not commence until the transfer has been approved. The transfer procedures must be completed before terminating your program at Texas State.

7. Change of Category

In general, a change of category is not permitted. The DOS, may permit an exchange visitor to change categories if it is consistent with, and related to, the participant's original objective. If the exchange visitor applies for a change in category and it is rejected by the U.S. DOS, the exchange visitor is expected to leave the country within 30 days of receiving the notice or within 30 days of the expiration date of the exchange visitor's current DS-2019, whichever is later. An approved application for change of category must be received by the J-1 exchange visitor before the exchange visitor begins activities in the new category.

8. Limitation of Consecutive Program Participation

According to the DOS, an individual who has participated in the Exchange Visitor Program as a professor or researcher is subject to a 24-month bar on "repeat participation" in those categories under two circumstances: If the exchange visitor completes a full five years of program participation with one or moresponsors; or If the exchange visitor completes a particular exchange visitor program, and the SEVIS record becomes Inactive before the full five-year period is over. In this case, the five-year window is "closed," the individual is not eligible to access the remaining unused time, and the individual must wait for two years before beginning a new program.

9. The Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

Some J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents are subject to this requirement. Upon the completion of the J- 1's program objectives, the J-1 and J-2(s) are expected to return to their country within 30 days or within 30 days of the expiration date on your DS-2019, whichever is sooner. If you are subject to this requirement, you are restricted from changing to someother types of nonimmigrant status, and restricted from changing to permanent residency. Under certain circumstances you may apply for a waiver of this requirement. **Processing the application waiver may take up to one year.** Note, if you receive a waiver, you are not permitted to apply for an extension of your DS2019. Consequently, once the waiver is received, you should take steps to change to some other nonimmigrant status. Apply for the waiver.

10. Health Insurance Requirement

Federal law requires that J-1 Exchange Visitors and their J-2 dependents have health insurance for the full duration of the J-1 program. The type of health insurance needed must meet specific coverage requirements. If you fail to obtain health insurance or if your health insurance does not meet the necessary requirements for you or your dependents, your RO must terminate your program and report the termination to the U.S. DOS.

11. J-2 Dependents

In order to invite family members to join you on the J-2 visa you should submit an DS-2019 request form to ISSS. After you pick up the DS-2019, you should send it to your dependents so that they may apply for a J-2 visa. J-2 dependents may apply for employment authorization with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (CIS) as long as the income from the employment is not needed to support the J-1 exchange visitor and his/her dependents. It normally takes from two to three months to receive employment permission (The Employment Authorization Document or EAD) or to renewemployment permission. Therefore, applicants should plan accordingly in order to avoid undesired breaks in employment. J-2 dependents who want to change to J-1 status must do so at least within 6 months of their initial arrival to the United States while the J-1 participant is still in the U.S. and in lawful J-1 status.

12. Reinstatement Procedures

If a J-1 exchange visitor violates his or her J-1 immigration status, it is possible to apply to be reinstated to lawful J-1 status in some cases. Reinstatement applications are approved or denied at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State. If a reinstatement application is not approved, the exchange visitor's program will be terminated and the exchange visitor will be required to leave the United States.





Notify ISSS and your RO within 10 days of any changes to your phone number, email address, physical address, or site of activity/program site.

I LOST OR DAMAGED MY DS-2019?!

Notify ISSS and your RO as soon as possible so we may process a replacement.

HOW CAN I TRAVEL ABROAD DURING MY PROGRAM?

Email ISSS and your RO with your anticipated travel dates, as well as the puprose of your travel. Your DS-2019 must be signed prior to your departure to allow reentry to the US

HOW LONG IS MY TRAVEL GRACE PERIOD?

You may enter the USA up to 30 days prior to the start date listed on your DS-2019, and remain in the USA up to 30 days after the end date listed on your DS-2019.

HOW CAN I CHANGE OR EXTEND MY PROGRAM?

Any changes to your program must be approved by your program sponsor and require an updated letter of invitation with new dates, proof of continued insurance in the event of an extension, an updated DS-2019 and may or may not require paying a change fee to the DOS.

CAN I WORK?

You are unable to engagement in unauthorized employment. Please contact the ISSS Office before accepting any offers made outside of your program.

MY PROGRAM IS ENDING, WHAT DO 1?

ISSS will update the J-1 Exchange Visitor's immigration record upon program completion (making the record inactive) and permanent departure from the US. When this update is made, the J-1 Exchange Visitor will receive an update via email from SEVIS.

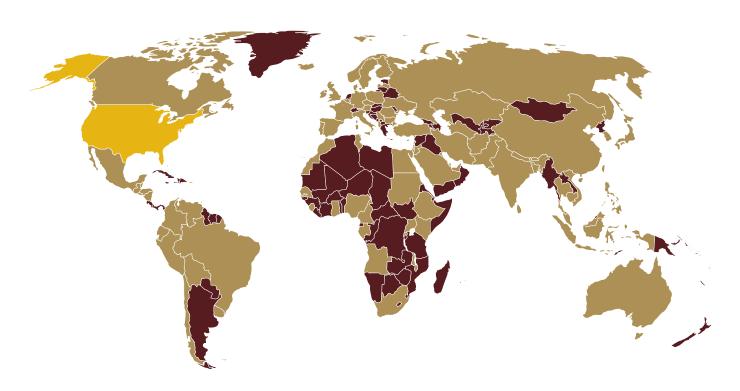
If a J-1 Exchange Visitor completes the program on or before the program end date, the sponsor or Exchange Visitor must contact ISSS at internationalscholars@txstate.edu.

I'M STRUGGLING WITH MY PROGRAM, WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

If you are struggling with the professional requirements of your program, the best person to speak with is your sponsor. However if you are struggling with English language, cultural adjustment, personal stress, are experiencing other barriers to your success at TXST, or feel unable to discuss your challenges with your sponsor, please do not hesitate to reach our to ISSS and your RO for resources and support.



YOU ARE WELCOME HERE



Our growing international community boasts over 1000 students, representing more than 90 countries!

ALBANIA
ANGOLA
AUSTRALIA
BAHAMAS
BANGLADESH
BELGIUM
BELIZE
BERMUDA
BHUTAN
BOLIVIA
BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CAMBODIA
CAMEROON
CANADA
CAYMAN ISLAND

CHAD CHINA COLOMBIA CZECH REPUBLIC INDONESIA **DENMARK ECUADOR EGYPT EL SALVADOR ETHIOPIA FINLAND FRANCE GABON GERMANY GHANA GUATEMALA** OS HONDURAS

HONG KONG ICELAND INDIA IRAN **IRELAND ISRAEL ITALY JAPAN JORDAN** KAZAKHSTAN PHILLIPINES **KENYA LATVIA LEBANON** MALAWI **MALAYSIA**

MAYOTTE MEXICO MOROCCO NEPAL NICARAGUA NIGERIA **NORWAY PAKISTAN PALAU PERU POLAND PORTUGAL** OATAR **ROMANIA RUSSIA**

RWANDA SAUDI ARABIA **SERBIA** SIERRA LEONE **SINGAPORE** SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH KOREA **SPAIN SRI LANKA SUDAN SWEDEN TAIWAN TANZANIA TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

TUNISIA

TURKEY UGANDA UKRAINE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UNITED KINGDOM URUGUAY VENEZUELA VIETNAM

INTERACTIVE CAMPUS MAP



BOBCAT SHUTTLE MAP

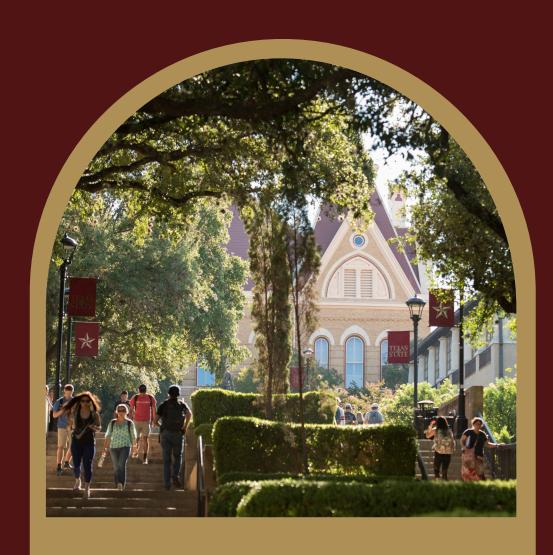


CARTS MAP (LOCAL BUS)



PARKING MAP





TEXAS STATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES