

# International Scholar's Handbook

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Center For Global Engagement  
865.974.3177  
1620 Melrose Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37996-3531  
<http://international.utk.edu>

# Contents

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<b>Welcome</b>	-----	<b>2</b>
<b>Pre-Arrival Information</b>	-----	<b>3</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check-list		
- Immigration Regulations		
- Health Insurance		
- Bringing Dependents		
- Traveling		
<b>Knoxville, Tennessee</b>	-----	<b>8</b>
<b>Post-Arrival Information</b>	-----	<b>9</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check-list		
- Check-in & Scholar Orientation		
- Housing		
- Resources		
<b>Maintaining J-1 scholar status</b>	-----	<b>12</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check-list		
- Traveling outside the U.S.		
<b>Campus Life</b>	-----	<b>13</b>
- Campus life		
- Campus Activities		
- Facilities on Campus		
<b>Daily Life</b>	-----	<b>15</b>
- Social Security Number		
- Tax Information		
- Transportation		
- Driving		
- Money and Banking		
- Health and Safety		
- Day care and Schools		
- Shopping		
<b>Before Leaving UT</b>	-----	<b>20</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check-list		
<b>Useful Link</b>	-----	<b>21</b>

## Welcome

The Center for Global Engagement (CGE) is happy to welcome you to The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

UT Knoxville has great professors, scholars and students who come from throughout the world live and work in a friendly campus community located in scenic East Tennessee. The campus and its signature "Hill" lure visitors with green space, nearby lakes, and vistas of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



You will enjoy provocative speakers, great entertainers and artists, a first-class research library, a technology-rich infrastructure, great local music and recreation.

The information provided in this handbook should help you throughout your stay in Knoxville. The International Student & Scholar Services staff is always available to assist you if you have any questions or concerns.

### □ The Center for Global Engagement and the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

The CGE, a department within the Division of Academic Affairs, serves as a catalyst at every level for the internationalization of the entire UTK community.

#### Office of International Student and Scholar services (ISSS)

The ISSS is one division within the CGE. ISSS assists more than 1,400 students and scholars from over 110 countries on the UT Knoxville campus. The staff of ISSS is trained and experienced in cross-cultural counseling and U.S. immigration regulations. We provide orientation and advising to international students and scholars. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

**Email** ✉: [ischolars@utk.edu](mailto:ischolars@utk.edu)

#### □ ISSS office

Hours: Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm

Sat-Sun: CLOSED

Location: 1620 Melrose Avenue

Knoxville TN 37996-3531

Phone: 865-974-3177

Fax: 865-974-2985

URL: <http://international.utk.edu>

**I**n case of a serious emergency outside the office hours, please call the **University of Tennessee Police** at 📞 (865) 974-3114 and ask them to contact Dave Lawson. **In case of extreme emergency, dial 911**

## ● Pre-Arrival Information

### ➤ Check-list

- ❑ **Verify that all of the information on your DS-2019 is correct.**
- ❑ **Pay the SEVIS FEE** online at [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee).
- ❑ **Obtain your visa.** Take your valid passport, Form DS-2019, SEVIS fee receipt and proof of sufficient financial support to the nearest U.S. Consulate/Embassy to apply for your visa. Be prepared to show ties to your home country, such as a permanent job, ownership of a home or property, home country bank accounts or familial responsibilities.
- ❑ **Maintain contact with your UTK host-department and with the CGE.** Be aware that current U.S. Government regulations require you to enter the country and report to our office within 30 days of the beginning date given on your DS-2019. If your travel plans change and you will not be able to arrive at UTK within those dates, please notify your host-department and ISSS (✉[ischolars@utk.edu](mailto:ischolars@utk.edu)) as soon as possible.
- ❑ **Arrange for health insurance coverage.** The U.S. Department of State requires all individuals who enter the U.S. in J-1 status to have health insurance for themselves and any accompanying J-2 dependents. If your department will not pay for your insurance, then you will need to purchase one of the health plans offered by UT, please visit our website and/or page 5 of this handbook for more information.
- ❑ **Consider your housing needs.** There are many housing choices in Knoxville. As ISSS is unable to assist you in locating housing, we hope that your host-department helps you in this task. [Visit our website for more information.](#)
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation from the airport.** For more information about the McGhee Tyson Airport, visit their website: <http://www.tys.org/>

## Immigration Regulations

### A. SEVIS Fee Requirement

Persons applying for J-1 visas must pay the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) fee. This fee must be paid at least 3 business days before the scheduled visa application interview at the U.S. Consulate. The SEVIS fee can be paid by completing the Form I-901 electronically and paying with a credit card online at [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee).

Print the electronic receipt immediately at the time of payment. You must show the receipt to the consular officer at the time of the interview.

Spouses and dependent children (J-2) do not pay this fee. The SEVIS fee is not a visa application fee. It is used to operate and maintain the SEVIS system. The fee is non-refundable, even if the visa application is denied.

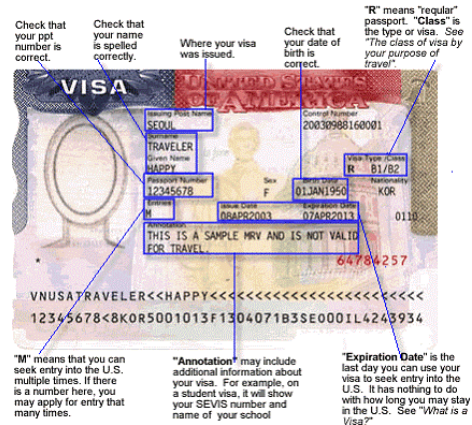
### B. Applying for a Visa

A valid J-1 visa is required for entry to the U.S. on the Exchange Visitor Program. Consult the following Department of State website for information on the appropriate embassy or consulate for your visa application, as well as information on processing times and procedures: <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.

Usually a personal interview is required, schedule your appointment as soon as possible. Be aware of potentially substantial delays due to security checks.

### C. After obtaining your Visa

Once your application is approved, the visa (which includes your name and photograph) is "glued" into your passport. It designates the school you will attend (UTK) upon arrival into the U.S. Carefully check that all the information on the Visa is correct.



### D. Arrival in the U.S.

At your port of entry into the U.S., present your DS-2019 form and passport. Occasionally the immigration officer will also ask to see financial documents. The immigration officer will stamp your passport. Be alert that this practice is being phased out.

The I-94 is an electronic record of your arrival. You may see your I-94 by going here <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>. We advise you to either print a copy or store an image of the I-94 on your phone.

### IMPORTANT

- Canadian scholars who enter from Canada are exempt from having to obtain a visa but must obtain a DS-2019 form to enter the U.S. with J-scholar status. You must obtain a I-94 form clearly indicating J-1 status when you enter.
- First-time new scholars are **not** permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date noted on Item #3 of Form DS-2019. You are required to report to and attend the school designated on your visa and DS-2019.

## □ Health Insurance

### A. J-1 Health Insurance Requirements

The U.S. Department of State and the Exchange Visitor Program requires that all persons in J-1 or J-2 status have health insurance for everyday of their program and stay in the United States. The health insurance policy must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Must cover at least 75% of your medical expenses up to \$50,000 per illness (after deductible is paid)
2. A deductible of not more than \$500 per illness
3. Cost of medical evacuation be covered for at least \$10,000 and repatriation in case of death for at least \$7,500
4. Provided by a company with an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an ISI rating of "A-i" or above, a Standard & Poor's rating of "A-" or above, or a Weiss Research rating of "B+" or above

This requirement applies even if the J-1 scholar or their J-2 dependents are outside the United States. J-1 scholars will be required to show proof of their insurance several times during their stay at the University. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in the termination of their program.

### B. Health Insurance Coverage Options

There are three options for coverage:

#### 1. Employee Health Insurance.

If a scholar will be hired as a regular employee by UT, the scholar will be eligible to have the same health insurance available to all UT employees. Information about the policy, enrollment, and fees will be given to the scholar during New Employee Orientation.

Scholars will need to purchase health insurance for the gap between his or her program start date and the insurance start date. Employee Health Insurance begins on

the 1st day of the month following the start date of employment. For example, if someone starts working on either March 2 or March 29, their insurance will begin on April 1 (the 1st day of the following month). To cover this gap, a scholar may purchase the UT Student and Scholar insurance (more information below) upon arrival to UT, or may purchase health insurance from another company (see options below).

In addition, the UT employee insurance does not have adequate repatriation and evacuation coverage (another J requirement) so a standalone policy is also available for purchase. More information about this policy can be given upon request.

#### 2. UT Student and Scholar Health Insurance.

Scholars not covered by University of Tennessee Employee Health Insurance must enroll in the UT Student and Scholar Health Plan. Scholars are not automatically enrolled in the UT Student and Scholar Health Policy, but any scholar or their host department may purchase this policy for the scholar and their dependents. Scholars interested in purchasing this insurance policy should contact their host departments to get more information on how to proceed. If a government sponsor provides direct contracted insurance coverage, scholars may request a waiver of the required UT contracted insurance, please refer below for more details.

One advantage of the UT Student and Scholar Health Policy is that a scholar can backdate the insurance plan to start on the day of entry (as required by law). For example, a scholar who arrives on a Saturday and checks in with the CIE the following Monday may elect for the insurance plan to begin on the Saturday he or she arrived. However, this policy may not be purchased prior to arrival. More information is available on our website.

#### 3. Government Contracted Insurance Plans.

If a scholar is covered by a health and accident policy contracted by their government sponsor, this is considered acceptable coverage. The insurance must be directly contracted with the sponsor and the insurance premiums must be paid directly by the sponsor.

If a sponsor provides funding to purchase the insurance through a stipend or payment, the scholar would need to purchase UT Employee or UT Student and Scholar insurance as indicated above.

## ❑ Bringing Dependents

Your legal spouse and your unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible to apply for J-2 dependent status. Your host department must contact ISSS to request an additional DS-2019 form for each dependent you wish to bring to the U.S. They will use their DS-2019 forms to apply for J-2 visa stamps at the U.S. Consulate in their home country.

Please note that all J-2 dependents are required to maintain health insurance coverage for the duration of their stay in the U.S.

J-2 visa holders may apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work in the United States. Employment will not be authorized if J-2 income is needed to support the J-1 scholar.

Contact ISSS or visit our website for more information about work authorization.

## ❑ Traveling

### A. Temporary housing

If you have not already found a place to live while in Knoxville, there is temporary accommodation available. Below is a list of some convenient options:

- 🏠 [Corporate Housing](#)
- 🏠 [SuiteNet](#)
- 🏠 [Maple Grove Inn](#)
- 🏠 [Maplehurst Inn Bed & Breakfast](#)
- 🏠 [Knoxville Hostel](#)
- 🏠 [Four Points Hotel](#)
- 🏠 [Hampton Inn](#)
- 🏠 [Holiday Inn](#)

### B. Weather

It is very hard to predict the weather in Knoxville, even one day in advance! The climate is diverse, and you will experience all four seasons during your stay.

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Fall is one of the most beautiful times of the year in Knoxville. The leaves change and you will see an amazing range of vivid colors. In September and early October it will still be quite warm. But by the end of November, winter is in the air. The average daytime temperatures during fall can range from 26°C down to 10°C.

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In winter, even though snow is not a common sight, Knoxville has been known to have blizzards and ice storms. You just never know what winter might bring. Average daytime winter temperatures usually range from 12°C, down to -3°C.

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Spring arrives in March, as the sun starts to come out more and the trees start to bloom. In April, there's a lot of rain. Mornings can still be chilly, but most days will start to get warmer. By May, most of the rain stops and the days start getting very warm. Average daytime spring temperatures can range from 1°C to 23°C.

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Summer in Knoxville is hot and wet. Summer storms in Knoxville are intense – thunder and lightning and a lot of rain, all of which only lasts for about one hour, and then the sun comes back out. You would never know it had rained at all. Average daytime summer temperatures can range from 15°C to 40°C.

**C. Clothing**

Knoxville culture is pretty casual, so you will see men and women wearing jeans, sweatshirts, etc. Dresses and suits are appropriate for more formal occasions. You should bring whatever you feel comfortable in, and bring clothes for all seasons and weather, from shorts to warm coats. There are also plenty of places for you to go shopping for new clothing. Feel free to wear your national dress if you prefer.

**D. Money**

There are various options for bringing money to Knoxville:

**Cash**

You will want to bring a few hundred dollars cash to cover the cost of taxis, buses, and other miscellaneous expenses, and to help set up your household. Private apartments normally require cash or check for a deposit and sometimes the first two month's rent, paid up front. The deposit may be as much as a full month's rent.

**Travelers Cheques**

Once you arrive in Knoxville, you can easily set up a free bank account and deposit travelers cheques.

**Credit Cards**

A credit card reduces the amount of money you need to carry with you, and is the easiest and safest way to pay many expenses.

**Bank Drafts**

Bringing a bank draft to deposit is also a safe means of getting money to Knoxville. However, it may take a few weeks before the bank is able to confirm the check and release the money to you.

**International ATM Cards**

International ATM Cards (an ATM card linked to the PLUS or Cirrus networks) enable you to use ATMs in the U.S. to withdraw money from your home country banking account. Although small transaction fees may be charged, in most cases, you can get better rate than exchanging traveler's checks at a local exchange counter.

**E. Getting To Knoxville, Tennessee**

You should try to fly into Knoxville's McGhee-Tyson Airport (TYS). Most international flights from Europe arrive in Atlanta, New York, Chicago or Washington DC, with flights from Asia coming into Los Angeles and flights from Latin America flying into Houston and Miami. Flying into these major cities usually means good Knoxville connections from international flights.

**IMPORTANT**

Due to increased security measures at U.S. airports, expect long delays at immigration and security check-points. We advise that you schedule long layovers (at least 4 hours) between flights at your port of entry to reduce the risk of missing your connection flight to Knoxville.

**F. From the Airport**

Once you get to Knoxville, we recommend you get a taxi to the University of Tennessee. You may have to call for one if you don't see one outside the airport or bus station. Making a telephone call from a public telephone will cost 35 to 50 cents and the taxi fare will be around \$26-32.

☎ Yellow Cab Company: 865.523.5151

☎ AAA Airport Taxi Service: 865.531.1930





## ● Knoxville, Tennessee

**K**noxville is a medium sized city that still retains the friendliness of a small town, yet has plenty for college students and scholars to do and see. The downtown is currently being revitalized and new businesses are booming in that area. Downtown and the adjoining 'Old City' offer live music, coffee shops and a host of unique shops. All of this is located one mile from campus – great to walk or ride to on the free trolley.

Knoxville hosted the 1982 World's Fair, so it is no stranger to folks from out of town. Perhaps more impressively, Knoxville is the home to many significant blues and country artists. Today you will find a diverse and thriving music scene.

Knoxville has the usual assortment of shopping malls and suburban sprawl for those who want to see those sorts of things up close. The cost of living in Knoxville is very low for cities of its size in the United States. Even movie theaters and restaurants are usually cheaper than in Atlanta, Charleston, etc. You can find out what's going on in town in the Metropulse, Knoxville's free weekly newspaper, at [www.metropulse.com](http://www.metropulse.com). For even more news you can read the local newspaper, the Knoxville News Sentinel at [www.knoxnews.com](http://www.knoxnews.com). Also, visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park website at [www.nps.gov/grsm/](http://www.nps.gov/grsm/), the online home of the most visited national park in the nation.



Like most places, you'll find all types of people here. We think it's a good idea to get to know and appreciate as many different types of people as possible, as opposed to just looking for people who are similar to you. Native Knoxvilleians tend to be more conservative and religious than people from other parts of the country, but, it's not wise to automatically assume this is true for each individual you meet. Overall, the people in Knoxville are usually friendly but might take a while to get to know.

\*\*\*If you enjoy exploring different cities, you can take comfort in the fact that Knoxville is within a day's drive of Washington, D.C., New York City, Destin, Charleston, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. There are eight states that border Tennessee, so you can easily explore different states and cities on weekends if you have transportation.

**For more information on Knoxville, check out these links:**

- 📍 [UT and Knoxville](http://www.utk.edu/knoxville/)
- 📍 [Knoxville Tourism](http://www.knoxville.org/)

## ● Post-Arrival Information

### ➤ Check-list

- ❑ **Check-in at CIE** as soon as possible after arriving in Knoxville.
- ❑ **Visit your host department.** Visit your host professor and the department secretary to be added to the University system. It takes between 3 to 5 days for your name to appear in the system.
- ❑ **Attend the International Scholar Orientation.** (Optional but strongly recommended)
- ❑ **Purchase Health Insurance.**
- ❑ **Arrange for Housing.**
- ❑ **Report your address:** If you have a J-1/J-2 status, then you satisfy this requirement by reporting address to sponsor (i.e. UT). If you do not have J-1/J-2 status then you have to complete an AR-11 Form and mail it to the Dept. of Homeland and security (one for each non-U.S. citizen). Find more information on the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website.
- ❑ **Regular Employees Only: Attend New Employee Orientation, complete enrollment forms for employee health insurance.** Orientation Location: UT Conference Center (Downtown Knoxville). Contact the Secretary in your host-department for more details.
- ❑ **Set up your NetID and activate you UT email** -- after your name appears in the UT system.
- ❑ **Notify CIE of your new UT email address** at ✉ischolars@utk.edu
- ❑ **Get University of Tennessee I.D. Card** (also known as "VolCard") -- after your name appears in the UT system.
- ❑ **Apply for a Social Security Number.** You must check-in with the CIE before applying for a SSN. Once you have arrived in the U.S., wait ten (10) days before visiting the SSN office (going too early will lengthen the processing time of your SSN).
- ❑ **Get a Tennessee Driver's License.** If you are staying in Knoxville for more than 6 months, we suggest you obtain a TN License within the first month.

## ☐ Check-in & Scholar Orientation

### A. New Scholar Check-in

It is mandatory that all international scholars check-in with CIE as soon as possible after arriving in Knoxville. If you do not check-in with the CIE, your J-1 program will be terminated.

Please bring all of the following documents to orientation with you:

1. Passport and visa
2. Form I-94 Departure Card
3. Form DS-2019
4. Proof of health insurance coverage in English (for example, receipt, ID card, copy of enrollment form, etc)
5. Permanent Record and J-1 Insurance Certification (available for download on our website).

### B. International Scholar Orientation

All scholars are highly encouraged to attend scholar orientation. If you choose to attend orientation, a date will be assigned to you at check-in. During orientation we will discuss immigration regulations, health insurance, taxes and any questions you may have!

**Date:** Fridays at 1:00pm (About 2.5hours)

\*Date will be assigned to you at check-in.

**Location:** International House (1623 Melrose Ave.)

**Topics:** U.S. immigration laws; tax laws; U.S. healthcare and insurance system; Tennessee state laws; and things needed to settle in at UT and Knoxville.

\* The CIE International Scholar orientation program is different from, and in addition to, the Employee Orientation program.

### C. New Employee Orientation (Offered by the Office of Human Resources)

Most people who will be employed by UTK will be required to attend New Employee Orientation offered by Human Resources on

Monday mornings in the UT Conference Center, located downtown. The program is offered to all new employees, and provides information about employee insurance, retirement benefits, and other employee benefits.

Contact the secretary in your host-department for more details.

## ☐ Housing



### A. To find housing

There are a large variety of housing options available to international scholars in the Knoxville area, both within walking or driving distance from campus. The Fort Sanders and Tyson Park areas are especially popular with international students and scholars. Knoxville also has bus and shuttle lines that service many residential areas. To save on expenses, it is common for people to share apartments or houses with others in the vicinity of campus.

- 🏠 [Knoxville Apartment Guide](#)
- 🏠 [Apartment Guide](#)
- 🏠 [Rent UTK](#)
- 🏠 [TN Housing Search](#)
- 🏠 [Knoxville Apartments](#)
- 🏠 [Apartment Ratings](#)

### B. Renter's insurance

It is also a good idea to purchase "renter's insurance" to protect against losses caused by fire, theft, or vandalism. This kind of insurance covers personal belongings in your house or apartment. It also covers damages for which you would be legally liable if a fire or other accident that was your fault damaged the apartment building and/or the property of other renters.

The cost of renter's insurance is relatively low, but can vary depending on the value of your personal possessions. Contact information for insurance agents can be found online or in the yellow pages directory under "insurance."

## ☐ Resources

### A. Setting up Utilities

In most cases, you will be required to pay for your own gas/electricity and possibly water. To set up your own account for any of these utilities, you will need to call the Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB). You will have to pay a new connection fee, plus your bill for the first month. After that, you will pay a monthly bill based on the amount you consumed during that billing period.

#### Knoxville Utilities Board:

📞 [www.kub.org](http://www.kub.org)  
 ☎️ (865) 524-2911

### B. Calling Options

#### ▶ Mobile Phones

There are two options for mobile phones:  
 1) Get a phone plan—this requires you to sign a contract (usually for a year or two) and most phone companies will require a SSN and a deposit. 2) Get a prepaid phone, which do not require you to sign a contract and won't require you to have a SSN.

📞 **AT&T** (800) 331-0500  
 📞 **Verizon** (888) 294-6804  
 📞 **Sprint** (888) 211-4727  
 📞 **T-Mobile** (800) 866-2453  
 📞 **Cricket** (800) 975-3708

#### ▶ Landlines

You may like to set up phone service through one of the local telephone or cable provider companies. There is usually a basic flat fee for local telephone calls and another fee for long distance and international calling plans.

📞 **Sprint** (888) 211-4727  
 📞 **Comcast** (865) 637-5411  
 📞 **AT&T** (800) 331-0500

#### ▶ I-House Public Phones

The International House has two public phones that can be used with a calling card or to make free in-state calls.

#### ▶ Phone Cards

Phone cards are a good option for making long distance calls, both within the U.S. and internationally. These cards are available at many locations including: pharmacies, grocery stores and convenience stores. Cards are also available for purchase online.

📞 [www.idphonecard.com](http://www.idphonecard.com)  
 📞 [www.phonecardsavers.com](http://www.phonecardsavers.com)

#### ▶ Other ways to communicate

Internet video chat providers are popular communication methods for international scholars with family and friends back home.

📞 **Skype**  
 📞 **Google Chat**  
 📞 **Yahoo Messenger**

### C. Internet and Television

Most housing does not come with preinstalled television and Internet. If interested, you need to choose a package that best suits your needs. Basic television is very cheap, but quickly becomes more expensive with additional cable channels. Internet prices vary depending on the speed. Most providers also offer special deals if you sign up for a TV and Internet package deal. Most people try to split costs with a roommate.

📞 **AT&T** (800) 331-0500  
 📞 **Comcast** (865) 637-5411  
 📞 **DIRECTV** (888) 777-2454



## ● Maintaining J-1 Scholar Status

All J-1 scholars are personally responsible for maintaining legal J-1 status in the U.S. Listed below are key points to remember about how to maintain your status. Remember, ANYTIME you are unsure about immigration issue, contact ISSS. Do not ask friends or colleagues! Inappropriate advice, even if well-meaning, may lead to termination of your legal status in the United States.

### ☞ Check list

- ❑ **Maintain valid health insurance for the entire duration of your program** (defined by the dates listed in section 3 of your DS-2019 form).
- ❑ **Report any changes of address** to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS within ten (10) days
- ❑ **Do not engage in unauthorized employment.**
- ❑ **Make sure your passport is always valid at least six (6) months** into the future.
- ❑ **Make sure your DS-2019 form is always valid.** If it is close to expiring and you need more time for your program, request an extension at least one month before it expires
- ❑ **Make sure you only engage in activities related to your program,** as described on your DS-2019 form. Do not become admitted into a degree program at UT or enroll in classes on a full-time basis.
- ❑ **Obtain a travel validation signature from ISSS before any trips you make outside the United States** during your program.
- ❑ **If you would like to extend your J-1 status, contact and submit required documents to ISSS at least one month prior to the end date on your current DS-2019 form.**
- ❑ **If you plan to transfer to another institution in the U.S., start and complete this process BEFORE your DS-2019 expires.**

### ❑ Traveling outside the U.S.

If you travel outside the United States during your program, you must obtain a travel validation signature on your DS-2019 form from CIE before you depart. Bring your DS-2019 form to ISSS at least two weeks before your trip. If your J-2 dependents are traveling with you, they will also need travel validation signatures on their DS-2019 forms. Also,

make sure that your visa is valid on the date you will reenter the United States, and that "M" (for multiple) or "2" (for dual) is listed under "Entries" on your J-1 and dependents' J-2 visas.

\*For visits of less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent Caribbean islands other than Cuba, you will be readmitted to the United States with an expired J visa if you have a valid DS-2019 and I-94. Contact ISSS for more information.

## ● Campus Life

### □ Campus life

#### A. Net ID & E-mail Account

When your department enters your name and other information into the University computer system, you will be assigned a NetID, an initial temporary password, and a UT e-mail account. Your NetID is a username necessary to get access to many of UT's online services. You will need your NetID to check and manage your UT e-mail, to access many library resources, and to interact with various University offices over the internet

For detailed instructions on how to set up your NetID and email account please visit the [UTK Accounts](#) website.

#### B. Internet Access on Campus

##### ▶ Computer Labs

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) maintains many computing facilities across the campus. To use one of these labs, use your NetID and password to log onto a machine. Some of the buildings where you can find computer labs are: "The Commons" in Hodges Library, International House and University Center. For a complete listing of computing lab locations, hours, hardware, and software go to <http://oit.utk.edu/labs/>

##### ▶ Your own computer

###### Before you receive NetID:

If you don't have a NetID you should connect to the "ut-visitor" wireless network. (Note: you will receive limited access on the visitor wireless network)

###### After you received NetID:

After receiving your Net ID, you can connect to the wireless network "ut-open". In order to use this connection, you must register your computer on UT's network.

#### Office of Information Technology (OIT) HelpDesk

- Call the OIT HelpDesk  
(865) 974-9900  
Mon - Fri 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- OIT Walk-In Support  
Commons, Hodges Library 2nd floor  
Mon - Thu 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Fri 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Sun 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Help Request via the web  
<http://contact.helpdesk.utk.edu/>

#### C. VolCard

Your VolCard is your University ID Card. All students, faculty, and staff are required to have a valid VolCard ID. Your VolCard is your University ID Card to be used for identification purposes or access to goods and services to which you are entitled, such as building access, libraries, etc.

To get your VolCard you need to go personally to the VolCard Office located under Gate 9 in the Neyland Stadium. However, you need to wait until your name appears in the University System before going to the VolCard Office.

VolCard Office: Neyland Stadium, Gate 9.  
For more information, visit [VolCard Office website](#).



## ❑ Campus Activities

### A. International House

The "I-House" is a free-standing, non-residential programming facility that was opened in 1996 to provide all UTK students and scholars with a place in which they could meet and learn about people of every culture represented at UTK.

Email✉: [ihouse@utk.edu](mailto:ihouse@utk.edu)



#### Hours:

<Fall and Spring>  
Mon-Thurs: 8am-9pm  
Fri: 8am-5pm  
Sat-Sun: CLOSED  
<Summer>  
Mon-Fri: 8:am – 5:pm  
Sat-Sun: CLOSED

\*The hours of operation may change. Call 865.974.4453 for updated information

**Location:** 1623 Melrose Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37996

Tel: 865-974-4453

URL: <http://web.utk.edu/~ihouse/>

📌 Join the I-House Facebook Group to receive information about future events!

📌 <http://groups.to/i-house-utk>

## ❑ Facilities on Campus

### A. University Center

The University Center provides wide range of services to UT students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. It includes dining, bookstore, post office, ticket office, computer store, and much more.

For more information, visit

📌 <http://universitycenter.utk.edu/>

### B. UT Dining

There is a variety of options on campus for dining. UT's 21 dining stations offer continuous operation serving breakfast, lunch, dinner or even late night meal.

For more information, visit

📌 <http://www.utdining.com/>

### C. Library

There are three libraries serving the Knoxville campus. In the Hodges Main Library, research assistance and computer services are available 24 hours a day in the Commons. You may also explore virtual UT Libraries from home via [website](#) and through the [mobile gateway](#).

For more information, visit

📌 <http://www.lib.utk.edu/>

### D. RecSports

RecSports provides a wide variety of programs and well-maintained facilities for students, faculty, and staff of the university community. RecSports has a number of programs including Fitness, Aquatics, Intramurals, Outdoor Recreation, Sport Clubs, and much more.

#### Fees:

Faculty & Staff member: \$204.00/yr

Daily Use: \$5/day

For more information, visit

📌 <http://recsports.utk.edu/>

### E. Museum

The McClung Museum is a general museum with collections in anthropology, archaeology, decorative arts, local history, and natural history. The admission is always free.

For more information, visit

📌 <http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/>



## ● Daily Life

### □ Social Security Number

A Social Security Number is a 9-digit number issued by the U.S. government for income and taxation purposes. While all J-1 scholars are eligible for a Social Security Number, if you are being paid as an employee of the University of Tennessee, you are required to have a Social Security Number.

#### A. Applying for an SSN

First, WAIT at least 10 days after you enter the U.S. and after you checked in with CIE. If you apply before you check-in, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not be able to verify with U.S. immigration that you have entered the U.S. and reported to UT, and your SSN application will be automatically denied.

When 10 days after you check-in have passed, go to the SSA office to apply for the SSN in person at the SSA office. Bring the following documents with you:

1. Passport and J-1 visa
2. I-94 Card ("Departure Record", a small white card stamped by U.S. Immigration upon your initial entry into the U.S)
3. Form DS-2019 ("Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor" (J-1 Status"))

\*You do not need a letter from CIE; that requirement only applies for students.

#### Social Security Administration Office

Hours: Monday—Friday  
 9:00am - 4:00pm  
 Location: 8530 Kingston Pike  
 Knoxville, TN 37919  
 Tel: (865) 692-0196  
 For more information:  
[Social Security Administration](#)



### □ Tax Information

As an international scholar at UT, it is important that you be aware of your U.S. income tax obligations. U.S. tax laws distinguish between residents and non-residents for U.S. tax purposes. Non-residents only pay taxes on U.S. source income, while residents follow the same tax rules as U.S. citizens and pay taxes on their worldwide income. Most incoming J-1 scholars are considered non-residents for the first two calendar years in the United States.

The U.S. tax system is organized according to the calendar year and is a pay-as-you-go-system, which means that taxes may be deducted from salaries, stipends, and scholarships if these funds are from U.S. sources. In most cases, taxes are automatically withheld from your pay. Your available income after taxes, therefore, may be less than anticipated as you may be subject to federal, state and/or Social Security taxes that can range from 14% to 30% of your total income. The amount of taxes you will pay will depend on the type of income you receive and your tax status in the United States. [Visit our website for more information.](#)



#### A. Tax Treaties

There are many tax treaties between the United States and other countries. Such treaties may exempt earnings, scholarships, and stipends from taxes.

Please note: In order to claim a tax treaty benefit you must have either a Social Security Number (SSN) or an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN). For more information about tax treaties please visit the [IRS website.](#)



## B. Filing Tax Returns

Many of you may not realize that you will have to complete U.S. tax forms. Federal and state income tax forms are completed annually in the United States and submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) between January 1 and April 15 for the previous tax year (for example, 2010 tax forms will be due by April 15, 2011). Tax forms must be completed (even if a tax treaty exempts you from paying any U.S. taxes) if you were in the United States during any part of 2010 on any visa other than a tourist visa.

## C. Tax Preparation Assistance



To help guide you through the tax filing process CIE has purchased access to **CINTAX**, a web

based tax return preparation software designed exclusively for international students, scholars, and their dependents who are non-residents for tax purposes. During the tax season, the CIE will send you instructions via email on how to use this software.

If you are employed in the United States, your employer will send you a statement of earnings, called a Form W-2, by the end of January that details your income and any taxes withheld during the previous year. If you receive benefits of a tax treaty for employment, scholarship or fellowship income, you will receive a Form 1042-S by mid March that details your income and treaty benefits. You will need these documents to complete your tax forms. Be sure to keep copies of all your tax documents.

## □ Transportation

**Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)** provides a transportation service to the campus community. Their routes and times vary during the day so we suggest you visit their [website](#) or obtain a brochure at the Parking Services Office. You can purchase a "semester pass" in the Central Ticket Office at the University Center, which will allow you to ride

the bus unlimited times during one semester (you must present your VolCard).

"**The T**" is The University of Tennessee Transportation System, operated by KAT. The basic T routes include East-West, North-South, Ag Express and Late Nite. In addition, the T: Link transports students traveling late at night to the Late Nite bus or to their destination. UT Students and faculty ride free on all T services, with a UT I.D. Also there are free trolley services from UT to downtown.

For more information:

 <http://katbus.com>

 <http://www.ridethet.com/>

## □ Driving

If you plan to drive a car while you are in Knoxville, first make sure you have a valid driver's license. You can park at UT by purchasing a monthly or semester parking pass. Visit the [Parking Services webpage](#) to learn how to buy passes and how much they cost. Remember that you are required by law to wear a seatbelt while driving or riding in a car. You are also required to buy automobile insurance, which can cost between \$500 and \$2000 per year, so be sure to factor that into your budget.

### A. TN Driver's License

Current Tennessee Driver License policy will allow you to qualify for a TN Temporary Driver License until the expiration date specified in your immigration documents. If you apply for and receive an extension to stay beyond the original date, then you will need to present your extension papers to the Driver License Office for renewal of your license.



To apply for a Temporary Driver License, you should bring to the driver license testing station:

1. Passport
2. Original I-94
3. DS-2019 if you are in J status, and

4. At least 2 documents showing your residence in Tennessee, such as KUB bill, rental contract, bank statement, health insurance policy etc.

If you have applied for a Social Security Number, you should wait until you receive it and then apply for a Driver License.

If the driver license office requests other documents that you do not have, please contact ISSS.

**Note:**

Canadian citizens who have a valid Canadian Driver License can get a TN Driver License by showing their Canadian license and an abstract (of the driving record) from Canada. If they have a valid Canadian driver license, they only need to take the vision test.

German citizens who have a valid German driving license do not have to show an abstract from their country but do have to take the knowledge/theory test and a vision test. They will not need to take the road test when applying for a TN Driver License.

For more information, including Maps and the Drivers License Handbook and Study Guide, visit:

<http://www.tennessee.gov/safety/driverlicense/tdl.htm>

**B. Automobile insurance**

Before you buy, compare prices at different insurance companies. You can visit <http://www.bankrate.com/insurance.aspx> to compare many companies at once. These are only a few of the insurance companies in the U.S.:

- [Geico](#)
- [Traveler's](#)
- [Allstate](#)



**C. Vehicle Registration**

Once you get your TN driver license and decide to buy a car, you will need to register that car in a County Clerk office. For your TN

license plates you will need to pay a fee every year you renew your registration.

If you have purchased a car from a private person, you will also need to change the name on your car's title and pay the sales tax on your purchase. You can register your car, get the license plates, transfer the title for your car and pay the sales tax all in one of the County Clerk Offices. It is advisable you have your TN driver license at the time of vehicle registration.

For more information, visit

<http://www.knoxcounty.org/clerk/motorvehicle/index.php>

**Money and Banking**

**A. Opening a Bank Account**

When you open an account, the bank will likely ask you for identification documents (such as your passport, DS-2019 form, and I-94 card). Some banks will also require you to have and Social Security Number, but not all of them will.

If you have a spouse or other dependents, you may wish to open a joint account so multiple family members can use the same account. This is a short list of the banks in the area:

- [First Tennessee](#)
- [Bank of America](#)
- [Regions Bank](#)
- [SunTrust](#)

**i** The [UT Federal Credit Union](#) provides almost all the services of a bank at lower rates. It is located on campus at 1502 W. Cumberland Ave., with an ATM available for 24-hour banking. For more information, visit [www.utfcu.org](http://www.utfcu.org)

**B. Using an ATM**

Most of the major banks' Automated Teller Machines (or ATMs for short) can be found at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the UT Public Parking Garage

and Plaza, along Phillip Fulmer Way. ATMs allow you to make cash withdrawals, deposits, and transfers between accounts. You can also view your account balance. There is a limit on how much money you can withdraw from an ATM at one time or on one day. Check with your bank to find out what the limit is.

### C. Using a Debit Card

A debit card—also called a check card—is connected to your checking account and is used almost like a regular credit card, except that the charges made are deducted from your checking account upon purchase. You do not get a separate bill at the end of the month as with a credit card. Be sure to keep track of your spending, though. If you spend more money than is in your account, you do not only risk ruining your credit record, but the bank also charges you with a fee every time you overdraw your account.

### D. Writing a Check

Americans usually write checks rather than paying cash for big purchases. When opening your bank account, you'll be given a check book. Using a check book for paying rent, your phone bill etc. helps you to keep track of payments.

## ☐ Health and Safety

### A. In case of illnesses or injuries

For minor illnesses such as colds, flu, and indigestion, or minor injuries such as small cuts and burns, you can buy medications, disinfectants, bandages, and other supplies at drug stores (pharmacies) or discount department stores such as K-Mart or Target. These supplies are relatively inexpensive and although they are not covered by insurance, it is sometimes the easiest way to get through.

However, if you are feeling sick, do not hesitate to get help. Look up your health insurance company's website and find nearest affiliated clinics and make an appointment.



Unless you have a real emergency, such as uncontrolled bleeding or a broken bone, do not go to a hospital emergency room for treatment. Emergency rooms are very expensive and, if your condition is not life threatening, you may have to wait a long time for care. For medicine prescribed by your doctor, your insurance will likely require that you "co-pay" a portion of the cost.

### Health Care and Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency involving any student, faculty, or staff member, immediately call 911 or 974-3111, or pick up a [Blue Light Phone](#) to alert first-response medical care.

### B. Emergency Dialing

If there is an emergency, you can dial following numbers for assistance.

Emergency: **911**  
 UT Police (emergency): **974-3111**  
 UT Police (main line): 974-3114  
 Safety Information: 656-SAFE (7233)

UT has its own police force, in addition to the City of Knoxville police. On the UTK campus there are more than 50 emergency call boxes with blue flashing lights. If you feel that you are in danger on campus, find the nearest callbox to automatically dial campus police. The police are expected to both enforce the law and assist the public. It is always appropriate to ask the police to help with all kinds of matters such as lost or stolen property, noisy neighbors, and emergency situations. Police are legally prohibited from taking "gifts" or money. They may arrest people who attempt to offer such payment.

### C. Drugs

Recreational drugs are illegal but common in the United States. Many drugs are made in people's homes and cut, or mixed, with deadly substances. Never set your drink down at a party or bar! People can slip drugs into your drink this way. If you happen to set your cup down, get a new cup and drink.

Remember that you always have the right to say no to anything you encounter that makes you feel uncomfortable.

#### D. Alcohol

In Tennessee the legal age to purchase and/or drink alcohol is 21, and you must show your identification before buying any kind of alcohol. It is illegal to carry open containers of alcohol in public places like the street, or even transport them in your car. In addition, the laws against drunk driving are very strict. DO NOT DRINK BEFORE YOU DRIVE. Not only is this dangerous to you and others, but you could also lose your license and go to jail.



#### E. Campus 24-hour Transportation Service

One of the best ways for members of the UT campus community to stay safe is to take advantage of the nighttime transportation services offered by the "T." The services are convenient and free, and they are a great alternative to walking at night.

For more information, visit <http://safety.utk.edu/transportation/www.RidetheT.com> or call (865) 215-7800

### □ Day Care and Schools

#### A. Day Care




In the U.S., it is common for both parents to attend school or work outside the home and enroll their preschool-aged children in day-care centers. If you are looking for a good child care center, make sure that it is licensed by the state, has a low staff/child ratio, and provides an environment that encourages learning and personal development. The cost for full-time day care (usually 8:00 A.M. until 5:30 or 6:00 P.M.) varies widely, but is likely to cost \$200 or more per week for full-time care. Call each day care provider for current rates.

For more information, visit <http://www.knoxville-tn.com/daycare.html>

#### B. Schools

There are basically two types of schools in Knoxville and the surrounding areas: public schools, which are free, and private schools, which charge a tuition fee. Some private schools have a religious affiliation. Knoxville's public schools are available to any child living in the city, but the quality and accessibility vary. Students are generally required to attend the public school in their neighborhood, unless they pay tuition to attend another school.

For more information, visit

-  [Knox County Schools General Information](#)
-  [Knoxville Private Schools](#)
-  [Knoxville School Zone Finder](#)

### □ Shopping

Knoxville has two indoor malls: West Town Mall is the largest and is located about 10 minutes from campus, going west on Kingston Pike. The other is Knoxville Center Mall, which is slightly smaller and about 10 minutes east of campus. There are movie theaters and food courts in both malls. There are also plenty of other shops in and around Knoxville that cater to all tastes – new and used books, music, sports, crafts, ethnic food supermarkets, and anything else you can think of, as well as Wal-Mart and Target superstores. You can also find things in cheaper prices at Thrift stores, garage sales, and advertisements around campus posted on bulletin boards. The posted price generally does NOT include sales tax, which must be calculated in when you make your purchase. The sales tax varies by county, but is usually 5-7% of the purchase price. Whenever you buy something, ask for a receipt. If the item is damaged or unsatisfactory, you can usually return the item and receive your money back if you have the receipt.



## Before Leaving UT

### Check-list

- ❑ **Early exit: Email ISSS if you are leaving the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the end date on your Form DS-2019.**
- ❑ **30-Day Grace Period: Scholars have 30 days after the program end date to depart the USA.** However, a scholar cannot engage in program activities (research/lecturing) during your 30-day grace period.
- ❑ **Report your departure ISSS.**
- ❑ **Make sure you do not owe any money to the University** (fees charged to your VolCard, parking fines, library late fees, etc.).
- ❑ **Update your forwarding address** (1) with your department and (2) with the UT Payroll office if you were being paid by you UT.
- ❑ **Make sure you have received reimbursement on all of you and your dependents' medical insurance claims**, if you filed any. Update your forwarding address with the insurance company if any reimbursement is still due to you.
- ❑ **Request the return of your apartment deposit from your apartment complex or landlord.** You will need to have a walk-through in the apartment with the apartment complex manager or landlord to make sure that you are eligible to receive your deposit back.
- ❑ **Close your bank account** if you do not intend to return to the U.S.
- ❑ **Save all of your immigration documents** (all DS-2019 forms, passports, and visas) even after they expire. They may be helpful when arranging your future trips to the U.S. Also be sure to keep your Social Security Card, Driver's License and VolCard. **Your I-94 card must be collected by the airline personnel when you depart the U.S.**



## Useful Information

Here is a list of links you may find useful. Please be advised that the Center for International Education is not responsible for the content of any third party websites listed below. Information on third party websites may change at any time without notice.

### Immigration

- 🔗 Department of Homeland Security: [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)
- 🔗 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: [www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm](http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm)
- 🔗 U.S. Customs and Border Protection: [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)
- 🔗 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)
- 🔗 Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)
- 🔗 U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### Foreign Embassies/Consulates in the U.S.:

- 🔗 [www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco](http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco)
- 🔗 <http://www.embassy.org/embassies>

### Immigration Information (Embassies, Visa, etc.)

- 🔗 [U.S. Embassies Worldwide](#)
- 🔗 [Foreign Embassies in the US](#)
- 🔗 [SEVIS Fee Payment](#)
- 🔗 [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- 🔗 [U.S. Department of State Office of Authentication](#)
- 🔗 [Law Enforcement and Your Rights](#) (PDF)
- 🔗 [US Customs Services](#)

### U.S. Information

- 🔗 [Education USA](#): US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- 🔗 [www.leaderu.com/isr](http://www.leaderu.com/isr)
- 🔗 [www.internationalstudent.com](http://www.internationalstudent.com)

### Knoxville community

- 🔗 <http://www.utk.edu/knoxville/>

### Forms and documents for international scholars

- 🔗 <http://international.utk.edu/scholars/forms.shtml>





Center For International Education  
865.974.3177  
1620 Melrose Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37996-3531  
<http://international.utk.edu>

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE   

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KNOXVILLE