



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

CENTER FOR GLOBAL
ENGAGEMENT



International Pre-arrival Handbook

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1. Introduction



1.1 Welcome note

Welcome to the University of Tennessee! We hope that you love it here. As you adjust to life in the United States, you can use this handbook to help you get to know Knoxville and become familiar with the resource available to you as an international student.

We at the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) are devoted to helping you be a successful college student. If you have questions and can't find the answers in this handbook, please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at 865-974-3177 or stop by 1620 Melrose Avenue. Thank you for making the University of Tennessee your home for college!

1.2 History

The University of Tennessee is the second oldest and the largest public higher education institute in the state of Tennessee. It was founded in 1794, two years before Tennessee became a state. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville hosts over 27,000 students. Of those, approximately 1,000 are international students. The University offers over 300-degree programs at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels. Many of these programs are consistently ranked in the top 50 in the USA.

Double-check the following sections of your visa for accuracy:

- Spelling of your name under the **Surname** and **Given Name** Section
- Passport Number
- Birthdate, written in this format: DAY/MONTH/YEAR

****Important Note****

Canadian (citizens) students who enter from Canada are exempt from having to obtain a visa but must use the SEVIS Form I-20 or SEVIS Form DS-2019 to enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-student status. You must obtain a Form I-94 clearly indicating F-1 or J-1 status when you enter. First-time new students are not permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date noted on Item #3 on the SEVIS Form I-20, or Item #5 on SEVIS Form DS-2019. You are required to report to and attend the school designated on your visa and Certificate of Eligibility (SEVIS Form I-20 or SEVIS Form DS-2019).

2.3 Visa Applications Process

1. Read all of the information on your I-20 or DS-2019 to make sure it is correct. If there are any errors, contact the UTK CGE Engagement before using the form.
2. Read the form very carefully and sign at the bottom of Page 1 to show that you have read it.
3. Review our instructional video on how to pay the SEVIS fee here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ygs-k1TgPI0>. Then navigate to www.fmjfee.com to pay the SEVIS fee. Keep in mind that the fee is \$350 if you are an F-1 student, and \$180 if you are J-1. **Save and print your receipt!**
4. Review the information on how to apply for a student visa here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html>, and gather the required documentation.
5. Fill out the DS-160 visa application form found here: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
6. Follow instructions on the Consulate website to pay the Visa Application Fee of US\$160. (This is different from the SEVIS Fee). Print proof of payment.
7. Locate the U.S. consulate nearest you at the <http://www.usembassy.gov/> web site. Schedule your appointment for a visa interview. Be sure to print confirmation of your appointment.

2.4 Visa Interview Tips & Common Questions

Documents to bring to your visa interview

- I-20 or DS 2019 Form
- Passport valid for at least six months
- Printed receipt for SEVIS fee
- Documentation that you have paid the Visa Application Fee
- Confirmation of your visa interview appointment
- Evidence that you have the amount of funding indicated on your I-20 or DS-2019 form.

Top Ten Visa Tips!

1. Dress appropriately.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes early for your interview appointment.
3. Remember that interviews last ~ 3-5 minutes.
4. Be clear of your intention to study.
5. Show ties to your home country.
6. Be confident and prepared.
7. Be able to discuss why you chose the school and major.
8. Provide brief, specific, succinct answers.
9. Remain calm and relaxed.
10. Only answer questions that are asked – below are the 3 most common interview questions:
 - a. What do you intend to do after completing your program?
 - b. Do you have any relatives in the US? Where are they living?
 - c. Why should I grant you a visa?

Important Note:

F-1 and J-1 visas are nonimmigrant visas. The most common reason for visa denial is the failure to overcome the presumption of immigrant intent. U.S. law requires that visa officers assume that applicants for an F or J visa want to move to the US permanently and students must overcome this in order to be eligible. U.S. consular officers want the applicant to demonstrate permanent employment, meaningful business or financial connections, close family ties, or social or cultural associations, which will indicate a strong inducement to return to the country of origin.

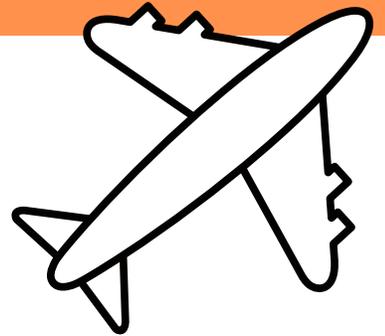


3. Traveling to the US

At this point in the process, you have successfully completed the visa application process and valid passport and visa stamp to show for it. Now you can start thinking about planning your trip to the United States. But before you get started with booking flights, make sure you have done the following:

- Submit your complete immunizations to the UT Student Health Center
 - Note that if your immunization records must be submitted in English, thus translations of my existing records may be needed and are an undergraduate student, you cannot move into your residence hall upon arrival until you have submitted these records. Additionally,
- Confirm your check-in date
 - Book your tickets such that you arrive in Knoxville before your check-in date. Review the [available check-in dates](#) and select the best date.
- Reviewed our travel checklist and tips below

TRAVEL CHECKLIST & IMPORTANT TIPS!



CARRY THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WITH YOU:

- SEVIS Fee Receipt
- Documentation of evidence of funding
- Valid passport with F1 or J1 visa stamp
- I-94 arrival document (you can download your i-94 here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Weather appropriate clothing
- Currency
 - You can typically exchange currencies at the airport. If you have a card that you are able to use globally, be sure to let your bank or card company know you will be traveling.

TRAVEL TIPS

- Schedule long layovers (at least 4 hours)
- When selecting your flight tickets, consider which connections will be optimal for arrival in Knoxville. There is more detailed information about this in following section
- Carry both paper copies and e-copies (on phone or other device) of the above documents
- When you enter the U.S., have your passport, I-20 or DS-2019 form ready to show the immigration officer

3.2 Arriving in Knoxville, TN

We recommend students 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 or San Francisco, and flights from Latin America flying into Houston or Miami. Flying into these major cities usually means good Knoxville connections from international flights.

Below is a list of a few major airports that provide non-stop flights to Knoxville, TN:

- Atlanta, Georgia – ATL
- Charlotte, North Carolina – CLT
- Chicago, Illinois – ORD
- Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas – DFW
- Detroit, Michigan – DTW
- New York, New York – LGA
- Newark, New Jersey – EWR



Below are options for transportation from the TYS airport to your destination in Knoxville:

- Uber
- Lyft
- Local taxi services:
 - Yellow Cab Co.: 865-523-5151
 - Chariots of Hire: 865-522-8108
 - Abba Cab: 865-292-9316
 - Checker Cab Co.: 865-523-5152
- International House airport pick-up services – note that airport pickup services are not always available. Review information on the provided link to register.

*Please note, you must pay a fee to use a taxi, Uber, or Lyft. Be sure you have at least \$35-40 cash available with you to pay for a taxi or have your debit/credit card linked to your Uber or Lyft account.

4. Housing

4.1 On-campus Housing



On-campus residence halls are composed of single rooms that are typically shared with one other student, though some private rooms are available. The halls differ from one another in the amenities included, so you should research each option before making your housing request. Please contact University Housing with any questions regarding housing.

1. If you are an undergraduate degree-seeking student:

All undergraduate students are required to live on-campus at UT for the first year of study. After the first year, you can opt to either continue living on-campus or pursue off-campus living, which will be covered in the next section. We strongly recommend that you complete your [housing application](#) as soon as possible – on-campus housing at UT fills up very quickly.

UT On-Campus Housing Contact Info:

- **Phone:** 865.974.3411
- **Fax:** 865.974.1420
- **Email:** housing@utk.edu
- **Web:** <https://housing.utk.edu/>

2. If you are a graduate degree-seeking student:

The University of Tennessee does not offer on campus housing for graduate students. The University does provide information about off campus housing that is available. Please go to <https://offcampushousing.utk.edu/> for more information.

3. If you are a J-1 exchange non-degree seeking student:

Residency on-campus is required for all exchange students for the duration of their enrollment at UT, and it is provided without application. Students are assigned to Clement Hall and are notified of housing arrangements via MyUTK in July for Fall start students and in early December for Spring start students. To determine if housing is included in your benefits or if you will be expected to pay out-of-pocket, please refer to our [budget sheets](#).

4.2 Off-campus housing



Off-campus housing is a popular and affordable choice for many international students at UT, particularly housing in the Fort Sanders or Tyson Park areas, both of which are a walking distance from campus.

For more detailed information, review our housing guide: <https://tiny.utk.edu/CGEHousingGuide>. Below are some examples of general housing options:

- **Apartments** can be large enough to have two or more bedrooms, can be furnished or unfurnished, and should provide you with a stove, kitchen sink, refrigerator and one or more bathrooms. Apartments are usually shared with 1-3 other students.
- **Efficiencies** are small, single-occupancy apartments where one large room serves as a bedroom, living room, and sometimes kitchen, with a private bathroom.
- **Rooms** are typically a rented room in a larger house or apartment, where the kitchen, living room and bathroom facilities are shared by everyone in the house. Three to six (or sometimes more) people can live in one house, depending on the size of the house.

4.3 Temporary Housing

If you are unable to check into your permanent housing when you arrive in Knoxville, you can explore options for temporary housing.

- **Temporary on-campus at UT** – Contact UT Housing and inquire about availability prior to your arrival – note that temporary housing on campus is not available for students arriving in spring or summer terms.
- **Knoxville hotels** – book your hotels ahead of time as spots fill up quickly at the beginning of each semester
- **Airbnb** – Temporary rentals of houses, apartments, condos and more.
- **International student associations** may assist in arranging temporary housing with a current student who is willing to let you spend a few nights with them.



*Please note that most temporary housing options require payment.

5. Employment

5.1 Graduate Assistantships



Graduate assistantships (GA) are a form of student employment that normally grants a tuition waiver, health insurance and a monthly stipend. Graduate assistantships are posted [here on the graduate school's page](#). You should still bring sufficient funds with you to assist with expenses you will incur at the beginning of the semester, including other expenses such as books, meals and household equipment.

Note that due to payroll processing times, it takes 1-2 months before you receive your first paycheck as a GA.

A. Graduate Assistantships for F-1 and J-1 students outside of the US:

The University of Tennessee is not allowed to employ any person who does not have legal work authorization. Because a graduate assistantship is considered employment, you must obtain the necessary legal immigration status before you begin your assistantship. If you are in legal status as an F-1 or J-1 student, you are allowed to accept an assistantship.

Important Note for J-1 students: J-1s must first obtain permission from the program sponsor prior to accepting an assistantship. A student with J-2 immigration status may also be allowed to work, if employment authorization has already been granted by the Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), a branch of DHS.



5.2 Employment and Immigration Regulations

F-1 transfer students currently studying at another U.S. institution:

- You must comply with U.S. immigration transfer procedures before UT can employ you. You will need to complete the immigration transfer procedure within 15 days of the program start date before you are eligible to begin working at UT. If you are currently a J-1 student, you should check with your program sponsor for assistance with correct procedures.

J-1 transfer students currently with a non-UT J-1 program:

- Your transfer UT must be processed and completed by UT before you may begin work. If your DS-2019 is issued by a governmental/ scholarship agency rather than by a university, you do not need to transfer to the UT program. However, you will be required to show a letter from your sponsor authorizing you to work at UT.

Individuals holding another non-immigrant status:

- If you currently hold another non-immigrant status, it may be possible to change your status to F-1 so that you can accept a position. However, this process takes many months and you will not be able to begin working until the change has been approved. If you would like to know more, contact your current international student advisor, or email international@utk.edu

6. Check-in and Orientation

6.1 Check-in Sessions

Like most universities in the U.S., UT has **a required orientation** for all international students, including transfer students. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires all new international students at UT to check-in with the CGE Engagement. Below are some of the topics that will be covered during the check-in session:

- Immigration laws and regulations relevant to international students and scholars
- Campus work authorization procedures
- Taxes
- Health insurance
- I-house programs

6.2 How to Sign up for a Check-in Session



The [check-in process](#) is a part of international student orientation, and varies based on your status. **If you are a J-1 exchange student, you will be automatically scheduled for a check-in session.** All other students must sign up for a specific session via [iVols](#). All students should plan on arriving by or before the date of your scheduled check-in session.

If you are an undergraduate, graduate, or J-1 exchange student, please bring the following to your check-in session:

- Passport
- I-20 or DS-2019
- I-94
- Other documents issued by the US government

If you are a **F-1 student transferring from another U.S. school**, please also bring the following:

- ❑ Original I-20 from UT
- ❑ I-20(s) issued in the last year from previous US institutions attended
- ❑ Proof of legal status (transcript or practical training documents)
- ❑ Current semester class schedule for UT

7. Important events following your arrival at UT

A. English Placement Guide



The English department offers four courses – ENG 121, 122, 131, and 132 that focus in teaching advanced English academic literacy. **Only undergraduate degree-seeking students (NOT J-1 undergraduate exchange students)** will be placed into these courses based on their TOEFL (or equivalent) scores used for university admission. Review the [English Placement Guide](#) page for more information.

Fall and Spring EPE

- Students who do not have test scores or are not satisfied with their placement based on test scores can choose to take an English Placement Exam (EPE). The EPE will take place at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, and students will be notified by email regarding registration, place, date, and time of the exam.

UT English Department Contact Info:

- **Phone:** 865.974.5401
- **Email:** hsaeli@utk.edu
- **Web:** <https://english.utk.edu/>

Walk-ins will not be accepted. For more information, visit: <https://english.utk.edu/composition/faq.php> or contact the UT English Department.

Information for Undergraduate Students

- A combination of scores and sub scores will determine English course placement. You will be contacted by the English Department as soon as you confirm attendance. If you are not satisfied with you test scores, you can choose to take the English placement Exam which is usually held at 9am on the Friday before classes start.

Information for Graduate Students

- The ESL Writing Program offers English 122, Academic English for Graduate Students, for graduate students whose first language is not English. Students are encouraged to register for English 122 particularly if their TOEFL score is less than 100 (or IELTS less than 7.5)

B. ITA Testing Program

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are also required to participate in the ITA Testing program (formerly the SPEAK test). It is a rule in the State of Tennessee that any non-native English speaker wishing to teach must score at the appropriate level on test. For more information, visit: <http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>.

7.1 Course Registration



During orientation, we will go over registration procedures, as well as the minimum number of enrollment hours required for international students to maintain their legal status. These steps/procedures are different for graduate and undergraduate students. Below is some general information regarding registration based on your status:

- **Degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students:**

You cannot register for classes until you have arrived in Knoxville, attended orientation, taken the EPE (if necessary), and met with an academic advisor from your department. If you are an undergraduate student, the academic advisor must clear you to register before you will have access to the system.

- **Non-degree seeking J-1 Undergraduate Exchange Students:**

CGE will preregister you into classes based on your course request list. In some cases, students will also meet with academic advisors after arrival in order to assist you with adjustments to the student's class schedule. Business and engineering student are the most likely to benefit from the academic advisor meetings

7.2 Paying Tuition and Fees



You will start to receive messages from the University of Tennessee directing you to check your fees online. **DO NOT PAY** your tuition and fees before you get to UT. Once you have arrived in the US and registered for your classes, then you can pay your tuitions and fees through any of the below options:

- **Flywire** – international payment platform accessible through [MyUTK](#)
- **OneStop** – pay in-person via cashier’s check, check or money order
- **Credit/Debit Card** – note that there is a 2.85 percent service fee for these payments.
- **Domestic Bank Account** via [MyUTK](#)

All students should regularly check MyUTK for outstanding payments such as library fines, parking tickets, health center fees, etc. If you do not pay on time, you will be charged late fees, your account will be put on hold, and UT will not release your transcript until your account is settled. For more information about your student account, visit One Stop Student Services: <http://onestop.utk.edu/>

***Note:** *Even if you have a graduate assistantship that provides a tuition waiver, you will likely still have to pay for some student fees so prepare accordingly*

Payment Information for J-1 Undergraduate Exchange Students

Exchange students will have items that are not payable by you, but rather by UT. These payments will be made after you arrive on campus. Please check the [budget sheets](#) detailing the benefits received on each program so that you can anticipate what fees you are responsible for on your [MyUTK](#) account. Payments are typically due in late-August for the fall semester and mid-January for the spring semester.

8. Post Arrival Information

8.1 Health Care Information

A. Health Insurance



All international students attending UT are required to enroll in a health and accident insurance plan. UT has negotiated a plan that fits most students' needs. You will automatically be enrolled in this plan and pay for it at registration. For more information, you may also visit our [website](#).

Health Insurance Waivers

- If you have a scholarship that provides an adequate policy or are covered under an eligible policy from your home country/institution, you may request to [waive the UT Health Insurance plan charge](#). If your request is denied, you will then be required to purchase the UT Student Health Insurance plan.

Graduate Assistantships and Health Insurance

- Most graduate students who have been offered assistantships will have this health insurance fee paid for by their departments. Health insurance will be discussed in more detail at orientation.

B. UT Student Health Center

The UT Student Health Center on campus provides a full range of health services to all enrolled UT students who have paid the student health fee. Staff at the clinic are professionally trained and offer services including primary care, [mental health counselling](#) and vaccinations. It also administers the health insurance program that all international students are required to purchase.



C. Health Records

Students are required to bring a copy of their medical and vaccination/immunization records to UT. The Student Health Center will inform you if you need any vaccinations prior to arrival at UT. Any necessary vaccinations that you do not have can be obtained once you arrive at UT. **Be sure to remember to bring copies of your prescriptions for medications, eyeglasses, etc. (in English).** Visit the [Student Health Center page](#) for more information on any of the above information.

8.2 Resources for Daily Life in US

A. Utilities



If you choose off-campus housing, you will, in most cases, be required to pay for your own gas/ electricity and possibly water. Your landlord will tell you in your lease which utilities are included in your rent. If you need to set up your own account for any of these utilities, you will need to call the Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB) at **865-524-2911**.

Note that 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 of water and electricity that you consumed during that billing period.

B. Internet and TV

Most off-campus housing does not come with preinstalled television and Internet. If interested, you should research provider options and choose a package that best suits your needs. Note that internet alone can cost around \$25 per month or more – you may search for special deals online or opt to split costs with a roommate to save money.



C. Mobile Phones



If you are interested in purchasing a cellular/mobile phone, there are many options around Knoxville. Many companies have month-by-month or pre-paid options, and some even have international calling plans. Data packages including web and email access usually cost \$30-\$45 extra. Be sure to shop around and check out a variety to decide which company and calling plan would best suit your needs.

D. Email

All on-campus residence halls and most academic buildings are equipped with free wireless Internet access. The library and residence halls have student computer labs. All incoming students at the University of Tennessee will be assigned a NetID and a UT email account. You are encouraged to access your UT campus email regularly – this is the primary means for CGE and other UT departments to relay important information to you. For more information, please visit the

8.3 Campus Life

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.

The I-House provides a "home away from home" environment for international students, and is a space for people to meet and learn about people of all cultures. The I-House hosts events and programs each semester designed enhance cultural understanding and foster international friendships. Check the [I-House page](#) regularly for information on exciting upcoming events. You can also follow I-House on social media to stay up to date!



Below are some of the programs and events led by I-House:

- [Friendship Program](#)
- [Language Practice](#)
- [Photo Contest](#)
- [Coffeehouse](#)
- [International Festival](#)
- [Dance Competition](#)
- [American Cultural Experience](#)
- [World Showcase](#)



Semester Hours*:

Mon-Thurs 8:00 am - 9:00 pm
Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Weekend Closed

Contact Information:

1623 Melrose Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37996
Tel: (865) 974-4453
Fax: (865) 974-2985
ihouse@utk.edu

8.4 Safety

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

- 911 – all emergencies
- UT Police
 - 974-3111 (emergency line)
 - 974-3114 (main line)
- #00 – if you need to dial outside the U.S., enter this prior to the number for the international operator. **Note that this may be expensive.**

A. Blue Light Phones

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.

****Police are legally prohibited from taking "gifts" or money. They may arrest people who attempt to offer such payment.**



A. 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.

B. 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



C. Campus 24-hour Transportation

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 <https://ridethet.utk.edu/safety-at-night/>, <http://ridethet.utk.edu/>, or call **(865) 215-7800**

B. International Student Associations



Students from over 100 countries attend UT. If you are interested in knowing what international associations are available at UT, visit [the Office of Multicultural Student Life website](#). Often, these student groups can assist you in settling into your life in Knoxville. If your country is not represented by an association, know that you can start your own student organization when you arrive!

C. Outreach Activities

Many students are interested in sharing their cultural traditions with fellow students and their new community. The CGE is frequently asked by local public schools if international students are willing to talk about their culture to their classes. If this is something you are interested in, you may want to consider bringing your flag, some pictures, traditional dress or music instruments you may play. Email ihouse@utk.edu for more information.



D. Facilities On-campus

1. Student Union



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://studentunion.utk.edu/>

2. 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://dining.utk.edu/>

3. 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. For more information, visit <http://www.lib.utk.edu/>



4. 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. For more information, visit <http://recsports.utk.edu/>

5. 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>

9. Transportation

9.1 Public Transit Options

A. Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)



The KAT bus 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).

B. “The T”

“The T” is a free “trolley” bus runs between UT campus and downtown Knoxville. “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.



9.2 Driving

A. Getting a Driver’s License or Permit



If you plan to drive a car while you are in Knoxville, first make sure you have a valid driver’s license. CGE has created an instructional document on all the steps on [how to obtain a temporary Tennessee driver’s license](#). This guide includes information on how to get started, where to go, what to bring to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DVM), and how to study for a driver’s test. If the DMV requests other documents that you do not have, please contact ISSS. If you have applied for a Social Security Number, you should wait until you receive it and then apply for a Driver License.

****Important Note for Canadian Citizens:** 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

B. Parking

You can park at UT by purchasing a monthly or semester parking pass. Visit <https://parking.utk.edu> 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.



C. Automobile Insurance

Before you buy, compare prices at different insurance companies. You can visit <https://www.bankrate.com/insurance/> to compare many companies at once. By law you are required to have liability insurance when driving a car in the U.S.

D. 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>

10. Money and Banking

10.1 Opening a Bank Account



When you open an account, the bank will likely ask for identification documents (passport, I-20 or DS-2019 form, I-94 card, etc.). Some banks will also require you to have and Social Security Number, but not all of them will. Note that without a Social Security Number (SSN), you will be ineligible for credit cards or check cards. Information on social security numbers and eligibility will be discussed at orientation. 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. Once you open your account, you will receive a checkbook and ATM (automated teller machine) card, which allows you to withdraw cash from your account 24 hour a day.

Important Tips for Opening a Bank Account

1. Inquire about any special “Student Accounts” offers the bank has available – such accounts typically have minimal to no monthly charges.
2. Ask about what stipulations the bank has for international students.

10.2 Using an ATM

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. ATM machines can be found at the following locations on the UT campus:

- **First floor of Student Union** - SunTrust Bank ATM, Bank of America ATM, First Tennessee ATM, and UT Credit Union
- **Volunteer Hall** - SunTrust Bank ATM located at Volunteer Hall.
- **Presidential Court Building** - First Tennessee ATM



10.3 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.

10.4 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. Below is an example of a check

The image shows a check with the following details:

- 1** Date: 07/01/2018
- 2** Payee: ACME Grocery Shop
- 3** Amount: \$ 8.15
- 4** Amount in words: EIGHT AND 15/100 DOLLARS
- 5** Signature: Jane Doe
- 6** Memo: Lunch w/Friends

Other details on the check include the sender's address (Jane Doe, 123 Main St, Anywhere US 10111), the bank's address (Your Bank, 456 Main St, Anywhere US 10111), and a MICR line at the bottom: ⑆ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ⑆ 100 100 1 2 3 9 ⑆ 0 7 9 0.

- 1) **Date:** The date that you wrote the check. Note that the bank may refuse to pay a check that is more than six months old.
- 2) **Payee:** The person or company that you are paying.
- 3) **Amount:** The amount you are paying in numerical form.
- 4) **Amount:** The amount you are paying written out in words.
- 5) **Signature:** Your signature is your name written in a unique way, that certifies your identity. Your signature approves the payment on the check.
- 6) **Memo:** The reason for your payment

11. Final Notes

Please refer to the University of Tennessee’s website: www.utk.edu for more information about the university, campus life and news, as well as information about Knoxville in general. For more information on the CGE, go to www.international.utk.edu.

We try to answer email questions as promptly as possible. The office tends to get very busy as we approach the beginning of a semester, so it may take several days before you receive a response. Please do not send multiple emails as this tends to clog up our email accounts. Ask all of your questions in one email.

We strongly urge each student to arrive early. There are many tasks that have to be accomplished before the rush of orientation and registration begins. Remember, it will take most people a few days to get over “jet lag.” A couple of days spent resting and exploring Knoxville and the UT campus can make a big difference in how your first semester at UT gets started.



12. Glossary

- ☐ **CGE:** Center for Global Engagement
- ☐ **Coke:** In the southern U.S., a term used to describe every type of carbonated beverage.
- ☐ **DHS:** Department of Homeland Security
- ☐ **EPE:** English Placement Exam
- ☐ **Old City:** Downtown Knoxville, about a 10-minute walk east of campus
- ☐ **Residence Halls (sometimes called “Dorms”):** Massive buildings with 300-500 students. Rooms come in singles (you are the only occupant) or doubles (you have a roommate). Most rooms are doubles. Residence hall rooms are furnished with a bed, desk, dresser, mirror and closet. You must provide your own linens.
- ☐ **SEVIS:** Student and Exchange Visitor Program
- ☐ **Smokey:** UT’s mascot, a bluetick hound dog.
- ☐ **Smoky Mountains:** The beautiful mountain range located 45 minutes from Knoxville. It’s the most visited National Park in the United States.
- ☐ **SSN:** Social Security Number. Required for employment in the USA.
- ☐ **The Strip:** The section of Cumberland Avenue just north of campus with bars, restaurants, banks, bookstores and other shops.
- ☐ **T-RECS:** Tennessee Recreation Sports facility located on campus. Contains an indoor track, workout rooms, pools, exercise machines and weights.
- ☐ **TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language exam
- ☐ **TYS:** The IATA code for Knoxville’s McGhee Tyson Airport
- ☐ **Utilities:** Electricity, water, telephone, cable and Internet
- ☐ **VOLs:** Short for “Volunteers.” Used to describe the Vols (men’s) and Lady Vols (women’s) athletic teams
- ☐ **Volunteers:** The University of Tennessee’s nickname.
- ☐ **Vol Card:** Student identification card. o Y’all: Mainly used in the southern states. Short for “you all.” Used when referring to someone or a group of people. Plural – “All Y’all.”