NEW STUDENT GUIDE

Studying in another country is one of life’s most enriching experiences; travelers have recognized the benefits of learning about different ways of thinking and living. Studying in a country and culture different from your own will enable you to look at the world from a new perspective. Nearly half a million students come to the United States to study each year from countries around the world.

ADJUSTMENT

Your adjustment in the United States may not seem like a shock at all; you may just be uncomfortable at times, or more tired than you would normally be. Regardless, most foreign students and faculty experience culture shock and most learn to accept the differences that they encounter and even adjust to them. Remember though, that each person’s experience is different, and part of the value of your experience abroad will be your own discovery of America and Americans.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK

- Extreme homesickness
- Weariness of speaking English
- Desire to avoid social settings that seem threatening or unpleasant
- Lack of interest in studies
- Lack of motivation
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Constant yearning for familiar foods and spices
- Fatigue
- Hostility against the host culture
- Depression and feeling of helplessness
- Weight gain or loss

Suggested Ways to Combat Culture Shock

- Get in touch with family and friends back home.
- Get enough sleep and try to relax.
- Involve yourself with college activities; interact with other students.
- Be active! Participate in sports, or exercise your body.
- Observe how others are acting in the same situation.
STUDENT LIFE

You will only be living abroad for a limited time. Enjoy it!!!

★ Make the most of your experience.
★ Discover the region in which you live.
★ Be sure to get to know the city in which you live. Meet the locals.
★ Go to cultural activities like operas, plays, fairs and concerts.
★ Visit the historical sites and museums.
★ Look at the architecture. Eat at local restaurants. Investigate the nightlife.
★ Look for student discounts.
# AMERICAN CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>To many Americans, precision is very important. Having an appointment with Americans is like having a Swiss watch, which means “precision.” Being late for class may result in lower grades. Be sure to arrive few minutes early to your appointment. Call if you will be coming late.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td>In this mobile society, friendship may be transitory and are often established to meet personal needs in a particular situation. The casualness of friendship patterns in the U.S. allows people to move freely into new social groups. These groups usually form around work, shared interests, school, or places of residence. Most Americans usually welcome new people to their social groups as long as you show an interest in them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>Americans often greet each other (or you) with phrases such as “How are you?” or “Nice day, isn’t it?” Usually, it’s not a question at all, but rather a form of “Hello.” A usual response to this question would be: “I’m fine, how are you?” You may not be “fine” at all, but this kind of greeting is a courtesy and is not intended to invite a lengthy conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitations</td>
<td>If you accept an invitation to a person’s home, it is important to keep the appointment. The host expects you to call or write well ahead of time to cancel your appointment if you cannot come. If you are not sure you can attend, it is probably better to decline. It is not customary to bring a gift if you are invited to dinner, a bottle of wine or flowers will always be appreciated. Before leaving, thank the host and hostess for accommodating you and compliment them for the meal they prepared for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>Upon your purchase of goods and services (clothing, foods, books, etc.), you will notice that advertised price does not include a sales tax. The sales tax is added on the price when you go to pay for your goods and services. Tax varies from city to city, but they are usually around 6-8 percent of the price listed on the sales tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipping</td>
<td>Customers reward workers’ (such as waiters and waitresses, taxi drivers, airport and hotel porters) good service by tipping them. When service is particularly poor, some people consider it appropriate to limit the amount of a tip. Your waiter expects a tip of 15-20 percent of your bill while a taxi driver expects an additional 10-15 percent of the fare shown on the taxi’s meter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness and Body Odor</td>
<td>Americans tend to choose products that will help them, their clothes, and homes smell like anything except their natural odors. Realize that your own culture’s ideas about what smells good may be different from the American culture. For example, cooking odors can often be the most obvious and even offensive scents to most Americans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Banking | Most students use banks to maintain checking, savings and other accounts, and to wire money to-and-from their accounts. When opening a bank account, make sure that you have your passport, visa, form I-20, school Id. With a checking account, you will be able to write checks or transfer money electronically for the amount of money you have on deposit at that bank. You can also consider applying for a Student Credit Card.  

**When opening an account consider the following:**  
- What is the minimum opening deposit?  
- Are there service charges, and how can they be avoided?  
- Will there be a charge for every check you write? If so, how much?  
- Is there a fee charged for every use of an ATM (Automated Teller Machine)? If so, how much?  
- Can the bank accept wire transfers from a foreign bank, and vice versa? |
IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

As a non-immigrant international student, you must:
★ Have a valid passport at all times.
★ Attend the school you were authorized to attend.
★ Be registered full-time for each academic semester as defined by law. For undergraduate students, this means registration for at least 12 credits per semester.
★ Maintain good academic standing and make normal progress towards completing your degree.
★ Obtain proper authorization before engaging in any off-campus employment.
★ Report promptly to the Registrar’s office any change of address.

If you have questions on any aspect of law and regulations related to your status, please make an appointment with your Academic Advisor.

**Essential Documents**

★ Passport
★ Visa
★ I-20 Form
★ I-94 Card

**Address Update**

You must report your current residential address to the Immigration Services within 10 days of a move. Addresses you provide are automatically sent to the Immigration Services via SEVIS. Please update your local address in when you move.

**Leaving the US and Re-entry**

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S. (including going home), you must have page 3 of your I-20 Form signed by the DSO in the Registrar’s Office. This affirms that you are eligible to continue as a student at Atlantis University when you return to the U.S.
EMPLOYMENT FOR F-1 STUDENTS

On-Campus Employment

F-1 students in lawful status are eligible and permitted to work on campus. Opportunities for on-campus employment exist but are competitive, and you should not expect immediate employment. Maintaining eligibility for most types of F-1 employment means that you must limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. You may work full-time (when school is not in session) and during summer vacations. Students who wish to apply for on-campus employment should make an appointment to request information about this.

Off-Campus Employment

All off-campus employment requires prior authorization from the Immigration Services. In most cases, you must be a full-time student in lawful status for one academic year before you are eligible to apply for off-campus employment authorization. Most common types of off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students are Curricular/Optional Practical Training.
The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) issues a Florida driver’s license. You will have to take a written test and a road test. There are a number of acceptable proofs of ID required by the DMV before they will issue a driver’s license. Some of these documents include:

- Passport
- Student ID
- I-20 Form
- Utility bill showing local address
- Health insurance card

Your current F-1 program terminates if your absence from the U.S. is over 5 months, unless you have been authorized for study/research abroad.

By state law and university policy, all international students at AU in F-1 and J-1 status are required to have medical insurance prior to registration. Students will NOT be allowed to register for classes unless they comply with the medical insurance requirement.