Welcome

Dear International Students:

We are delighted that you have chosen to attend Texas A & M-Corpus Christi, the Island University. The Office of International Education (OIE) welcomes you. We are here to help you have positive experiences as you participate in the academic, social, and cultural life of this campus and we hope that you will share your rich cultural heritage with us.

We have compiled this manual to assist you in identifying campus and community resources. We also encourage you to come and visit our office and bring your questions, ideas, and concerns as we want your transition and stay to be successful.

Once again, welcome to The Island University.

Sincerely,

Office of International Education
International Student Handbook

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1. Office of International Education

About OIE
OIE is here to help international students adjust to the new surroundings and to understand how to navigate through the university’s rules and services. We encourage you to participate in orientations at the beginning of each semester. For ESLI students, there are orientations provided when they first arrive on campus and upon completion of Level 3. OIE also offers cultural and social events throughout the year to give you opportunity to share your culture while learning about others’.

Hours
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Website
http://tamucc.edu/oie/
You will find useful information and helpful links on this website. Events, programming, immigration issues and other important information can be found by visiting the OIE website.

E-mail
Ana Billeaux, Director: ana.billeaux@tamucc.edu.
Karin Griffith, International Student Services Coordinator: karin.griffith@tamucc.edu
Mary Beth Davis, International Initiatives Coordinator: marybeth.davis@tamucc.edu

Programs
The Office of International Education hosts programs and activities each semester to enhance your cultural and social experience. OIE also collaborates with other organizations on campus and in the community to provide opportunities for you to expand your academic, social, and cultural experience. For a calendar of events and the most up-to-date information, visit http://wow.tamucc.edu/
2. How do I …?

Find Housing
On campus housing is offered by Camden Miramar. You can visit Camden Miramar for more information. To find out prices, go to “Rates and Floor Plans.” When you move into Camden Miramar apartments, you will need to bring your own sheets, blankets, and pillows. As you can see on their webpage, their dorms and apartments are furnished, so you do not need to buy furniture.
Move-in starts about one week before classes start; however, you may be able to arrange for an earlier move-in date. You can contact them at 361/825-5000. Once you get to school, go to the Camden Miramar office to pick up the keys to your apartment or dorm. The office is usually open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you make previous arrangements, you may be able to pick up your keys as late as 10:00 pm.

There is off campus housing available near campus and on the bus route. Here is a link that the University suggests your visit: off-campus living. If you move off-campus, you will have to check with each apartment complex to find out whether they offer furnished or unfurnished apartments. We advise that you live on-campus for at least the first semester. Doing so will give you time to adapt to school and the city. It will also give you time to decide where you want to live, and you might even find friends who want to move in with you.

If you arrive early, you may need a hotel room for a few days. For a complete list of hotels closest to campus, click here.

Find Transportation
One of the advantages of living on-campus is that you do not have to worry about transportation as much. However, you might have errands to run, need to buy groceries, or want to go to the mall. Public transportation is available from TAMU-CC to different locations in the city. This service is free of charge for students by presenting a valid TAMU-CC Sand Dollar$ card. To learn more about the transportation services please visit www.crrta.org. Other ways to move around Corpus Christi include:

Taxi services: Taxis are expensive; however, it is easiest way to move around in an unknown city. The phone number is 1-800-TAXICAB (1-800-829-4222).
Personal car: Buying a car is very common here in the United States, and many students own one. If you want a place to start looking for your car, you can visit www.carsmart.com. You can visit the dealerships in town, and you can also check the classified ads in the local newspaper. If you are buying a used car, request a car fax. This will give you the car’s history and you will learn whether this automobile was involved in accidents or if it has had any problems. When you buy a car, remember to buy a parking permit at the Student Services Center (Round Building), at the Business Office. You need to have a parking permit in order to park your car on campus. If you do not have a parking permit, you will have to pay a fine. And of course, in order to drive your car, you will need a Drivers License. The required documents to obtain a driver license are:

a. Foreign Passport with a visa (valid or expired)
b. Form I-94 with status code F1, F2, M1, or M2, an unexpired Form I-20, and two documents verifying your current residence
c. Form I-94 with status code J-1 or J-2 and an unexpired Form IAP-66 or Form DS-2019 or
d. Unexpired Form I-94 with a defined expiration date: Form I-94 must have been issued for a period of at least one year and have at least six months validity remaining.

For additional information on how to obtain a driver’s license, call the Department of Public Safety at 361/698-5625 or visit their website at TxDPS. Their office is located at 1922 South Padre Island Drive.

Purchase Health Insurance
You must have health insurance as long as you attend TAMU-CC. Your health insurance must meet US, Texas, and Texas A & M System requirements. If you do not have health insurance that covers you through the duration of the semester, you will not be able to enroll in your classes. The university automatically charges you for health insurance each semester.

Get a TAMU-CC Student ID (Sand Dollar$ Card)
Your student ID is called the SandDollar$ Card. The Sand Dollar$ office is located in the University Center, Office 134. This is not only your official ID; it is also the easiest way to purchase goods and services at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. You will need to show your passport in order to be able to request your SandDollar$ card. The SandDollar$ card is an ON CAMPUS debit card. You can connect it to your Wells Fargo bank account, or deposit money at the SandDollar$ Office. Use it to buy food, books, and even in some of the vending machines. You will also need this card at the library in order to print, make copies, and have access to Personal Computers, and Notebook Computers. If you live on campus you will need it to get through the security gate, which closes at 10 pm every day. Finally, you will be able to attend many university events free of charge or for a reduced price using the SandDollar Card. For more information, click here.

Get my free e-mail account
To activate your Islander e-mail account follow these steps:
2. Select Islander Student E-mail. Scroll down and enter your Student ID and your birth date in the format MMDDYYYY. Click Submit.
3. You have now activated your Islander e-mail account. You will be provided with your e-mail User ID and password.

To log into your Islander E-mail account follow these steps:
1. Go to http://islander.tamucc.edu/mail.
2. In the Name field, enter User ID you were given when you activated your e-mail account. In the Password field, enter the e-mail password you were given. Click Submit.
3. You have now logged into your Islander e-mail account.

To learn more, click here.
Register for Classes
In order to register for classes, you must meet with your Academic Advisors. Your advisor will help you choose and register for your classes for the following semester. Each College has academic advisors and you can make appointments to discuss your degree plan with your advisor. Your academic advisor will help you develop your Degree Plan, which will list all the courses you must take to complete your bachelor’s or master’s degree. Once you have your degree plan and have discussed it with your academic advisor, you can register online.

Where do I pay? Once you register for your classes, you pay for your tuition and fees at the Student Services Center in the Business Office
Phone: 361-825-2600
Fax: 361-825-2143
Mailing Address: Business Office 6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5765
Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5765
E-Mail: business.office@tamucc.edu

How to pay: You can pay by cash, check, debit card, credit card and SandDollar$ Card. However, you may not pay with a VISA card. Paying with debit or credit card has an extra cost. You can either pay your whole tuition at once or pay in installments. An Installment Payment Plan allows you to pay half of tuition at the beginning of the semester and pay the rest during the semester. The Business Office will give you a payment schedule so you know when each installment is due. For more information on payment options, click here.

Buy My Books
You can buy your books at the University Bookstore in the University Center. Go to the second floor of the bookstore, there will always be someone there to help you. Here you can also buy notebooks, pens, pencils, and anything else you need for class. Visit the Bookstore at http://tamucc.bncollege.com/. There is another bookstore off campus. It is called The Islander Bookstore, and you may be able to buy your books there too. It is located at 6133 Enis Joslin, less than a mile away from campus. You can visit them at http://islandertextbooks.com/. There are a number of other options to get your books, which include book rental, checking Amazon.com, textbooks.com, and others. You will need to decide what works best for you.

Find Food
At School: Our University offers a variety of food, from American fast food, to Mexican food, to ‘home-made’ food. There are restaurants at the University Center, the Center for Instruction and outside the Library. There is also a Starbucks, and Einstein Bagels, and other food vendors. They are generally closed during the weekends and on Friday afternoons.

The Supermarket: Our big local supermarket is called H.E.B. Go to www.heb.com and click on 'store locator’ to find addresses of local HEB’s. You can go there by bus or maybe even ride with your roommate!
Restaurants: Corpus Christi has a great variety of restaurants. They range in price and quality, and you are sure to find your “favorite restaurant” once you are here. There is a comprehensive list of restaurants at www.corpuschristicvb.com under ‘Dining & Night Life’.

Communicate With Folks Back Home
The easiest way to communicate with family and friends back home is definitely by internet. You have access to our computers at the library almost every day, and the library has very convenient hours. Or you can always use the phone. All campus dorms and apartments have a phone that will allow you to make local phone calls and to receive local and long-distance calls at no charge. You can buy a Calling Card that will allow you to call home from any phone. http://www.callingcards.com/ is one of many websites that can help you obtain a calling card.

Maintain My Immigration Status
You must be a full time student in order to maintain your immigration status. If you are an undergraduate student, you need to enroll in at least 12 credit hours per semester. If you are a graduate student, you need to enroll in at least 9 credit hours per semester. Karin Griffith is the International Student Services Coordinator. You can reach her at 361/825-2258 or via e-mail at Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu. You can also visit www.uscis.gov for additional information on immigration and visa rules.
3. Banking & Other Money Matters

Checking and Savings Accounts
There are many banking institutions in Corpus Christi and you can consult the phone book for their location. For your convenience and ease, there is a bank, Wells Fargo, that operates one of its branches in the University Center.

In order to keep your money safe, you should open a checking or savings account. This will allow you to keep a record of your income and expenses. In some cases, checking and savings accounts may earn interest on the balance on your account.

Writing & Cashing Checks
Once you open a checking account, you can write checks to make purchases. Many businesses require that you show identification before they can accept your check. If you receive a check from someone else, you can deposit it in your checking or savings account, or you can choose to cash it at your bank. Banking institutions will charge you a fee for cashing checks if you do not have an account with them. There are places in town (not banks) that can also cash a check for you, but there will charge you a fee.

Writing a check is easy, but you there are a few details that you need to keep in mind.
1. Date you write the check
2. Name of business or person you are writing the check to
3. Dollar amount in numbers
4. Dollar amount – spelled out in writing
5. Why you writing this check
6. Your signature

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DATE (1) May 20, 2009

(2) PAY TO THE ORDER OF H.E.B. $ (3) $45.65

(4) Forty five and 65/100 DOLLARS

MoneyInstructor.com Bank
1221 Main Street
Anywhere, US 10001

FOR (5) Groceries (6) Your Signature

21460278 8161843000 0101

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MoneyInstructor.com
ATM Cards
ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) make it easy for you to get cash. If you have an ATM card with your checking or savings account, you can withdraw funds at any time as long as you have money in your account. Some banks charge a fee for using your ATM card. Make sure you know your financial institution’s rules for using your card, especially regarding fees. There is a Wells Fargo ATM on campus. There are ATM’s in grocery stores and gas stations. If they are not connected to your bank, there will be a charge. Charges may vary from one ATM to another.

Debit Cards
Debit cards use MasterCard or Visa cards and connect them to your checking or savings account. Debit cards ARE NOT credit cards. If you do not have enough balance in your account to make a purchase, the transaction will be rejected.

Credit Cards
Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, and Discover) are like loans. You use the card with the understanding that you have to pay at a future date, and there is a high percentage of interest charged to you in addition to the actual amount you spend. Credit card balances require that you make a minimum payment every month, and there is a late fee charge if your payment does not reach the creditor on time. Many credit cards have a yearly fee, which could be as high as $50 per year.

Receiving Money from Home
Use your Credit or Debit card from your country to withdraw money from an ATM. You can do a transfer of funds from a bank account in your country to the bank account you open here in America. You can call 1 (361) 825 2267 (Wells Fargo Bank – campus branch) for more information.
You can also ask in your home country for other ways of sending money to the United States. These change from country to country, and there may be fees associated with this transaction.

Working
You may be eligible to work, but it will depend on your visa and student status. Visit Karin Griffith, International Student Services Coordinator, to find out when and how you may apply to get a job on or off campus. Once you find out if you are eligible to work, visit the office of Career Services, located in University Center 304. You can also call them at 361-825-2628, or visit their website.

Scholarships:
In order to apply for scholarships click here. Create an account, and fill out the application form by the appropriate deadline. There is one form for most of the scholarships available at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. In some cases, depending on availability, a $1,000 ESL competitive scholarship will change your status to allow you to pay in-state tuition. For more information contact the Scholarship Office at (361) 825-2522.
Social Security Numbers (SSN)

When you first arrive in the United States, you are not eligible to work off campus. And if you are not employed, you are not eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN). Once you get a job on campus or are given a research assistantship, you will need to obtain your social security card in order to get paid. In order to get your social security card, you will need to bring a letter from your employer to the International Student Services Coordinator who will issue a letter to verify your F-1 status. These two letters are very important because the Social Security Administration needs to verify your on-campus employment AND your full-time enrollment status. To apply for your social security card, take your employment letter, the letter issued by the International Student Services Coordinator, and your immigration documents (passport, I-20 and I-94 card) to the Social Security Administration Office located at 3801 South Port Avenue, Corpus Christi, TX.

Taxes
When you accept employment on campus, you use the SSN to complete required U.S. tax forms. Income tax must be filed between January 1 and April 15 every year. Check with the Payroll Department located in the University Service Center for more information.
4. Health Services and Insurance

Health Insurance
Health care in the United States is very costly. A short stay in the hospital could cost thousands of dollars. Even a visit to the Emergency Room can run into thousands of dollars. It is very important to have health insurance that will help pay for medical expenses. “The Texas A&M System mandates that ALL international students purchase health insurance before registering for classes. The Texas A&M System student health insurance plans meet the minimum requirements. The insurance fee is automatically assessed at the time of registration. No personal insurance plans will be accepted.

University Health Center
You do not need health insurance to access TAMU-CC Health Center. The center is located in the bottom floor of the Sandpiper Building, across from Miramar Student Housing. It is open 8:00 – 5:00 Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 – 3:00 on Fridays. There is no charge for an office visit to see the doctor or nurse, but you are responsible for cost of medications, immunizations, and laboratory tests. If you need medical assistance after hours you can call the Campus Police at extension 4444 or the Resident Assistant. If it is an emergency, you will need to dial 911. For more information about the Health Center click here.

University Disability Services
Disability Services office is located in Corpus Christi Hall 116. This office provides support and services to ensure that students with disabilities have access to all programs offered to TAMU-CC students. For more information visit their website.

University Counseling Services
The University Counseling Center provides counseling services to help students address personal problems that may interfere with their academic success. You may find it hard to adjust to college life and its demands, and there are counselors available to help you develop and enhance your ability to cope with changes and challenges you will encounter during the course of your studies. These services are free of charge. For more information click here.
5. Emergencies

There are many different kinds of emergencies: A crime in progress, a building on fire, someone who needs prompt medical attention, and many more. Locking your keys in your car, needing directions to get to a destination, locking yourself out of your apartment are NOT emergencies. If there is an emergency, call 911. This number should be used ONLY for emergencies.

Fire
Your safety is very important. If you see a fire, you must move to a safe area, and call 911. If you hear a fire alarm sound, please evacuate the building and move to a safe area. Texas A&M – Corpus Christi runs “fire drills.” These fire drills are run to help everyone on campus prepare in case of a fire or another emergency. When you hear a fire alarm in a building, you must exit the building, even if it is during class time, at night, or at any time. Remember these fire drills are completed to help you learn what you need to do in case of a fire.

Injury or Illness
This is a good opportunity to remind you that you MUST have Health Insurance. If you are ill or injured you may need to see a physician. If your illness or injury is very serious, you may need to go to a hospital’s Emergency Room. If you are sick or injured but your condition is less serious, go first to the University Health Center. If the Health Center is closed, you can go to emergency care centers, where you can be seen by a doctor without an appointment, or as a “walk-in.” If your condition is such that you can wait for a day or two before seeing a doctor, you can make an appointment with your physician. Please keep in mind that you will be charged for these services. This is why it is VERY IMPORTANT to have health insurance. Health care is very expensive in the U.S.

Here are some of the local hospitals.
Bay Area Hospital - http://www.ccmedicalcenter.com
Christus Spohn System - http://www.christusspohn.org/

These are some of the emergency care centers, that can see you without an appointment. Be sure to check your insurance coverage, to make sure you go to a center that accepts your insurance.
Bay Area Quick Care - 9929 SPID, Flour Bluff Plaza # 109 - 361/937-2121
Bayside Medical Centers - 3817 S.P.I.D. (SPID @ Weber) - 361/857-0178
Concentra Urgent Care - 4025 S.P.I.D. - 361-852-8255

Hurricanes / Severe Weather
Corpus Christi is on the Gulf Coast, and hurricanes are possible. Officially, hurricane season starts on June 1st and lasts until November 30. However, the most active time happens between August and November. During hurricane season the city may issue a mandatory evacuation order and everyone must leave the city. When this evacuation orders are issued, all housing on campus is closed, and you must leave. There will be instructions so that the campus can be safely evacuated. Please follow this link to learn more about hurricane preparedness: http://safety.tamucc.edu/Hurricane.html.

For those who live on campus, you will not be permitted to stay in your on-campus housing unit during an evacuation. If you do not have a place to go or transportation, the university
offers assisted evacuation to Laredo. Please note, this is an option of last resort. Accommodations are very basic: Texas A & M International University in Laredo prepares their gym to allow students to stay there. You will be sleeping on a gym floor and you will not have privacy for your person or your belongings. You will only be allowed up to two bags – including your bed linens and pillow. You must bring your I-20, I-94, passport and visa as well. During an assisted evacuation, you will be restricted to the Laredo campus, have a curfew, not be allowed to smoke and other very strict rules. You may not bring a personal vehicle. If you have another place to go and a way to get there – it is highly recommend that you use this option instead.

For those who live off campus, if there is a mandatory evacuation of the city, you will need to either make personal arrangements or use the city evacuation program. Monitor local media for instructions. The university is not able to evacuate off campus students to Laredo. If and when you evacuate Corpus Christi, keep in mind that you must drive away from the coast. Go towards San Antonio, Austin, Laredo (but not TAMIU if you live off campus). Cities such as Houston, Port Aransas, Galveston, that are near the gulf are NOT places to evacuate to. They are, like Corpus Christi, places to stay away from. For more information on the city evacuation program see the document below:

REGISTER TODAY—BEFORE THE STORM IS ON ITS WAY!
TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE REGISTRY

If you need help evacuating in the event of a hurricane, dial 2-1-1 to register in advance for a ride. Dial 2-1-1 as soon as possible:

☐ If you have a disability or special health care need and require assistance to get out.
☐ If you cannot drive and cannot arrange transportation.
☐ If you do not have a vehicle and you have no one else to help you evacuate.

Frequently Asked Questions
☐ What information do I need to have when registering?

An Information and Referral Specialist will ask:
○ Name
○ Address
○ Phone number (there is only room for one number, so please give the best number to call)
○ Contact name
○ Contact relationship (aunt, brother, son, friend, landlord, etc.)
○ Contact phone number
○ Do you need transportation? (yes or no)
○ Do you have any pets or service animals? (yes or no)
○ Do you have a special medical need. The Information and Referral Specialist will ask the type of need you have and list it accordingly.

☐ Who is going to see my personal information?
The state of Texas will provide your information back to emergency planners in your immediate area.
☐ Will I receive a call after I am registered?
Some emergency managers are not always able to contact individuals who have registered. This is because there are hundreds or thousands of entries in some communities. Emergency management offices will only follow-up with individuals if there is a question/concern about a particular registrant. However, please keep in mind that just because someone does not get a letter or a phone call does not mean that emergency management does not have their information. In addition, individuals will not receive notification (letter, phone call, etc.) from either the Governor’s Office or the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management. The state office does not follow-up with individual registrations in any form.

☐ How long is this registry active? Do I need to call to update my information?
Once you are registered, your information is safe in the database. There is no need to call either 2-1-1 or your local emergency management office back to verify registration. This includes people who registered last year. Unless there is a change to your information, you do not need to re-register.

☐ Can I register for someone else, such as my mother or other elderly/disabled relative?
As long as you have the individual’s consent to register them, our technicians can register them with the state database. Please be sure to have complete contact information, emergency contact information, and the reason that the individual needs transportation assistance before registering them.

☐ If there is a hurricane and our area needs to evacuate, is someone going to pick me up or call me to see if I need help?
Local emergency management will make every attempt to evacuate someone who does not have the ability to evacuate themselves, as long as the person is in the direct path of the storm. In the event of a hurricane entering the Gulf, individuals should pay close attention to local media to determine when/how evacuations will take place. If someone needs specialized transportation and has not been contacted, 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Specialists will have referrals for those callers at the appropriate time.
Another reason for the registration process is to give local emergency planners a better idea of the numbers of individuals who may need assistance, and the type of assistance they may need. It is essential that all individuals have a personal plan concerning evacuation needs that includes family, friends, or neighbors who may be able to assist them. Emergency planners in your community may or may not have the capacity to make individual phone calls to see if you need assistance evacuating. Do not assume that someone will contact you. Continue with your individual evacuation plans and call 2-1-1 if you need further guidance.

SAVE YOUR LIFE. DIAL 2-1-1 TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR A RIDE
6. Culture Shock
This article was written by Dr. Carmen Guanipa, San Diego State University.
http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm

What is it?
The term, culture shock, was introduced for the first time in 1958 to describe the anxiety produced when a
person moves to a completely new environment. This term expresses the lack of direction, the feeling of
not knowing what to do or how to do things in a new environment, and not knowing what is appropriate or
inappropriate. The feeling of culture shock generally sets in after the first few weeks of coming to a new
place.

We can describe culture shock as the physical and emotional discomfort one suffers when coming to live
in another country or a place different from the place of origin. Often, the way that we lived before is not
accepted as or considered as normal in the new place. Everything is different, for example, not speaking
the language, not knowing how to use banking machines, not knowing how to use the telephone and so
forth.

The symptoms of cultural shock can appear at different times. Although, one can experience real pain
from culture shock; it is also an opportunity for redefining one's life objectives. It is a great opportunity
for leaning and acquiring new perspectives. Culture shock can make one develop a better understanding
of oneself and stimulate personal creativity.

Symptoms:

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Preoccupation with health
- Aches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country
- Loss of identity
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Unable to solve simple problems
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- Developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness
- Longing for family
- Feelings of being lost, overlooked, exploited or abused

Stages of Culture Shock
Culture shock has many stages. Each stage can be ongoing or appear only at certain times. The first stage
is the incubation stage. In this first stage, the new arrival may feel euphoric and be pleased by all of the
new things encountered. This time is called the “honeymoon” stage, as everything encountered is new and
exciting.

Afterwards, the second stage presents itself. A person may encounter some difficult times and crises in
daily life. For example, communication difficulties may occur such as not being understood. In this stage,
there may be feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness, and feeling incompetence. This happens when a person is trying to adapt to a new culture that is very different from the culture of origin. Transition between the old methods and those of the new country is a difficult process and takes time to complete. During the transition, there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction.

The third stage is characterized by gaining some understanding of the new culture. A new feeling of pleasure and sense of humor may be experienced. One may start to feel a certain psychological balance. The new arrival may not feel as lost and starts to have a feeling of direction. The individual is more familiar with the environment and wants to belong. This initiates an evaluation of the old ways versus those of the new.

In the fourth stage, the person realizes that the new culture has good and bad things to offer. This stage can be one of double integration or triple integration depending on the number of cultures that the person has to process. This integration is accompanied by a more solid feeling of belonging. The person starts to define him/herself and establish goals for living.

The fifth stage is the stage that is called the "re-entry shock." This occurs when a return to the country of origin is made. One may find that things are no longer the same. For example, some of the newly acquired customs are not in use in the old culture.

These stages are present at different times and each person has their own way of reacting in the stages of culture shock. As a consequence, some stages will be longer and more difficult than others. Many factors contribute to the duration and effects of culture shock. For example, the individual's state of mental health, type of personality, previous experiences, socio-economic conditions, familiarity with the language, family and/or social support systems, and level of education.

**How to Fight Culture Shock**

The majority of individuals and families that emigrate from other countries have the ability to positively confront the obstacles of a new environment. Some ways to combat stress produced by culture shock are:

- Develop a hobby
- Don't forget the good things you already have!
- Remember, there are always resources that you can use
- Be patient, the act of immigrating is a process of adaptation to new situations. It is going to take time
- Learn to be constructive. If you encounter an unfavorable environment, don't put yourself in that position again. Be easy on yourself.
- Don't try too hard.
- Learn to include a regular form of physical activity in your routine. This will help combat the sadness and loneliness in a constructive manner. Exercise, swim, take an aerobics class, etc.
- Relaxation and meditation are proven to be very positive for people who are passing through periods of stress
- Maintain contact with your ethnic group. This will give you a feeling of belonging and you will reduce your feelings of loneliness and alienation
- Maintain contact with the new culture. Learn the language. Volunteer in community activities that allow you to practice the language that you are learning. This will help you feel less stress about language and useful at the same time.
- Allow yourself to feel sad about the things that you have left behind: your family, your friends, etc.
- Recognize the sorrow of leaving your old country. Accept the new country. Focus your power on getting through the transition.
- Pay attention to relationships with your family and at work. They will serve as support for you in difficult times.
- Establish simple goals and evaluate your progress.
- Find ways to live with the things that don't satisfy you 100%.
- Maintain confidence in yourself. Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future.
- If you feel stressed, look for help.

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http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm
7. To keep in Mind

1. **Drinking Water:** The tap water is safe to drink! You can choose to buy bottled water, but it could be expensive. If you are in a restaurant and don’t want to buy a drink, you can usually ask for a cup of water instead of paying for bottled water.

2. **Alcohol:** You must be 21 to drink! If you are buying or drinking alcohol you must be 21 or older. If you try to use a fake ID or you are caught drinking underage you may be arrested. If you live on campus, even if you are 21 years old and have roommate under 21 years of age, you may cited by the apartment managers and/or Student Affairs. For more information on Prevention of Alcohol Abuse and Illicit Drugs, visit [this page](http://safety.tamucc.edu/uploads/Site/finalbooklet.pdf).

3. **DUI:** Driving while intoxicated is a serious crime. If you are caught driving while drunk or under the influence of drugs, you will be charged a very large amount of money. You could lose your driver’s license and/or go to jail. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is also very dangerous. You may get in accidents that many times result in someone’s death. PLEASE, DO NOT DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.

4. **Eye Contact:** Some cultures may prefer that you do not make eye contact when you talk to someone of high status. However, in the United States, when you are speaking to someone it is considered respectful to look at them, no matter their status or age.

5. **Shaking Hands:** When you meet someone for the first time, it is polite to shake hands with them.

6. **Wait in Line:** Americans wait in line for almost everything: At restaurants to be seated, in the grocery store to pay for groceries, at the bank to talk to the cashier, at the movie theatre to buy your tickets, and in many other instances. It is considered very rude to step ahead of someone that is already waiting in line. You must always wait your turn.

7. **Ask for help!** If you have difficulty in class, if you don’t know how to find something, if you are lost, if you don’t understand what you must do, if you want to find a specific item in the store, ask for help. You will learn that the majority of people are happy to help. If the person you ask tells you that he or she does not know the answer to your question, ask someone else.

8. **Be hygienic:** It is customary to shower regularly and to maintain good hygiene habits. These include brushing your teeth using toothpaste every morning, use deodorant daily, wash your clothes and your bedding regularly (at least every other week), maintain your room/apartment free of debris or spoiled food as this would attract pests (roaches, rodents, etc.).

9. **Be safe:** Pay attention to your surroundings; try to walk in groups at night; keep your cell phone with you, in case you need to make calls. And remember, if you have an emergency, call 911. On campus you can call 825-4444. This link will take you to Quick Reference Guide to Campus Emergencies [http://safety.tamucc.edu/uploads/Site/finalbooklet.pdf](http://safety.tamucc.edu/uploads/Site/finalbooklet.pdf).
10. Be honest: Texas A & M has a strict code of conduct. Please follow this link to review the complete Code of Conduct. If you prefer, you can pick up a copy of the Student Code of Conduct in the Office of Student Affairs, UC-318. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask the Dean of Students or the International Student Advisor. It is very important that you understand the rules and regulations stipulated in this document, as well as the consequences for not following them.
8. Ensuring Student Success

Texas A & M-Corpus Christi offers an array of services to help students achieve academic success. There are face-to-face tutoring and lab work for many subjects. Visit Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) to learn about opportunities designed to help you.

The Honors Program offers enriched plans of study to highly motivated students who have the potential to excel academically and the desire to develop global perspectives. For more information visit http://honors.tamucc.edu.

Texas A & M – Corpus Christi also has more than 40 different student organizations. You are sure to find one (or more) that fits your style and interests. For more information visit http://studentactivities.tamucc.edu/UCSO. If you are interested in joining sports team, contact Recreational Sports at 825-2454. Learn more about Islander Teams at www.goislander.com.
9. Useful contacts and links

**Campus**

**Books and Class materials**
University Bookstore
361-825-2603
*tamucc.bncollege.com*

**Food**
*www.tamuccdining.com*

**Housing**
Camden Miramar
361-825-5000
*www.housing.tamucc.edu*

**International Student Services Director**
Karin Griffith
361-825-2258
*Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu*

**International Student Advisor**
Ana Billeaux
825-3922
*ana.billeaux@tamucc.edu*

**Islander Cultural Alliance - ICA**
*www.ica.tamucc.edu*

**Orientation**
New Student Program
361-825-6051
*orientation.tamucc.edu*

**Online - SAIL**
*sail.tamucc.edu*

**SandDollar Card**
*universityservices.tamucc.edu*
Scholarships
Alexandra Hudec
361-825-2522
alexandria.hudec@tamucc.edu

Knowing the Rules
Student Hand Book
falcon.tamucc.edu/~students

For additional campus contact information visit
phonebook.tamucc.edu

Off Campus

Housing
http://www.tamucc.loc101.com

Banking
Wells Fargo
361-825-2267
universityservices.tamucc.edu

City of Corpus Christi
http://www.cctexas.com/

Communication
Online
www.msn.com
www.skype.com

By phone
www.phonecardsmile.com

Buy a cell phone
www.att.com / www.t-mobile.com /
www.verizon.com

Department of Public Safety
http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/administration/

Federal government
www.usa.gov
Food
Restaurants - corpuschristirestaurants.net/
Supermarket - www.heb.com

Hospitals
http://corpuschristi.areaconnect.com/Hospitals/

Hotels
tour.tamucc.edu/hotels

Immigration & Visa
www.uscis.gov

Job regulations
www.uscis.gov

Local Newspaper
www.caller.com

Transportation –
Public Safety - www.txdps.state.tx.us
1-800-TAXICAB (1-800-8294222)
Bus - www.ccrta.org
Buy a car www.carsmart.com
Find an address - www.mapquest.com
Public Transportation - www.ccrta.org

Tourism & Fun
www.corpuschristicvb.com