PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
Office of International Education

Address: 6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412

Telephone: 361-825-3346
Email: international@tamucc.edu

Website: http://oie.tamucc.edu/
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International Student Admission Flow Chart

Student is admitted to Texas A&M University Corpus Christi

OIE creates I-20 for an F-1 student and sends the immigration packet to the student

Student receives the immigration packet

Student pays the SEVIS fee online and contacts their local U.S embassy to schedule visa appointment

Student goes through visa interview, and may be subject to additional security clearance checks

Student receives visa and personal documents are returned to student

Student arrives in the U.S. and reports to Office of International Education (University Center 226)

Student attends International Student Orientation

For more information about F-1 visa application, please visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange.html
Form I-20

United States Department of Homeland Security document that provides supporting information for the issuance of a student visa or change of status. This is your Certificate of Eligibility to study at an institution in the U.S. and it is issued by colleges, universities, and vocational schools which you attend.

- Upon receiving your I-20, review it to make sure the information is correct. Check your I-20 carefully.
- Your I-20 shows that you have a purpose and are allowed to stay in the U.S. You must have your I-20 to enter the U.S.
- You are not allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the “report to school date.” Keep all your I-20s ever received by all schools FOREVER!
- It is NOT legally acceptable to remain in the U.S. with an expired I-20. Your I-20 must be valid for the duration of your stay.

Passport

Document which certifies, for the purpose of international travel, the identity, and nationality of its holder. It is issued by the national government of your home country.

- If you obtain a new passport, and your F-1 visa is in your old passport, you need to keep both passports and travel with both of them.

F-1 Visa

Allows you to gain entrance to the U.S.

- You must have your visa to enter the U.S.
- It is legally acceptable to have an expired visa once you have entered the U.S. as long as your I-20 is valid.
F-1 Visa Application

Step 1: Choose your visa type: F1

Step 2: Complete the DS-160 online application at https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/

Step 3: Create your profile and pay your visa fee at https://www.fmjfee.com

Step 4: Schedule a visa interview with your local U.S. Embassy

Step 5: Complete the visa interview

Step 6: Receive your visa and your personal documents are returned to you

F-2 Visa

F-2 visas are for dependents of F-1 students. Dependents are the spouse and unmarried children (under age 21) of F-1 students.

- Individuals holding an F-2 visa cannot work, enroll in a degree program, or attend school full time. Individuals holding an F-2 visa can take occasional, recreational courses.
- F-2 children under the age of 18 MUST attend elementary or secondary school. Individuals holding an F-2 visa are strongly encouraged to have health insurance.

SEVIS

Student & Exchange Visitor Information System

- TAMUCC’s International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, must report failure to maintain status to DHS (U.S. Department of Homeland Security) by terminating the student’s SEVIS record.
- Once a student has fallen out of legal status, he/she cannot receive any F-1 benefits, such as employment authorization.
- If F-1 students fall out of status, their F-2 dependents are out of status as well.
- Be sure to maintain your legal status.
- Contact Ms. Karin Griffith if you have any questions or concerns. You can reach her via e-mail (karin.griffith@tamucc.edu), phone (361-825-2258), or come by her office in the University Center (UC) 226D.
Form I-94

Arrival/Departure Record

The I-94 is a legal document to provide passenger identification and to record a person’s entry to and departure from a country. It is issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

- Website: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/consent.html](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/consent.html)
- Each time you enter the U.S you must log into: [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
  - Print 2 copies of your I-94
    - Keep one and give the other to Ms. Karin Griffith.
- This is evidence of your legal entry into the U.S. through Immigration.
- You will surrender your I-94 when you leave the U.S. and will obtain a new one when you re-enter.

Important Immigration Basics

Non-immigrants are admitted to the U.S. for a limited time, with a specific purpose and plan to depart the U.S. after completing that purpose.

- **F-1 students and their F-2 dependents are non-immigrants.**

Maintain Status

Below are some of the most common F-1 regulations. Please consult with the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, for further information. You can reach her via e-mail (karin.griffith@tamucc.edu), phone (361-825-2258), or come by her office in the University Center (UC) 226D.

Keep Your Documents Up to Date

- **I-20**: Do not let your I-20 expire.
  - If you need an extension for the completion date on your I-20, please contact the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith.
  - If your I-20 expires before you graduate, you will be out of legal status.
  - Be sure to keep all of your I-20s for your records.
- **Passport**: Do not let your passport expire.
  - You should extend your passport six months prior to the expiration date at your country’s Consulate in the United States or when you go back home.
  - You cannot work with an expired passport.
- **I-94 Card or I-797**: Keep your I-94 card.
  - It must state F-1 and D/S (Duration of Status).
  - Your dependents’ I-94 must state “F-2” and “D/S”.
  - If you have an expiration date on your I-94 card, you should speak to the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, immediately.

- **Visa Stamp**: It is okay for your visa to expire while you are in the United States; however, you may need to renew it if you travel outside the United States.
  - Pay attention to the number of entries into the United States you are allowed.
  - It is acceptable for your visa to have another school name on it.
  - Please contact the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, for information concerning going to Mexico or Canada with an expired visa.

- **Physical Address Changes**: Be sure to report any physical address changes to the university and to the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith.
  - If you fail to do so you could result in losing your legal immigration status and you could be required to leave the United States.

- **Maintain Foreign Permanent Address**: Your foreign permanent address is the address outside the United States to which you intend to return.

**Maintain Full-Time Enrollment**

- **Full-Time Status**: In order to be a full-time student you must have the following number of hours each Spring and Fall semester. Summer enrollment is not mandatory.
  - Graduate Students – 9 hours
  - Undergraduate Students – 12 hours

**Program Extension**

- **Apply for an extension of your program** if you cannot complete your degree by the ending date listed on item five on your Form I-20.
  - You can apply for a program extension any time during your course of study.
  - You will need to contact your Academic Advisor prior to the end date of your Form I-20.
  - Your Academic Advisor will then contact the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, with your new completion date.

**Employment**

- **On-campus work** is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during fall and spring semesters.
- It may be full-time (more than 20-hours/week) during summer and official school breaks.
- **Work off-campus** is only permitted if you have first received authorization from the International Student Services Coordinator.
Common Reasons Why F-1 Students Lose Legal Status

- Allowing the Form I-20 to expire.
- Enrolling in less than full-time without permission from Ms. Karin Griffith.
- Dropping below full time enrollment without permission from Ms. Karin Griffith.
- Working without work authorization.
- There are other actions that may impact your legal non-immigrant status. If you are unsure, speak with the International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith, before taking action.

You can also visit www.uscis.gov for additional information on immigration and visa rules.

Change of Address

F-1 non-immigrants are required to keep the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) informed about their place of residence at all times while living in the U.S.

- Your local address must be updated within ten days after any change of residence. P.O. boxes are not acceptable.
  - To update DHS of your change of address, please e-mail Ms. Karin Griffith at Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu
    - You must keep Ms. Karin Griffith informed of any change of physical address, email address, and phone number.
    - Be sure to contact Ms. Karin Griffith within 10 days of the changes.
  - Students must also inform the University of any change of address.
    - To update your address in the University records, you must log on to S.A.I.L. (http://sail.tamucc.edu/) and make the necessary changes.
    - All University correspondence will be sent to the address you have registered in S.A.I.L.

Remember: you must report the change of address to Ms. Karin Griffith AND you must make these changes in S.A.I.L.

Change of Major

Report your change of major to Ms. Karin Griffith at Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu. She will issue the new I-20 as necessary.

Change of Degree Level

Submit your application and provide documents as needed, including a new affidavit of support (visit Graduate Studies at https://gradschool.tamucc.edu for more information). Be sure to also notify Ms. Karin Griffith at Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu.
Extension of Stay

Submit a request to extend the program end date on the I-20 if you are unable to complete your program by the date indicated.

- This extension must be completed BEFORE the I-20 expires.
- You must provide a signed letter/memo on letterhead or an e-mail sent to Ms. Karin Griffith at Karin.griffith@tamucc.edu from your Academic Advisor stating the reason(s) for extension of the program. She will issue the new I-20 as necessary.

Corpus Christi Weather

The city has a humid subtropical climate, with hot summers and very short, mild winters. In the months from November through February the weather is the coolest. There is a noticeable warming trend in which March through April is fairly warm. The warmest part of the year in Corpus Christi is June through September with August being the peak of summer. October in the city is very pleasant while still warm but not as hot as the summer months. Corpus Christi is very windy, with wind speeds often reaching to 25 miles per hour (40 km/h) with gusts reaching more than 35 miles per hour (56 km/h). The city's record high temperature is 109 °F (43 °C), on September 5, 2000. Average night-time winter lows in January, the coldest month, are a little less than 50 °F (10 °C) and its record low is 11 °F (−12 °C).

Hurricane Information

Hurricane season runs from June 1 – November 30. Hurricanes are serious storms that bring a lot of water and can cause the university to shut down due to a danger of flooding and unsafe conditions on campus.

- If the university decides to shut down, all individuals will need to evacuate.
- It is best to find your own method of evacuation. However, if you have no way to evacuate, you can arrange a ride with the university or the city.
- The university’s evacuation destination is Laredo, TX but you are welcome to evacuate wherever you can if you have your own transportation.
IMPORTANT

If an evacuation is declared, **YOU MUST TAKE YOUR IMMIGRATION PAPERS WITH YOU**. Be sure to have the following documents with you when you evacuate:

- I-20
- Passport
- Visa
- I-94

If you do not take these with you, you will have a lot of trouble getting back to the university. BE SURE TO TAKE THE DOCUMENTS WITH YOU!!!

We recommend putting all of your important immigration documents in a convenient location so in the case of an emergency you can easily grab them as you leave your residence.

Evacuation Plans

It is best for all students to have a hurricane evacuation plan – where will you go and how will you get there?

- The university and city do evacuate residents out of the city, but those evacuees live at a gymnasium during the evacuation period.
- If it all possible, students should evacuate on their own to a city that is not in the storm pathway.
- An evacuation or campus closure could last 2 days or 2 months, so students should have both a short term and long term plan.

On-Campus Residents (living at Camden Miramar or Momentum Village)

- If necessary, the university will evacuate Islander Housing residents to either Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas or to Palo Alto College in San Antonio, Texas.
- When the university makes the decision to evacuate and close the campus, no one is allowed to stay on campus.
- Students are taken by bus (no personal cars allowed) to one of the universities and will be housed in a gym. Students will sleep on a gymnasium floor (with a thin mattress) and will be provided meals for free. Evacuees must bring sheets, pillows, blankets, clothing, and personal care items. Evacuees will return to campus once the university is open.
Off-Campus Residents

- In the event that an evacuation is called for and an off-campus student does not have a vehicle, the student can evacuate with the City of Corpus Christi.
  - The City will provide more information on the evacuation on their website: http://www.cctexas.com/
  - The city will transport residents by bus to another city and will return once the city grants permission.

Additional Information

Students who evacuate either with the university or the City of Corpus Christi should know the following:

- Generally, only 2 small bags can be brought
- Evacuees may not drive a personal vehicle to the evacuation site
- No pets are allowed
- Smoking is very restricted (if allowed at all)
- Normally, once someone is at an evacuation site, they cannot leave. If they do leave, they are not allowed to return to the evacuation site.

If you have your own transportation, here are the Evacuation Routes:

- The following highways are recommended depending upon your destination:
  - Houston – U.S. 77, 77A to U.S. 59
  - San Antonio or Austin – Interstate 37 or U.S. 181
  - West of Corpus Christi – FM 624 west from Corpus Christi and I-35 North from Cotulla.
- Texas Highway 35 along the coast is very often impassable due to high tides pushed in front of a hurricane. This route is not recommended. Consider a route which will take you directly away from the coast, not parallel to it.

Recommendations:

- Keep at least a half tank of gas at all times during hurricane season (June 1 – November 30)
- Keep cash with you
- Have all important documents/medications in an accessible location where you can grab them all easily if you need to evacuate
- Store these phone numbers (to get current information & to see if it is safe to come back on campus):
  - 1-888-234-4887
  - 1-361-825-0000
For more information about hurricane safety, please visit the TAMUCC Hurricane Preparedness webpage: http://safety.tamucc.edu/Hurricane.html

Packing Checklist for F-1 International Students

Items to be Placed in your CARRY-ON Luggage

☐ Passport, visa, I-20, financial statement (An original bank letter or statement of account <stated in U.S. currency> must be accompanied providing evidence of funds available to meet the expense of the student), copy of TAMUCC acceptance letter and all other supporting documentation

Travel Itinerary Documents

☐ All flight numbers
☐ Ticket confirmation numbers
☐ Times of flight departures and arrivals (understand time zones)
☐ Contact numbers for RTA B-line Service, Tax
☐ U.S. currency includes money for food, transportation, and other necessities during your initial days in the U.S.; do not travel with a large amount of currency as it can be easily lost or stolen.
☐ Credit and debit cards
☐ International driving license
☐ Prescription medication in original container, backup supply, and letter from doctor (in English)
☐ Instructions for treating any allergies or unique medical conditions (in English)
☐ Extra change of clothing (in case your luggage is lost)
☐ Reading materials, ear plugs, MP3 players, or other travel comforts.
☐ A light jacket

Items to be Placed in your CHECKED Luggage

☐ Copies of all immigration documents including your Passport, Visa, I-20, Letter of acceptance.
☐ Seasonally and culturally appropriate clothing, undergarments, shoes, and accessories
☐ Eyeglasses and extra supplies of contacts
☐ Electrical outlet adapters for electronics
• Voltage in the U.S. is 120V/60Hz
• Type A and B sockets

☐ Traditional dress/outfit
☐ Personal computer software/USB drive
☐ Underwear
☐ Jeans/Pants
☐ Tops/T-shirt/Some long-sleeved
☐ Sweater (at least one)
☐ Rain Jackets
☐ Sneakers
☐ Flip flops
☐ Small items representative of your home and culture

Additional Items

Most of these items can be bought in the U.S. unless you have a very specific brand you must use. You can also check online to see if your brand and type can be purchased here. If you choose to purchase here, make sure to have extra money. If you bring them with you, they should be packed in your checked luggage.

☐ Bed sheets (for students living on campus, bring extra-long twin sheets), blanket, pillow, and pillowcase
☐ Towels and washcloths
☐ Toiletries and cosmetics (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant etc.)
☐ Supplies for 2-3 days
☐ Medicines such as over-the-counter pain reliever, cold/flu, and allergy medicine
☐ First-aid kit, pain reliever, cold/flu, and allergy medicine

Taxi Service

Convenient door-to-door taxi service is easily accessible outside the baggage claim area of the airport.

• Names and Phone Numbers of Taxi Cab Operators in Corpus Christi
  ○ Airport Taxi: 361-884-3211
  ○ American Cab: 361-563-2294
  ○ Corpus Christi Taxi: 361-548-7656
  ○ Express Cab: 361-960-9222
  ○ On Time Taxi: 361-444-4444
- Super Yellow Cab: 361-855-5555
- Special Needs Transportation Providers:
  - RTA B-Line Service: 361-883-2287
    - Requires 24 hrs advanced notice and eligibility determination

**Hotel Shuttles**

Some local hotels offer shuttle service to and from the airport. A telephone call board in the baggage claim area is provided for instant contact with your hotel. Students can also look up hotel websites to see if they have shuttles services.

**Hotel**

Listed below are hotel options for off-campus accommodations prior to move-in day.

- Comfort Suites Near Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
  - Address: 1814 Ennis Joslin, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412
- Hyatt Place Corpus Christi
  - Address: 6773 South Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412
- Hilton Garden Inn Corpus Christi
  - Address: 6717 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
- Town Place Suites Corpus Christi
  - Address: 6701 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
- Hampton Inn & Suites Corpus Christi
  - Address: 5879 S Padre Island Dr. Corpus Christi, TX 78412

**TAMUCC Virtual Tour**

Take a virtual tour of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Campus by clicking this link: [http://virtualtour.tamucc.edu/](http://virtualtour.tamucc.edu/)
Housing

There are housing options on-campus and off-campus.

- Students who choose to live in on-campus housing are required to buy a meal plan.
  - For information, please follow this link: [https://universityservices.tamucc.edu/Dining/Meals.html](https://universityservices.tamucc.edu/Dining/Meals.html).
- If you would like to live off-campus, there are many options. Many apartment complexes are located on the bus route. Corpus Christi transportation is free for students with a current student ID (SandDollar$ card).
  - For more information, please check Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) at [http://www.certa.org/](http://www.certa.org/).

On-Campus Housing

- Website: [http://housing.tamucc.edu/](http://housing.tamucc.edu/)
- Phone Number: 361-825-4663

Off-Campus Housing

- List of Apartments:
  - Aspen Heights Corpus Christi
    - Phone Number: 361-299-5824
  - Bay Vista Apartments
    - Phone Number: 361-882-7766
  - Baytree Ocean Drive Apartments
    - Phone Number: 361-991-4164
    - Website: [http://www.baytreeoceandrive.com/](http://www.baytreeoceandrive.com/)
  - Camden South Bay Apartments
    - Phone Number: 361-980-9700
  - Campus Quarters
    - Phone Number: 361-991-6398
    - Website: [http://livecampusquarters.com/](http://livecampusquarters.com/)
  - Chandler’s Mill
    - Phone Number: 361-993-6677
    - Website: [http://www.chandlersmillapts.com/](http://www.chandlersmillapts.com/)
Food Meal Plan for Residence Hall

Students residing in standard residential type housing are required to minimally purchase the Gold Meal Plan.

- The Gold Meal Plan provides the student with 14 meals per week and $100.00 Dining Dollars.
- The current cost of the meal plan is $1,712.29 per semester including tax (but this price could change per semester). Renewal is automatic for the spring semester.
- Students may use their Dining Dollars to eat at any of the campus dining retail locations.
- Weekly meals are valid from Sunday to Saturday. All unused weekly meals expire at the end of each week (Saturday).
- Any unused Dining Dollars roll over to the next semester (fall to spring). All unused Dining Dollars expire at the end of the spring semester.

For more information, please visit https://mealplans.tamucc.edu/

Food Meal Plan for Apartments

Students residing in Island Campus apartment type housing will be required to minimally purchase the Silver Meal Plan. This plan is available to Momentum Village residents. However, it is not required.
• The Silver Meal Plan provides the student with ten (10) meals per week and $250.00 Dining Dollars.
• The current cost of the meal plan is $1,558.54 per semester including tax (but this price could change per semester). Renewal is automatic for the spring semester.
• Students may use their Dining Dollars to eat at any of the campus dining retail locations.
• Weekly meals are valid from Sunday to Saturday. All unused weekly meals expire at the end of each week (Saturday).
• Any unused Dining Dollars roll over to the next semester (fall to spring). All unused Dining Dollars expire at the end of the spring semester.

**Bus Information**

One of the advantages of living on-campus is that you do not have to worry about transportation as much. If you live in the Momentum Campus housing, there is a shuttle that continually provides rides to and from the Momentum Campus to the Main Island Campus. 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. Also, if you live off-campus you can easily take public transportation from a bus stop near your apartment to TAMU-CC campus.
  o This service is **free of charge for students by presenting a valid TAMU-CC SandDollar$ student ID card.**
  o To learn more about the transportation services, please visit [www.ccrta.org](http://www.ccrta.org)
• Another way to move around Corpus Christi is by Taxi Service. Taxis are expensive, however, it is the easiest way to move around in an unknown city.
  o The phone number for one taxi company is 1-800-TAXICAB (1-800-829-4222).
  o Please see page 12 for additional taxi companies.

**Buying a 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](http://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, which gives 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 purchase a parking permit at the Student Services Center (Round Building), at the Business Office. You need to have a parking permit to park your car on campus. If you do not have a parking permit, you will have to pay a fine.
• Of course, to drive your car, you will need a Driver’s License.
Obtaining a Driver’s License

The required documents to obtain a driver’s license:

- An unexpired Form I-20
- Foreign Passport with a visa (valid or expired)
- Form I-94 with status code F1, F2, M1, or M2
  - Unexpired Form I-94 with a defined expiration date: Form I-94 must have been issued for at least one year and have at least six months’ validity remaining.
- Two documents verifying your current residence such as water bill, phone bill, leasing contract, or local bank statement.

For additional information on how to obtain a driver’s license, contact the Department of Public Safety at 361-698-5625 or visit their website at http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/ or visit their office located at 1922 South Padre Island Drive.

Bank Information

- Wells Fargo Bank at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
  - Address: 6300 Ocean Dr. #5784 (located at University Center)
  - Telephone: 361-886-6599
  - Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

The bank mentioned above is on campus, however, there are more banks off campus in Corpus Christi. Additional banks can be found by searching online.

Health Center

There is no charge for an office visit to see the doctor or nurse, but you are responsible for the cost of medications, immunizations, and laboratory tests.
Walk-in Clinic: For illnesses or injuries requiring prompt medical attention, the Health Center offers a Walk-in Clinic. Walk-in patients are accepted beginning Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., until the clinic’s maximum capacity is reached.

If you need medical assistance after hours, you can call the Campus Police at 361-825-4444 or your Resident Assistant (name & numbers given to you at check in). If it is an emergency, you will need to dial 911.

For more information about the Health Center at http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu/

Pharmacy

The University Health Center pharmacy is a Class A pharmacy offering many medications that can be ordered by University Health Center providers or your own primary care provider.

- Telephone: (361) 825-6079
- The pharmacy does not bill to insurance, but does accept cash or payment by credit card or Islander SandDollar$ card.
- If your insurance covers your prescription and you choose to purchase it at the University Pharmacy a receipt can be obtained to submit to your insurance for reimbursement.
- To discuss your prescription with a nurse or to change pharmacies call (361) 825-5735.

Note: The graduate student insurance plan is a reimbursement only plan for prescriptions.

Health Insurance

It is Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi policy that all international students have medical health insurance and evacuation/repatriation coverage.

- The International Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Karin Griffith (361-825-2258), is responsible for monitoring verification of international students’ required health insurance.

Before you travel to the U.S., there are some simple things you can do that will make your life much easier, and could prevent you from having to pay for things that are typically not covered under international student health insurance plans:

- Prescription Medications
If you are currently taking any prescription medications (such as asthma inhalers), make sure to bring a good supply with you, along with your doctor’s notes for those medications (in English).

- **Eye Test**
  - Opticians are typically not covered under international student health insurance plans, so get a checkup before you travel and make sure you have current prescription glasses and contact lenses.

- **Dentist**
  - Make that visit to the dentist you have been putting off! Dental costs in the USA can be very expensive and will likely not be covered by your insurance plan.

- **General Checkup**
  - Go to your doctor and have a checkup before you travel, and make sure all your vaccinations are up-to-date!

Our students' health is important to us. When you are sick you should immediately contact the University Health Center: [http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu/](http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu/) or 361-825-2601

The U.S. healthcare system offers some of the best medical care in the world, but it is complex, difficult to navigate, and often very expensive. For a video overview of the U.S. healthcare system for international students please click here: [http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/us-healthcare-system-video.php](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/us-healthcare-system-video.php)

Mental health awareness is also an important topic for international students. For an overview of the concept of mental health for international students in the U.S., covering mental health awareness and warning signs, dispelling myths, and showing ways to seek treatment, please click here: [http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php).

Please Note: It is also the student’s responsibility to comply with University System and Federal regulations as they relate to health insurance.

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**Counseling Center (on campus)**

Students currently enrolled at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi who have paid the Student Service Fee are eligible for an initial consultation appointment. There is no additional charge for services, and there is a $25 fee for no-show/late cancellation.

- Telephone: 361-825-2703
- Location: Driftwood Building (on campus)
- Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm (CLOSED from 12:00pm-1:00pm)
- Website: [http://counseling.tamucc.edu/index.html](http://counseling.tamucc.edu/index.html)
**Student ID- SandDollar$**

To get your SandDollar$ ID card, you must be enrolled in classes. This is your official student ID.

- Telephone: 361-825-5978
- Location: University Center room 107
- Website: [http://universityservices.tamucc.edu/sanddollar/](http://universityservices.tamucc.edu/sanddollar/)

**How You Use Your SandDollar$ ID Card**

- It allows you to ride the bus free of charge.
- If you’d like, your SandDollar$ card can be a prepaid declining balance account that can be renewed each time you make a deposit.
  - SandDollar$ card can be used at vending machines, copy machines, and at all food service locations.
- Your card allows you to check out books at the library, pay for printing in our computer labs, and gives you access to our recreational and fitness facilities.
- Don't forget your SandDollar$ card to gain free access to athletic events.
- For more information, please go to [http://universityservices.tamucc.edu/sanddollar/index.html](http://universityservices.tamucc.edu/sanddollar/index.html)

**Islander Email**

As a new student, you will need to activate your Islander ID. You will receive official university correspondence, updates, notes from the International Education Office, notes from your professors, and emergency announcements, just to name a few.

- Go to [https://passwords2.tamucc.edu/](https://passwords2.tamucc.edu/) and click on New User.
  - You will need to have your A number (student ID number) ready. This number was provided to you in your university acceptance letter.
- It is very important to activate your email account and to check it daily.
- More information on the Islander ID and email accounts can be found at [http://it.tamucc.edu/accounts/index.html](http://it.tamucc.edu/accounts/index.html)
S.A.I.L.

S.A.I.L. is a secure student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial aid records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

To log in:

- Enter your Student ID number (Axxxxxxxx) as your User ID.
- Your PIN is your date of birth in the order of month, day, year as follows: mm/dd/yy.

For more information, go to http://sail.tamucc.edu/

Blackboard

Blackboard is used for:

- Accessing the syllabus, course content, and grades through interactive grade center called "My Grades".
- Submitting assignments and viewing instructor feedback.
- Engaging in discussions, blogs, wikis, and other interactive tools as directed by the instructor.
- Viewing audio and video content.

Website: https://bb9.tamucc.edu/

To join Blackboard Workshops:

- At the beginning of each semester, the university offers workshops to provide an overview of Blackboard navigation.
- Workshop schedules are posted on the website below at least two weeks before the semester start date.
- The 90-minute workshop provides an overview of Blackboard navigation and hands-on activities to learn tools such as the discussion forum, wikis, blogs, journals, and quizzes.
- See upcoming Blackboard workshop schedules at: https://iol.tamucc.edu/student_workshops.html
Workshops are also available online using WebEx online meetings. If you cannot come to the workshop on campus, you may also join the workshop online.

- Please Contact 361-825-2122 to make a web conference reservation via WebEx web meeting software.
- WebEx web meeting software: https://tamucc.webex.com/mw3100/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=tamucc
- WebEx Tutorials and Information: https://iol.tamucc.edu/webex.html

**Academic Advising**

Your Academic Advisor will help you map your studies. Each College has a number of academic advisors ready to assist you with your degree plan. For more information, please use the links below:

- College of Business: http://www.cob.tamucc.edu/advising.html
- College of Education: http://advising.tamucc.edu
- College of Liberal Arts: http://cla.tamucc.edu/advising/index.html
- College of Nursing and Health Sciences: http://conhs.tamucc.edu/advising_nursing.html
- College of Science and Engineering: http://www.sci.tamucc.edu/advising/index.html

**CASA (Center for Academic Student Achievement)**

The Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) is committed to providing students with academic support services through student-centered, supplemental, lifelong learning opportunities to help students achieve independence in learning in an inclusive and supportive environment.

- Location: Glasscock Student Success Center (GSSC)
- Website: http://casa.tamucc.edu/index.php
Mary and Jeff Bell Library

- Telephone: 361-825-2609
- Office Hours: hours are subject to change. Please check http://rattler.tamucc.edu/info/hours.html
- Website: http://rattler.tamucc.edu/index.html

Outside of regular reference hours, please contact Circulation Staff at 361-825-2340.

Career Services

- Telephone: 361-825-2628
- Location: University Center room 304
- Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Website: http://career-services.tamucc.edu/

Social Security Number (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 (University Center 226) 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.
Things to Do in Corpus Christi

On-Campus

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Calendar of Events can be found at: https://tamucc.edu/events/index.html

Note: The Office of International Education provides the In Touch International Islander newsletter via a separate monthly email to all international students. This newsletter selects campus and local events that would specifically interest and benefit international students. We hope you all can enjoy and get involved!

Off-Campus

Community Event Website (Google Recommendation): http://eventful.com/corpuschristi/events

The city is home to a number of popular destinations for both tourists and residents. The official visitor and tourism information organization is the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau. Some of the most visited attractions are on North Beach, where the Texas State Aquarium and the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay are located.

The USS Lexington was also part of the set for the 2000 film Pearl Harbor. Corpus Christi’s museum district is located near the USS Lexington. Some attractions located in the museum district are the Museum of Asian Cultures, the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, the South Texas Institute for the Arts, and the Harbor Playhouse Theatre, one of the oldest continually operating community theatres in Texas. Heritage Park is also in the museum district, where a number of older restored houses can be found. The downtown area, of which the museum district is a part, is home to skyscrapers such as One Shoreline Plaza, company offices, various shops, a very popular center of marinas, and Mirador de la Flor. Downtown also is home of the Texas Surf Museum, which explores the history of surfing and focuses on surf culture along Texas’ 367-mile (591 km) coast, as well as K Space Contemporary, a nonprofit art organization promoting and presenting local, regional, and national contemporary art.

The Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, also located in the city, hosts gardening programs from time to time. On Oso Bay near the Pharaoh Valley subdivision is the Hans and Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is known for seabird-watching. Nearby Padre Island and Mustang Island are home to various municipal, state, and national parks, most notably the Padre Island National Seashore. The city is also near King Ranch, one of the world's largest ranches, upon which the movie Giant was based.

The city also celebrates the annual Buccaneer Days Carnival, which is typically held downtown.

S. Padre Island Drive (locally abbreviated as "S.P.I.D.", with the letters pronounced individually), is the city's main retail corridor, with two shopping malls, La Palmera (formerly
Padre Staples Mall), and Sunrise Mall. Also, a number of other large shopping centers, small strip centers, and restaurants can be found throughout the city.

Corpus Christi also is the home of Midget Ocean Racing Fleet, also known as MORF, which promotes sailing in the Coastal Bend. The Wednesday night races held by MORF are the longest-running weekly races in the United States. Pharaohs golf course also serves as a haven for coastal and migratory birds.

Emergency Contacts

University Police Department (UPD): 361-825-4444

Life Threatening Emergency: 911

University Health Center: 361-825-2601

Hurricane Hotline: 361-825-9999

Texas Department of Public Safety: 361-879-4500

Poison Control: 800-764-7661

International Student Health Insurance (BlueCross & BlueShield): 855-267-0214

University Counseling Center: 361-825-2703

Immigration Concerns: 361-825-2258

Office of International Education

Telephone: 361-825-3346

Fax: 361-825-2223

Email: international@tamucc.edu

Location: University Center Room 226

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm