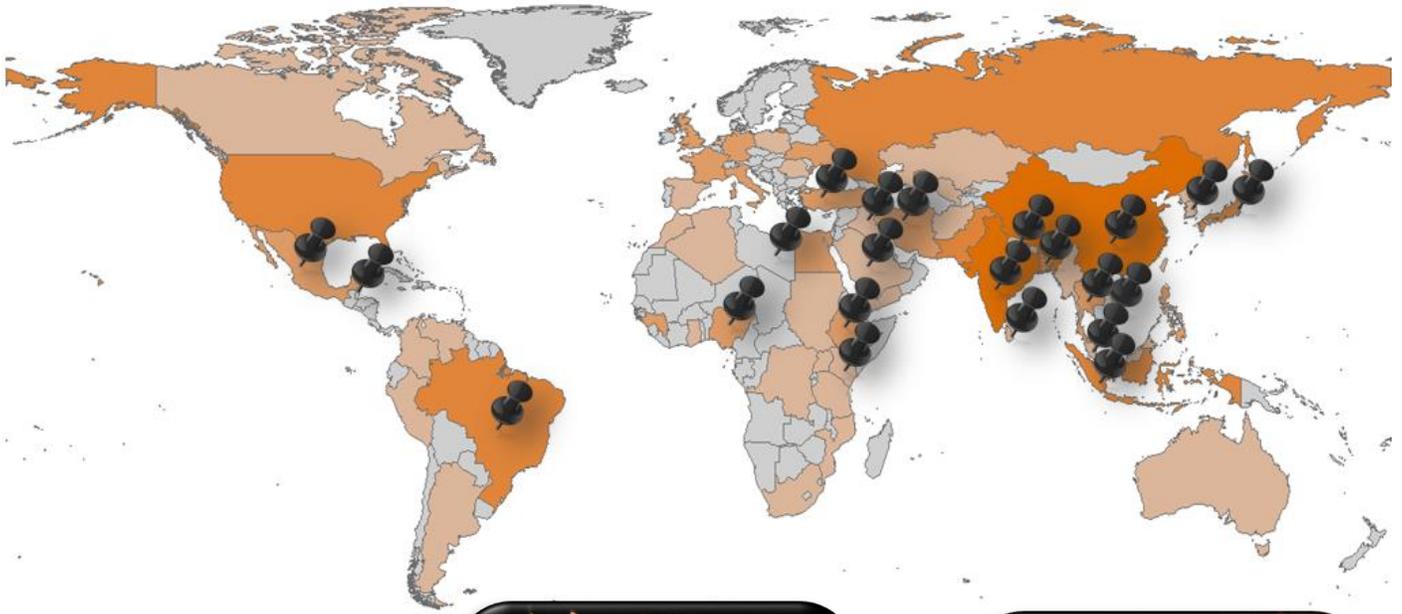


# International Student Handbook



International Students and Scholars  
250 Student Union  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

Phone: 405.744.5459  
Email: [su-iss@okstate.edu](mailto:su-iss@okstate.edu)

**“Orange is that day when I landed in the States to go to OSU. It’s meeting those amazing friends that would stick with me for life... It’s wearing orange the Friday before the first game & every Friday after that. It’s ATRC, Library, Boone Pickens Stadium, the Student Union...endless nights working on the toughest problem from this week’s assignment ... it’s you and me. Orange is putting your arm around the shoulder of the stranger next to you to sing the Alma Mater. It’s knowing that it’s left hand up to make an “S.” Orange is Pistols Firing – Touchdown Oklahoma State. It’s the big smile on your face when you walk past the orange fountain. It’s a cabinet full of Joe’s cups. Orange is wanting to get out of Stillwater for four years & spending the rest of your life wanting to go back!”**

**-Dr. Sid Vaijapurkar, PhD in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Oklahoma State Alumni Class of 2013**

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# Chapter 1: The International Students & Scholars Office

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of International Students and Scholars is to assist the University and its international community in the appropriate application of federal regulations which affect this constituency, to facilitate the education and personal development of international students and scholars, and to assist with culture exchange and enrichment at OSU and in the Stillwater community.

## The Management

The staff in the International Students and Scholars Office (ISS) is committed to helping international students adjust to the campus and the community so their academic and cultural experience in the United States will be as satisfying as possible. In addition to providing a variety of programs and services, the office is responsible for the administrative work involved in international student advising and international undergraduate student admission. It is served by the following staff positions:

**Manager**, Tim Huff

**Coordinator of Immigration**, Regina Henry

**Coordinator of Sponsored Students**, Karen Sebring

**International Student Specialist**, Trisha Chaparala Lyonsi

**International Student Specialist**, Joel Pennie

**International Tax Coordinator**, Linda Dunbar Garmy

**Senior Administrative Assistant**, Brad McDaniel

**Sponsored Student Financial Specialist**, Jennifer Nixon

**Manager of Chinese Development**, Vivian Wang

**OSU Tulsa International Advisor**, Thomas Wallis

## Graduate Assistants

A team of graduate assistants assist with the day-to-day functions of ISS in the Stillwater office. We also have a part-time assistant at OSU-Tulsa.

## Services Provided

The ISS staff members provide numerous services for international students and scholars enrolled at OSU. However, other departments on campus provide academic counseling. Some of the ISS services include:

- Publishing and sending pre-arrival information to new students; meeting new arrivals at the OKC airport; International Peer Advisors guide new students to the Help Center for assistance in setting up bank accounts, getting housing information and other “settling in” needs. ISS also conducts a mandatory international student orientation before the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Advising international students on University policies, immigration regulations, U.S. culture, customs and values, institution resources and local opportunities.
- Counseling international students and scholars and their dependents on personal and financial matters; providing a referral service to resource and support programs available on campus and throughout Stillwater.
- Preparing documents and letters required for foreign exchange requests, travel, medical coverage, court cases, and other related matters for international students, scholars and their families.
- Processing documents, forms and reports for the USCIS (United States Citizenship Immigration Services), U.S. Department of State, other federal agencies, educational institution, foreign governments and sponsors.
- Issuing work permits to international students and scholars who are qualified to work part-time on campus. Providing assistance with annual tax forms preparation.
- Facilitating, encouraging and promoting international cultural programs at OSU and in the community.

- Maintaining liaison with students, departmental organizations, and community organizations that focus on international students and scholars.
- Coordinating and facilitating programs for international students, scholars and their dependents (for example: educational trips, community activities, break programs, cultural events).
- Publishing the international listserv and maintaining a website of current news for international students.
- Providing consultation regarding problems or changes in institutional procedures, guidelines, and policies affecting international students and scholars.
- Completing surveys and statistical reports and conduct research.
- Being on call for emergencies involving the police and hospital.
- Seminars on immigration issues involving OPT, Academic Training and H1B applications.
- Processes all documents and requests related to sponsored students, scholars, or international faculty such as:
  - Acting as an official point of contact with government and private agencies regarding international sponsored students.
  - Assisting in the recruitment of international sponsored students and providing supplemental services to help support those students.
  - Assisting with the maintenance of contact with OSU international sponsored student alumni.

### **Orientation**

The International Students and Scholars Office provides mandatory orientation programs each year for new international students. The orientation includes sessions on finances, legal concerns, academic matters and immigration regulations. As part of the orientation materials, the ISS office publishes this orientation handbook.

### **Office Address:**

International Students & Scholars  
 250 Student Union  
 Stillwater, OK 74078  
 Phone: 405-744-5459  
 Fax: 405-744-8120  
 lss.okstate.edu

**Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8:00a.m.-11:45a.m. and 1:00-4:45p.m. Counselors are not available during lunch.

# Chapter 2: International Student Activities

## Area Clubs and Student Organizations

### International Student Organization

The International Student Organization (ISO) is open to all international students attending Oklahoma State University. The members of the ISO work to foster a spirit of friendliness and cooperation among all international students on campus. It provides an organized body that attends to matters of common concern. They also work to promote social and cultural exchange between international students, the OSU student body as a whole, the administration and the community.

In addition to sponsoring International Olympics and an International Expo in the fall and an International Bazaar and an International Cultural Night in the spring, the ISO often plans picnics, get-acquainted parties for new international students, and farewell parties for graduating students. The ISO also encourages and assists individual clubs in presenting cultural events. Each nationality or area club chartered at OSU is represented on the ISO council. For names of the area club officers, contact the Student Activities Office in Campus Life, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union in the Campus Life department, telephone: 405-744-5214. You may also visit their website at: <http://orgs.okstate.edu/iso/>.

### Area Clubs

There are numerous area clubs on campus which organize cultural, social, and education programs at OSU and throughout the community. During the year, the area clubs have welcome parties, films, trips, international dinners and cultural programs. Area club activities are reported at the ISO Council meetings and are often posted on the ISS bulletin board at 250 Student Union. The names and phone numbers of the area club presidents are also kept at the ISS office. For links to the various clubs, you may visit: <http://orgs.okstate.edu/iso/>.

#### Area Clubs

African Student Organization	Malaysian Student Society
Bangladesh Student Association	Malaysian 24 Season Drum Troupe
Chinese Friendship Association	Nepalese Student Association
Ethiopian Student Association	Pakistan Student Association
Indian Student Association	Saudi Student Association
Indonesian Overseas Student Association	Sri Lankan Student Association
Iranian Student Association	Taiwan Student Association
Iraqi Student Association	Thai Student Association
Japanese Student Association	Turkish Student Association
Korean Student Association	Vietnamese Student Association
Latin American Student Association	

### Cultural Connections

International students and spouses interested in sharing their histories, cultures and experiences are invited to make presentations to Stillwater community organizations such as Rotary International, the American Legion and public schools. Students are asked to give a speech, present a slide show, explain a craft of musical instrument, or teach young children a traditional song or game. For more information, visit <http://iss.okstate.edu/what-cultural-connections> or email Trisha Chaparala Iyonsi at [trisha.iyonsi@okstate.edu](mailto:trisha.iyonsi@okstate.edu).

### **Volunteers/Peer Advisors**

Prior to the beginning of each semester, the International Students and Scholars Office plan services for new students. A good way for experienced students to help new students is to volunteer as International Peer Advisors (IPA). Students are needed to assist the ISS office during orientation sessions: to lead the discussions after each presentation made by guest speakers on immigration regulations, legal concerns, health, academic, living and learning and other general topics that the new students may have.

### **Cowboy Cousins Program**

The Cowboy Cousins Program is designed to bring International and American students together for the purpose of cultural exchange. Cowboy Cousins have the opportunity to participate in monthly social events to exchange cultural awareness. Cousins are encouraged to maintain regular contact to promote friendship. Having a Cowboy Cousin is rewarding and fun. For more information go to please visit the Student Government Association Office at 211 Student Union or call 405-744-6500.

### **Mayor's Welcome**

The Mayor's Welcome is a function held each year following the International Student Orientation in order to allow the Mayor of Stillwater and the OSU Administration to officially welcome new international students. It is a casual event with a party atmosphere normally attended by 300-400 new international students. Organizations that offer services to international students distribute information, snacks are served, "cowboy" dancing is taught and a live band plays.

### **Seminars**

The International Students and Scholars Office offer seminars/workshops throughout the year as part of an ongoing programming effort. Immigration Seminars may be held to familiarize students with immigration regulations affecting their stay in this country. It is an opportunity to ask immigration lawyers questions since they are guest presenters at this program. Income Tax Seminars assist international students in filling out federal and state income tax forms. Practical Training Seminars cover the programs available from OSU Career Services, and information and procedures about Curricular Practical Training, Optional Practical Training and academic training. All programs are free and are advertised by email through the listserv and by fliers on the ISS web page. Students may be required to sign up in the International Students and Scholars Office if they wish to attend.

### **ISS Electronic Newsletter (Listserv)**

Up-to-date information on international student activities is posted weekly in the ISS electronic newsletter. This electronic newsletter contains valuable information and FYI info bits for our student's benefit. It is sent to the student's okstate.edu email address and can be found at the following website: <http://iss.okstate.edu/listserv-weekly-newsletter>.

### **Break Activities**

Programs such as films, trips, dinners and sports event are sometimes organized during Thanksgiving, fall and spring breaks. These activities are sponsored by the International Student Organization (ISO), Residence Hall Association, Student Government Association (SGA), International Students and Scholars (ISS) and Residential Life. For more information, check with ISS, refer to the ISS webpage ([iss.okstate.edu](http://iss.okstate.edu)) and read the weekly email sent to your okstate.edu email account.

### **Trips**

Several groups organize trips to a variety of places in Oklahoma and the rest of the United States. The trips may be short weekend trips such as shopping, touring museums, camping and hiking. Trips are announced well in advance and sign-up is on a first-come-first-serve basis. Student groups interested in taking longer trips may ask the assistance of the ISS staff in planning such excursions.

## Foreign Exchange

It is important that international students understand their governments' regulations for exchange of funds. A number of countries require certification of enrollment before funds can be transferred to a student in the U.S. Letters of enrollment certification are issued by the Certifications Department of the Office of the Registrar in 322 Student Union. Exchange documentation is issued by the ISS Office, 250 Student Union.



## Programs for International Spouses and Children

### English as a Second Language

Stillwater High School offers Adult Basic Education courses for the GED and English as a Second Language classes in the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. Classes begin the second week of each semester. For additional information call the Stillwater Board of Education, Special Services at 405-533-6300.

### Courses

International dependents are often interested in enrolling continuing education courses that are organizing by:

Activities/Courses	Short Description	Phone
Adult Educational Program	English Classes	405-533-6300
Meridian Technology Center	Short-Term Adult Education	405-377-3333
OSU Colvin Center	Recreational Instruction	405-744-5510
Parks & Recreation Department	Crafts, Art & Sports	405-747-8084
Pre-Natal Classes	Classes for Pregnant Women	405-372-1480
Red Cross	First Aid & CPR Instruction	405-372-1833
Stillwater Medical Center	Nursing Care	405-742-5488
International Education & Outreach	Various Topics	405-744-6606
YMCA	Swim, Exercise, Basketball, Sports	405-372-5833

For details, call any of the organizations listed above.

### Stillwater Family YMCA

The YMCA offers numerous programs for children and adults. The YMCA offers a Child Care program (ages 3-5) as well as After School Fun Clubs, youth sports (basketball, flag football, soccer and swimming), summer day camps, aquatics, racquetball and exercise classes. A membership fee or a fee for individual programs is required. Telephone 405-372-5833 for more information.

### Family Resource Center

Do you need assistance shopping in U.S. grocery stores or preparing American foods? Do you need a car seat for your infant? Does someone in your family need English language lessons? These and other needs and interests of international families can be met at the Family Resource Center, located at 719 North Walnut, just south of the University laundry facility. The center serves any family living in Payne County. Stop in or call to find out what programs would be of interest to you and your family. FRC activities include after school programs and clubs for children, parenting classes, Foreign Language (Arabic, English, Japanese, Spanish and Turkish) classes, and a weekly meeting for international women. The foreign language classes are open to the OSU community. There is also a 90 day car seat loan program, a book and vacuum loan program, a list of baby sitters in the community, a toy library, and information about activities in Stillwater. The programs for children and lending programs are limited to the University Apartment residents only. Children are welcome at the center. The FRC also has a small coffee shop that sells light breakfast and lunch items. The FRC facilities may be reserved for special occasions. Visit the FRC between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. weekdays, (closed on Saturdays), and from 12-8:00p.m. on Sundays, or call 405-744-6539.

## **English Language Institute**

Office: 307 Wes Watkins Center

Phone: 405-744-7519

The English Language Institute (ELI) at Oklahoma State University is an intensive English program designed to help international students attain the English proficiency necessary to enter Oklahoma State University. It is also suitable for those who wish to learn English for business or personal reasons. ELI offers classes up to thirty hours per week in listening and speaking, grammar, reading, composition and academic skills. Also included in the thirty-hour week are sessions in the listening laboratory. Intermediate and advanced students may attend an OSU class on a non-credit basis.

Each student is placed in one of six levels based on ELI placement examinations, which occur the week prior to the semester start date. The length of time necessary to complete the ELI program depends on the student's English background as well as his or her diligence and motivation. A student who places at the beginning level should expect to remain in the program for ten to twelve months in order to reach the proficiency level necessary to do academic work. ELI provides orientation and cultural programs each semester. Some of the special activities include holiday celebrations, sporting events, picnics and short field trips.

Regular testing is done throughout each semester. An institutional TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam is given by the English Language Institute at the end of each semester. In addition, Oklahoma State University is an official International TOEFL Testing Center through the University Assessment and Testing (UAT) Office. Their office is located on the corner of Walnut and Admiral Streets on campus. Students must sign up for the exams through [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org). You may call UAT for more information at 405-744-5958.



## Chapter 3: Health Care and Insurance

### University Health Services

University Health Services is the student's professional resource for medical care while at Oklahoma State University. It is a primary health care facility designed to provide cost effective, physician directed health care and health information to the students at OSU. All new students are required to submit an immunization and health history. This requirement includes submission of verification of the dates of immunization against measles, mumps, rubella and Hepatitis B. Students may also be required to take a TB skin test. In addition, OSU recommends Hepatitis A, Tetanus-Diphtheria and Meningococcal immunizations.

### Services Provided

University Health Services provides the following:

**1. Outpatient Medical Clinic**

University Health Services offer full service outpatient health care provided by physicians, physician assistants, licensed nurses and other health professionals.

**2. Pharmacy**

Registered pharmacists fill prescriptions received at health center or from private physicians. They can assist in transferring a prescription from your home pharmacy to OSU.

**3. Laboratory Services and Radiology**

Performs lab tests and x-ray services upon request of physician. A consulting radiologist interprets all x-rays.

**4. Women's Clinic**

Provides gynecological examinations and information about birth control and human sexuality. By appointment only.

**5. Counseling Services**

Provides individual and group counseling for a wide variety of personal concerns including relationships, academics and stress management. By appointment only.

**6. Immunizations**

University Health Center (UHS) offers all immunizations needed by OSU students. Measles, Tetanus, Hepatitis A&B, Meningitis and Chicken Pox. Also TB skin testing is provided. The UHS also provides vaccinations needed for overseas travel.

**7. Health Education**

The health education department conducts programs and presentations in addition to providing health information and resources for the greater university. Coordinates Share the WEALTH peer health education program.

**8. HIV Education and Testing**

Provides HIV pre and post-test counseling and education on sexually transmitted diseases and other health issues. Services are provided in the clinic by the Payne Country Health Department.

**9. Allergy Clinic**

Students currently under the care of an allergist may receive their regular injections at this clinic. By appointment only.

**10. Flight Physicals**

Provides 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class flight physicals for commercial and private pilots. By appointment only.

## 11. Insurance Office

The insurance office provides information and assistance for students enrolled in the OSU Student Health Insurance Plan. This office can also help students with claim filing for medical services provided that the University Health Services.

## Questions & Answers

*The followings are excerpts from the OSU University Health Services pamphlet*

- Can my spouse use University Health Services?  
Yes! Non-enrolled spouses of students can utilize all services of UHS by paying the semester health fee. Please contact the UHS Business Office for details.
- Are you a Graduate Assistant?  
If so, you may qualify for Graduate Assistant insurance coverage. Check with your department administrative assistant to see if you qualify.
- Do I need to make appointments?  
As a convenience, students who wish to visit University Health Services are encouraged to call 405-744-7665 for an appointment. Walk-in patients are seen on a first come, first served basis.
- Is my information confidential?  
Records at University Health Services are strictly confidential and are not released to anyone without the patient's signed authorization. The medical record is not part of your academic record or part of the university personnel system.
- What are the office hours of the Student Health Center?  
The University Health Services business hours are from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information on University Health Services, please check out their website at <http://www.okstate.edu/UHS/studentinfo.php> or visit the office at 1202 Farm Road, Stillwater, OK 74078. Phone: 405-744-7665.

## Health Related Information

*The major portion of the following text was written by Judith A. Green, Florida International University and originally published with a grant from International Underwriters/Brokers, Inc., Fairfax, Virginia, 22030.*

Your health is your most precious possession, more important than anything you will own or experience you will have. As a student on a college campus in the United States, you will be faced with many decisions and choices that can affect your health and well-being. As an adult, you are RESPONSIBLE for your health care choices. You can do more than anyone else to keep yourself healthy, and this involves behaviors that you must practice daily. You can help prevent illness and make decisions that will avoid crisis.

You should also learn about the health care system in the U.S. so you can get the care you need in case of illness. Being well-informed before an emergency strikes will allow you to make better decisions. You can learn about the resources available on the campus and in Stillwater by consulting the International Students and Scholars Office or the Student Health Center. They will be able to tell you about the facilities available, where and when you can seek treatment, and answer questions about your health.

## How to Stay Healthy

Maintaining good health is a process that has physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. You should attend to each of these regularly to remain healthy.

Getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising and practicing preventive health care are all important part of physical wellness. Attending to your personal hygiene, avoiding stress, taking time for relaxation and maintaining friendships will help to keep you emotionally healthy. Maintaining your values and your sense of perspective and for some, practicing your religion or spending time outside with nature are parts of spiritual wellness. All of these components work together and are necessary to keep you healthy.

Preventive care is one of the most important facets of wellness. This includes eating a balanced diet, exercising, wearing seat belts when driving or riding in a motor vehicle, brushing your teeth, performing regular self-examinations, visiting the doctor regularly, practicing safe sex if you are sexually active, and making other lifestyle choices that will keep you healthy. Your own attitudes and behaviors play a major role in your state of health. The physicians, nurses and health educators at the Student Health Center and the Wellness Center can provide you with the information about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and can answer your questions and help you make needed changes for better health.

Keep in mind that moving to a new place that may be very different from your home will involve many changes that can affect your health. For example, the climate may be different from what you are accustomed to, and you may not be prepared for the colder or warmer weather.

In addition to these obvious physical differences, you will face a period of cultural adjustment when you first arrive in the U.S. Cultural adjustment is a process of growing accustomed to a new culture and becoming comfortable there. It usually takes many months and involves several stages. At times you may feel awkward, shy, or embarrassed; other times you may be frustrated, angry or disappointed. But most students who go through the cultural adjustment process say they eventually do become comfortable in their “second home;” this is called being bi-cultural. During those initial months, though, you may experience several health-related effects of cultural adjustment, which can include interruptions in your sleeping or eating patterns, depression, stress and loneliness. These emotional disturbances may lead to physical symptoms, including stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, heart palpitations and altered menstrual periods.

## **Public Aid Program**

When there isn't enough money to pay for medical care or food, an international family may be tempted to apply for “public aid”-financial assistance programs for low-income U.S. residents. Common forms of “public aid” are subsidized housing, food stamps, medical care, and nutritious foods for pregnant women and children. When students and dependents apply for F and J status the consular officers usually inform the applicants they may not “become a public charge.” That means that F and J status students should not expect to participate in U.S. Government (public aid) programs while they are in the U.S. F and J non-immigrants certify to the U.S. consulate that they have enough funds to support themselves and all their dependents while they are in the U.S. If they do not honor that commitment, they will be in violation of their F or J status.

Because they don't realize this, medical personnel and others in the local U.S. community may encourage international students or their dependents to apply for public aid. A public aid department (Department of Human Services or Payne County Health, for example) may even say that a person is eligible for certain aid programs, regardless of citizenship. However, attitudes are changing in the U.S.; negative public sentiment is developing toward non-citizens who receive public assistance. In addition, receiving public assistance is a violation of F and J immigration regulations. Consequences for violating these regulations may not be immediate, but can eventually prevent the non-immigrant from receiving future immigration benefits.

## **Why Insurance is required at OSU**

In the United States, each individual is responsible for paying the costs of his or her own medical care. Except for certain low-income U.S. citizens and permanent residents, **NO GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO NEED CARE BUT CANNOT AFFORD IT.** The cost of medical care is the fastest rising expense in the U.S. today.

Since most Americans cannot afford the high cost of medical care, they rely on insurance in medical emergencies. For an international student, one serious illness, injury or catastrophic medical emergency can mean financial ruin and spell the end of his or her educational dreams. **MEDICAL INSURANCE IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY IN THE UNITED STATES.**

## **Mandatory Insurance at OSU**

All International students taking 1 or more credit hours will be required to purchase the Student Health Insurance Plan. Waivers will only be granted for US Employer plans or Embassy/Governmental sponsored plans including Fulbright Scholars. Waivers will be based on the government or organization guaranteeing payment of all health care expenses including medical evacuation and repatriations. The premium cost for the health insurance plan will be billed to the students tuition account for all international students who do not provide a waiver prior to the waiver deadline.

## **Why Schools Require That International Students Carry Medical Insurance**

Most students are young and healthy and remain accident free for most of their lives. They often believe that they will remain healthy and will not need medical care while they are in school. Though most students do remain relatively healthy, some are diagnosed with serious illnesses and others suffer life-threatening injuries while they are in college. No one can predict who will remain healthy and who will not, and it is dangerous to assume that you will be among those who will remain free from illness and serious injury. Should you become ill or injured, you generally cannot purchase medical insurance to cover that illness or injury, which is called a pre-existing condition. In fact, you may not be able to purchase medical insurance at all, having become uninsurable.

An increasing number of colleges and universities in the U.S. require international students to carry medical insurances in order to attend school. Such mandatory insurance requirements have been put into place in part because international students are unaware of how the U.S. health care system works. Many believe that their universities or the U.S. government will pay their medical bills. In addition, universities must certify to the U.S. Department of State (on certificates of eligibility, Forms I-20 and DS-2019) that they have verified the financial resources of admittees and that the admittees have adequate funds to meet their needs while studying in the U.S. Universities realize most international students cannot pay large and unexpected medical bills, so as a condition of enrollment they require students to carry medical insurance. In this way, the insurance protects both the student and the university.

## **How Medical Insurance Works**

When an individual purchases medical insurance, his or her premium is combined with the premiums of others to form a pool of money. That pool is then used to pay the medical bills for those participants who need medical care. For most U.S. nationals and international students alike, insurance is the only protection against rising medical costs and unexpected emergencies.

Once you purchase a medical insurance policy, you will receive an insurance identification card from the company. This card is valid only as long as you continue to pay your insurance premium. It will show the name of the insurance company and the policy number, and often will indicate a telephone number to call in case of emergency or for answers to questions. If you become sick or injured and seek medical treatment, you need to notify your insurance company as soon as possible. They must receive a written request for payment (called a claim), that they will review before they can make a payment. Always provide the company with complete and accurate information on the claim form; otherwise they will be unable to evaluate the claim and make payment. Sometimes the insurance company will ask you or your doctor for additional information. You should respond promptly to their request so that they can process your claim.

In some cases, your doctor or hospital will submit the claim directly to the insurance company and wait to receive payment from them before billing you for any balance. Other medical providers will require you to pay in advance and seek reimbursement from your insurance company afterwards. You should ask about the payment arrangements before you receive treatment so you know what to expect.

## **Planning For Your Health Care**

The worst time to learn about the health care system and medical resources in the United States is when you are sick. Learn in advance about the Student Health Center on campus. Visit the Health Center and meet the staff. Find out about the hours of service, and whether your dependents are eligible to receive treatment there. Ask about services provided on campus. Your health fee will cover some services and others may be provided on a fee for service basis. For certain services, the Student Health Center may refer you to a health provider in the community, for example, to a specialist, a hospital, or a diagnostic center. Your student health fee probably will not cover services provided outside the health clinic, but your medical insurance should pay some or all of these costs.

The staff at the Student Health Center will be able to tell you what to do if the Health Center is closed when you need treatment. If dependent care is not available, they can make a referral to an outside practitioner for your dependents. If you select a family physician, you will be able to get more comprehensive and personalized care when you need it; otherwise, you may need to go to a local emergency room, where the wait could be long, the treatment impersonal and the cost high.

## **What to Do If You Get Sick**

If you are ill or injured during a time when the Student Health Center is open, you should go there for treatment. Otherwise, you should go to a local physician or urgent care clinic. For very serious illnesses or accidents, you can seek treatment in a hospital emergency room, but you should seek other options if your condition is not life-threatening. Similarly, if the Student Health Center does not offer treatment for dependents, you should select a family physician for them when you arrive in the U.S. If they need care when the doctor's office is closed, you can call his or her regular office telephone number and the answering service can contact the doctor right away.

## **How to File an Insurance Claim**

After you receive medical treatment (except service at University Health Services), you need to notify the insurance company and request payment for them. This is called filing a claim. You should ask for a claim form when you first buy insurance and review it carefully to be sure you understand it. Part of the form is completed by you and part by the physician or facility that provided treatment.

Complete your section of the claim form and take it to the clinic or hospital where you were treated. Be sure you have filled your section out completely; then ask the health provider to complete the rest and submit the form to the company. The insurance company can then evaluate the treatment you received to determine if it is covered by your policy, and if so, to arrange payment. However, if your claim form is incomplete, payment may be delayed. You should provide all the requested information so that the insurance company can act on your claim properly.

## **What to Do If Your Claim Is Denied**

Remember that most insurance policies have specific exclusions, that is, medical procedures not covered. You may submit a claim and later learn that the company has denied your request for payment. If you do not understand the reason for the denial, you should contact the Student Health Center or the insurance company. If you disagree with the decision of the insurance company, you have the right to appeal that decision and request the company to consider your case again. The insurance company can tell you the specific procedure for filing an appeal.

## **Keeping Costs Manageable**

Health care is the fastest-growing expense in the U.S. today. The increases in medical expenses are due to many factors including the cost of highly advanced and technical medical equipment and the litigious environment in the U.S. Choices you make when you need medical care can contribute to these high costs or help to control them. By seeking treatment at the Student Health Center whenever possible, using hospital emergency rooms only for life-threatening emergencies, filling out claim forms completely and accurately, and being a wise and well-informed medical consumer, you can help to contain costs. The view of some individuals, who seek medical treatment without regard to its cost simply because they have medical insurance

that pays for it, is short-sighted. Irresponsible use of insurance only leads to increases in costs, which are passed on to consumers like you in the form of higher insurance premiums in future years. By working with your health care provider and insurance company, you can make responsible health care choices, help contain costs, and protect you from higher premiums in the future.

### **GLOSSARY of Insurance Terms**

**Claim:** A written request by the insured individual for payment by the insurance company for a cost incurred and covered under the insurance policy.

**Co-Payment:** The portion of the covered expense, after the deductible is paid, which must be paid by the insured individual. The co-payment is usually expressed in a percentage. For example, if the insurance company pays 80% of covered charges, your co-payment is 20%.

**Cost Containment:** Actions or practices to minimize costs incurred by both the insured individual and the insurance company. Cost containment helps to maintain reasonable insurance premiums.

**Covered Expense:** Any expense for which complete or partial payment is provided under the insurance policy.

**Deductible:** The initial portion of a covered expense, which must be paid by the insured person before the insurance policy pays its part of the expense.

**Exclusion:** Any condition or expense under the terms of the insurance policy, no coverage is provided and no payment will be made.

**Fee for Service:** Medical care which is provided in exchange for a fee paid to the provider at the time the service is rendered.

**Insurance Policy:** A written contract defining the insurance plan, its coverage, exclusions, eligibility requirements, and all benefits and conditions that apply to individuals insured under the plan.

**Insurance Premium:** The amount of money required for coverage under a specific insurance policy for a given period of time. Depending on the policy agreement, the premium may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually.

**Lapse in Coverage:** After an initial insured period, the period of time during which an individual is uninsured, usually because of failure to pay the premiums.

**Pre-existing Condition:** A medical condition that existed prior to the commencement of coverage under a given insurance policy. Depending on the policy, a pre-existing condition may be defined as:

- a) A condition which has its origins prior to the commencement of coverage;
- b) A condition which exhibited symptoms prior to the commencement of coverage;
- c) A condition for which treatment was sought prior to the commencement of coverage;
- d) A condition which was diagnosed prior to the commencement of coverage; or
- e) A condition for which treatment was received prior to the commencement of coverage.

**Preventive Care:** Measures taken in advance of symptoms to prevent illness and/or injury.

**Renewal:** Paying a premium for an additional period of time (after the initial insurance period has expired) in order to continue coverage.



## Chapter 4: Academics

### Academic Matters

#### English Proficiency Test for International Graduate Students

Some graduate international students enrolling for the first time at Oklahoma State University are required to take the Test of English Language Proficiency (TELP), administered by the OSU Department of English, in cooperation with the University Testing and Assessment services. The test is given at a specific time during the orientation period before enrollment.

The TELP is not used for admission to the university and is taken only by those students who have been officially accepted for admission to OSU. The test does not duplicate the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); rather, it measures academic writing skills.

Results of the TELP are forwarded to the student's academic advisor. Should the results indicate a need for additional English study, the student is required to enroll in a graduate, non-credit English course until the deficiency is removed.

The only new international students who are not required to take the TELP are:

1. Graduate students who have completed two semesters at a U.S. institute, not including an English language center. (Even if the student has graduated from an American University, the major department at OSU may require him or her to take the TELP.)
2. Graduate students who obtain a TOEFL of 600 and a TWE of 5 or more.

### Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an important standard in the university community. It is expected that anytime a student is doing something to earn points for a grade in a class (homework, test, etc.); the work is expected to be the result of your work alone, not the combined work or efforts of more than one student.

Academic dishonesty is a very, very serious matter in American universities. The consequences can be severe - from lowering an exam grade to obtaining an F or even suspension or expulsion from the university. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty face reprimand, conduct probation, or suspension. Students will be held accountable for, and face possible disciplinary action, should their behavior fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Academic Dishonesty:** Behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another person.
2. **Academic Misconduct:** Unknowingly allowing other students to see examination answers or to see term projects or papers are possible acts of academic misconduct.

Students are required to actively protect their work against misuse by others.

**Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty or misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary actions.**

For complete information see [Student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Student Behavior](#) booklet, access the OSU home page or check with the Office of Student Conduct, 326 Student Union.

**Academic dishonesty examples:**

- Plagiarism- using someone else's words, ideas or data without "proper" credit. It is the representation of previously written, published or creative work as one's own.
- Cheating (talking) or copying during an examination.
- Using or attempting to use unauthorized information when taking an exam.
- Working with other students on homework assignments is not always allowed.
- Submitting work completed by another as your own (reports, drawings, assignments).
- Knowingly assisting another student in cheating or plagiarizing.
- Altering or forging a signature on an academic document or altering an official OSU document.
- Unauthorized Collaboration on Projects- The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of an unauthorized joint effort.
- Unauthorized Advance Access to Exams
- Fraudulent Alteration of Academic Materials
- Knowing Cooperation with another Person in an Academically Dishonest Undertaking - failure by a student to prevent misuse of his/her work by others

**Academic misconduct examples**

- Bringing study notes into a closed-book examination.
- Failure to observe strict requirements for the proper identification and citation of sources and supporting ideas in reports and essays.
- Excessive reliance upon and borrowing of the ideas and work of others in a group effort.

## Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy helps maintain good relations between the student and the instructor. The suggestions listed below are offered to the student for this purpose.

1. Be on time to class and for appointments. People in the U.S. expect promptness.
2. If you are late to class, do not knock on the door or ask if you may come in. Enter quietly and take a seat where you will not disturb anyone. If you are very late, explain after class.
3. Do assignments exactly as the professor asks. Follow his or her instructions; if you do not understand, ask questions.
4. If you know you will be late or absent from class, tell the professor ahead of time —unless it is a large lecture class.
5. You will be expected to attend classes on a regular basis. Complete all assignments, readings, and take all tests.
6. If you will be absent or away for more than two or three days, tell the professor ahead of time. Call, write a note, or send a letter or email. If you cannot reach the individual at his/her office, call the department and leave a message.
7. The first day of class, professors will tell you their office hours. Copy them down, as you might wish to visit the professor during the semester. During office hours, professors are prepared to meet with students to answer questions about class work.
8. When you miss class, ask the professor or a classmate for the assignments, and ask if you can turn the homework in as soon as possible. Always make up any work you miss- it may affect your grades.
9. Unless the professor gives you permission to call him or her by a first name, call your professors 'Mr.,' 'Miss,' or 'Ms.' with the family or surname. Use 'Dr.' with the surname, if you know the professor has a Ph.D. You may use 'sir' for men. Do not say just 'Miss' or 'Teacher' or use any other title without the surname.
10. Depending on the class and the professor, you may be called Mr., Miss, or Ms. with your surname, or by your first name. If you wish, you may tell them you have a special name you would like them to use.
11. When you telephone the professor or the office, identify yourself at once. If it is a large class, remind the professor what class you are in. For example, "Hello, Dr. Taylor. This is John Smith. I am in your Physics 101 class at 10:00 a.m."
12. It is appropriate to ask questions in class. Raise your hand and wait until the professor indicates you may speak
13. U.S. classrooms are informal and the teacher may sometimes sit on the desk. You, however, should not sit on the desk or put your feet on a chair. Talking to other students or reading newspapers during class is not considered to be polite!
14. Smoking is not allowed in the classroom or on the University campus. Eating in the classroom is allowed, but not polite.
15. If you make an appointment with a professor, you should keep it. If you cannot, you should call him or her before the appointed time to excuse yourself.

16. When other students are talking to the professor during class, you should listen to them and not talk to anyone else.
17. American students generally do not ask to go out in the middle of a class to use the drinking fountain or restroom, unless it is an absolute necessity do not walk out and come back in. Sharpen pencils before class begins. If you must leave early for some reason, tell the professor before the class.
18. If you wish to tape record the lectures of a class, first ask the professor for permission.
19. Expect to be given several short tests or quizzes. Do not say that you are not prepared and do not want to take the quiz. Always turn in the test as soon as the instructor asks for it.

## Glossary of Academic Terms

**Academic Subjects** are theoretical studies such as English, mathematics, chemistry and history (non-academic subjects include auto mechanics, appliance repair, typing and the like).

**Academic Advisor** is a university faculty or staff member who assists students with academic planning. Questions regarding academic procedures should be directed to your academic advisor.

**Accredited** means an organization is certified as conforming to certain standards or requirements. Accreditation means a university or university department has met standards established by a recognized accrediting or professional association. For example, OSU is accredited by the North Central Association of College and Secondary Schools, and the School of Architecture (among many) is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board.

**Adding a Class** is signing up for an additional course or research hours after regular enrollment. The student must have advisor's approval and sign up prior to the sixth day of class during a regular semester. (Please refer to the OSU catalog or class schedule).

**Advanced Standing** is the status given to a student who has earned acceptable credit at another university or who have earned college credit by taking an examination.

**Associate Degree** is a degree given for completing a college program of a least 2 and less than 4 years of study. A junior college or community college usually gives this degree.

**Bachelor's Degree** is a degree given for completing an undergraduate university program that takes at least 4 years. The degree is also called a baccalaureate degree.

**Course** is a single subject of study taken one term, quarter or semester.

**Course of Study** is the succession or combination of courses taken in a degree program.

**Course Load** is the total number of credits for which a student is registered in a given term. A typical undergraduate load is 12-18 semester credit hours. International undergraduates are required to carry at least 12 credits per regular semester. A normal graduate load is 9 credits. International graduate students are required to carry a minimum of 9 credits per semesters (6 if they have a half-time assistantship).

**Credit Hour** is a measurement of academic work expressed in semester hours. These credit hours are used to determine university standing. One credit hour usually means an hour (50 minute period) of class attendance each week for one semester. In some courses such as laboratory courses; however, two or three hours of attendance a week are required to earn one credit. A university degree represents a specified number of credit hours satisfactorily completed. Some colleges or universities divide the year into four parts, or quarters, and grant quarter hours of credit. A quarter hour is worth 2/3 of a semester hour.

**Double Major** is a program of study in which a student completes the requirements for two majors at the same time.

**Dropping a Class** is canceling enrollment for a class. This must be done with approval from your academic advisor. If this affects the international student's full-time status, it may create a problem with your legal status as a non-resident alien. Check with the Office of International Students & Scholars for advice. (Also see catalog or course schedule).

**Electives** are courses that are not part of the major or minor requirements for a particular degree. An elective course is not mandatory, but counts toward the total number of credit hours required for a degree.

**Extracurricular Activity** is student activity not associate with classroom work; for example, social events, student elections, academic/social clubs or organizations, etc.

**Grades** are letter marks that indicate the quality of a student's work. The grade is recorded at the end of a term and indicates the degree of proficiency the student has achieved in a particular course. The grade in any course is determined by the professor in charge of the course and is based on class participation, research papers, homework, examinations, etc.

Grades used at Oklahoma State University are stated in letter form and are based on a 4.0 number scale called points. They include:

<b>A</b> =4.0 (Excellent)	<b>D</b> =1.0 (Poor)
<b>B</b> =3.0 (Good)	<b>I</b> =Incomplete
<b>C</b> =2.0 (Average)	<b>F</b> =0.0 (Failure)
	<b>F!</b> =0.0 Failure and Academic Dishonesty

**R**=Continuing over several research semesters. Students are given either grades a Satisfactory Research (SR) or Unsatisfactory Research (UR).

**W**=Withdraw prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> week of summer classes or the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the Fall/Spring semesters.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** is determined by multiplying the number of earned credits by the number equivalent to the grade for each course, adding these points, and then dividing by the total credit hours. For example, a student who receives 3 credit hours of A ( $3 \times 4.0 = 12$ ), 6 credit hours of B ( $6 \times 3.0 = 18$ ) and 3 credit hours of C ( $3 \times 2.0 = 6$ ) will earn a GPA of 3.0, which is equivalent to a 'B' average.

In general, undergraduate students must maintain a 2.0 or C grade average to remain in good standing and to graduate; graduate students must maintain a 3.0 or a B average. More detailed information on maintaining appropriate academic standing maybe found in the OSU catalog.

**Graduation Requirements** are specific requirements that a student must meet to qualify for graduation. The requirements include specified total credit hours, required courses, minimum grade point average, etc.

**Laboratory Course** is a course in which a student participates in experimental projects in addition to lectures and classroom work.

**Lower Division courses** are those intended for freshman and sophomore level students.

**Major** is the field of study in which a student specializes and receives a degree.

**Minor** is a secondary field of study taken in addition to a major.

**Major Professor** is a faculty member who works with the graduate student to determine course work and to direct the student's research project.

**Oklahoma State University** is divided into 8 colleges Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences Center, Human and Environmental Sciences, and Veterinary-Medicine.

**Pre-Final Week (Dead Week)** is the week preceding final examination week. Because the purpose of the week is to enable students to prepare for final examinations, student organizations do not schedule any organized activities.

**Prerequisite** is a requirement for registration in a particular class. Calculus I is a prerequisite for Calculus II, for example.

**Remedial Class** is a corrective course designed to assist students to meet basic requirements for certain subjects, English or mathematics, for example

**Syllabus** is the overall plan of the course distributed by most professors the first day of class. The syllabus usually outlines what reading material the student is responsible for and when, when tests will be given, how grades will be assigned, when research papers are due, the professor's office hours, and often the professor's definition of academic dishonesty and its consequences. Keep and use the syllabus as your guide.

**Transcripts** are official copies of a student's academic record, showing courses completed, grades received, credit hours earned, and other student data. Transcripts are kept in the Registrar's Office and copies are available at the front desk in 322 Student Union. The transcript is free upon request since a \$5.00 fee for record maintenance is obtained on the tuition and fee bill.

**Upper Division Courses** are courses for junior and senior level students. Other academic terms are explained in the OSU catalog.



## Chapter 5: Immigration

### Immigration Services

The International Students and Scholars Office have professional staff members to assist you. They are available to discuss your immigration concerns on a walk-in basis during regular ISS office hours.

### Glossary of Immigration Offices

DHS: Department of Homeland Security is responsible for the immigration office listed below.

CIS: Citizenship & Immigration Services is responsible for the Service Centers and District Offices. (Also known as USCIS)

USCIS: United States Citizenship & Immigration Services is responsible for the Service Centers and District Offices. (Also known as CIS).

USICE: United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement is responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence and SEVIS.

USCBP: United States Customs & Border Protection is responsible for immigration inspections (FOEs), Border Patrol and Customs Service.

### GLOSSARY of Immigration Definitions

**Visa:** Stamp, 'chop,' or computer label in passport obtained from a United States Embassy or Consulate giving you permission to come to the United States. These are only issued outside of the United States and may expire, without penalty so long as you remain in the U.S. and maintain your status.

**F-1:** Visa classification for a student in an academic degree or a full-time intensive English language program.

**F-2:** Spouse, child, or dependent of an F-1 student.

**H-1:** Visa classification for a temporary worker of distinguished merit or ability.

**H-4:** Spouse, child, or dependent of an H-1B worker.

**J-1:** Visa classification for an Exchange Visitor student, professor, or research scholar.

**J-2:** Spouse, child, or dependent of a J-1 Exchange Visitor.

**B-2:** Visitors Visa -short term status. Not appropriate for a student pursuing a degree program.

**B-1:** Business Visa - short term status. Not appropriate for a student pursuing a degree program.

**WT:** Visitor's Visa — 90 day visits no extension or change of status.

## **GLOSSARY of Forms**

**SEVP:** Student Exchange Visitor Program is an organization that tracks and monitors schools and programs in the US. Educational system. <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/>

**SEVIS:** Student Exchange Visitor Information System that maintains accurate current information on non-immigrant students (F & J status) <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/>

**I-20:** Certificate of Eligibility issued via SEVIS and used to obtain an F-1 visa to enter the United States. (See section pertaining to travel for additional information).

**DS-2019:** Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor status issued via SEVIS, used to obtain a J-1 visa and to enter the U.S.

**I-94:** Arrival/departure form issued electronically to all non-immigrants upon arrival in the United States. Can be printed at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)

**I-539:** Immigration form used by a non-immigrant to apply for a change to another on immigrant status and for an F-1 student to apply for reinstatement.

**I-515:** immigration form used to notify a student or exchange visitor admitted without I-20 or a DS-2019 that he or she must submit an I-20 or DS-2019 to SEVP: Student Exchange and Visitor Program within 30 days after entry to the U.S. See an ISS staff if you have been issued an I-515.

**I-765:** Immigration form used when applying for optional practical training and off campus employment.

**EAD, Employment Authorization Document:** A card issued by USCIS containing a photograph and dates of employment.

**Note:** *Immigration forms usually have identification numbers (eg: I-765) in the lower left corner, of the page. Do not destroy or discard immigration forms that have been issued to you.*

## **SEVIS**

SEVIS is the Internet-based system that maintains accurate and current information on non-immigrant students (F & M visa), exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2, & J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications via the Internet, to the USCIS, USICE and Department of State (DOS) throughout a student or exchange visitor's stay in the United States. The system will reflect international student or exchange visitor status changes, such as admission at Port of Entry (POE), change of address, change in program of study, and other details.

## Non-Immigrant Students

### Passport Validity

United States Immigration requires that you keep your passport valid at all times. To extend or renew your passport, contact your country's consulate or embassy for directions. Ask for the addresses and phone numbers of consulates and embassies in the ISS office or go to: <http://www.travel.state.gov> (click on Foreign Consular Offices in the US or links to Foreign Embassies in Washington, D.C.)

### Maintaining Immigration Status

Permission to study in the U.S. has been granted at the port of entry by the United States Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP). In order to remain in the U.S., USCIS requires that you maintain your immigration status. This means that you must be a full-time student, abide by the immigration regulations, and submit immigration documents correctly according to those regulations.

If you abide by USCIS regulations, it is said that you are "in status." Significant penalties for being "out of status" can prevent you from taking advantage of a number of opportunities while you are in the U.S., can cause you to leave the U.S. before you complete your education, or can prevent you from re-entering the U.S. once you have left. Each student must sign page 1 of the I-20 or DS-2019 certifying that they have read and agreed to the requirements of their status.

***It is your responsibility to know immigration regulations that apply to you, and to adhere to them during your stay in the U.S.*** The staff members of the International Students and Scholars office (ISS) do not work for immigration. However, they know immigration regulations and are able to assist you in knowing how to stay in status. Please consult with one of the ISS staff members if you have questions about the immigration regulations or before you carry out plans to change schools, degree programs, travel out of the U.S., drop courses, accept employment, etc.

### Full-time Enrollment

Both F-1 and J-1 students must successfully complete a full-time course of study during fall and spring semesters. This is defined by USCIS and this university as receiving a passing grade for a minimum of:

- 12 semester hours for undergraduate students
- 9 semester hours for graduate students
- 6 semester hours for graduate students with a half-time assistantship

Grades of "W" or "I" do not qualify as "successful completion". Students must obtain a grade of A, B, C, D, or F in all courses. Students are not required to enroll in classes during the summer session, unless summer is the first semester in the U.S. If a student needs to drop a course, come to the ISS office BEFORE you drop the course. Under the SEVIS requirements ISS must report the reduced course load prior to dropping the class. This decision could create a very difficult situation.

### On-line or Distance Learning Education Courses

No more than three credits or one course of on-line or distance education courses can be counted as a full course of study.

### Non-Immigrant Status Violations

Some non-immigrant violations could accrue three and ten year bars. Under the current USCIS interpretations a student who has violated his/her status and has been denied reinstatement could be subject to the INA 222g and begin the clock on unlawful presence under INA 212(a)(9)(B). The effects could include:

- A visa cancellation with a specific date to depart the U.S.
- Student will begin accruing days of unlawful presence if he/she remains in the U.S. beyond the specified date on the I-94 given by USCIS. If the student remains in the U.S over 180 days after the denial, he/she is subject

to the 3 year bar; if the student remains more than one year after the denial he/she is subject to the ten year bar.

- If a student remains in the U.S. “out of status” and USCIS has placed the student in deportation, the immigration judge could determine the three or ten year bar based on unlawful presence.
- Due to these regulations, (222g) and (212(a)(9)(B), it is important that non-immigrant students take their immigration status very seriously.

## **Students in F-1 Status**

- Students arriving for the first time from overseas will be required to register via SEVIS. The ISS office will assist with the registration. Copies of your I-20, passport, and I-94 will be placed in the student’s file.
- Students beginning a new degree or program at Oklahoma State University (OSU) must file a level change via SEVIS if you plan to stay at OSU for an additional degree at the same level of study (e.g. second bachelors or masters) or if you are moving from one level of study to another (e.g. bachelors to masters or masters to Ph.D.) ISS will update the student’s SEVIS record and provide a new I-20.
- Students transferring from another U.S. university to OSU will require a release of the SEVIS record from the previous school. Once the transfer date has arrived, ISS will issue a transfer I-20 via SEVIS. The student will need to present all previous I-20’s, passport, I-94, and previous school transcripts to an ISS staff member within 15 days of enrollment at OSU.
- Students transferring OUT of OSU will need to provide evidence of acceptance to the new school and decide on an appropriate “release date” of the SEVIS record. Contact ISS if you are planning to transfer to obtain the appropriate forms.
- Students needing additional time to complete a degree will be required to file for a program extension. If you are not able to complete your current degree by the date indicated in item number 5 on the original I-20, you must apply for the program extension prior to the expiration. Contact ISS for further information.
- Students changing their major must contact ISS to update the SEVIS record and obtain a new I-20.
- The USCIS regulations require that all students report their change of address within 10 days of the change. ISS is required to report the change of address via SEVIS within 21 days. Changes in phone number and email address must also be reported.
- All spouses and children must obtain their own Form I-20 via SEVIS while residing in the U.S. The F-2 may enroll in part time study but is not authorized to work on or off campus.
- Under the USCIS SEVIS reporting requirements, OSU will be required to report any student’s failure to complete a program or withdraw from courses, drop courses below full course of study, address change, major or level change, program completion, optional or curricular practical training, and school transfers within 21 to 30 days depending on the event.
- If a student has failed to maintain the F-1 status he/she will be required to apply for reinstatement to the USCIS. The USCIS regulations have been narrowed and it is important that students contact ISS to seek assistance when in this situation.
- Work Off-campus ONLY if student receives authorization from International Students and Scholars or USCIS. On-Campus employment requires an on-campus work permit with verification of full-time status. PLEASE

NOTE: If a student works illegally the consequences could include voluntary departure from the U.S. or mandatory deportation. Student cannot be reinstated.

### **Leaving the United States**

- Students planning to travel outside the U.S. temporarily should obtain a validation on their I-20 in the ISS office. After receiving appropriate OSU clearances, an ISS staff member will sign page three of the I-20, if the student is in good standing at the university. Without a validated I-20, a student may be denied entry into the U.S. even if he/she has a valid visa.
- Students who have completed their study, or completed their practical training have 60 days to leave the United States once they have graduated, or completed practical training. Students who have applied to USCIS for another benefit or status may remain in the U.S. until USCIS makes a decision on their application. Students who have been admitted to another degree program are allowed to remain in the U.S. until the next semester begins or no later than five months. Students however must obtain an I-20 within 60 days of the end date of OPT or completion.
- Students who withdraw from classes must leave the U.S. immediately. The regulations provide no grace period days after the withdrawal from classes. However, students who seek prior approval from the ISS staff (DSO) to withdraw from classes will be given a 15 day grace period to depart the U.S.

## **Students in J-1 Status**

- All new students arriving from overseas or from another US institution - Have your passport, I-94, and DS-2019 checked and photocopied by an ISS staff member. Students who have DS-2019's signed by the Responsible or Alternate Responsible Officer in the ISS office at OSU will continue to be assisted by ISS personnel in obtaining extensions, validations, etc. Students who have DS-2019's signed by Responsible Officers or Alternates who are not employed by OSU will need to request extensions, validations, etc. from their particular Responsible Officers.
- Two year home country physical presence requirement - A requirement for most, but not all, J-1 exchange visitors is that they must return to their home country for 2 years upon the completion of their program of study in the U.S. The requirement extends to the J-2 dependents of the J-1. Exchange visitors who are subject to this requirement may not change to another status while in the U.S. Whether or not a student is subject to the requirement will be indicated on either the visa page in the passport, the DS-2019, a skills list, or on the I-94.
- Students needing an extension of stay - Must apply for an extension 30 to 60 days before the expiration date on the DS-2019 copy. Eligibility for extension consists of having studied full-time in the program indicated on the DS-2019, having adequate funding, and meeting the insurance requirement.
- Students wanting to change to another Status - J-1 students are permitted to change to another visa status ONLY if the 2 year home country physical presence requirement 212(e) is not indicated on the visa page in the passport, on the I-94, skills list, the DS-2019, or if the student has a letter from the U.S. State Department stating that section 212 (e) has been waived.
- Meeting the insurance requirement - J-1 exchange visitors and their dependents in the U.S. are mandated by regulation to be covered by medical insurance for the duration of their J-1 program. The insurance policy must include the following: 1) limit the deductible amount to no more than \$500 per accident or illness, 2) minimum benefits of \$100,000 for each accident or illness, 3) \$25,500 benefit for repatriation in case of death, 4) \$50,000 for medical evacuation. Willful failure to maintain the required insurance coverage can result in the termination of your program and result in having to depart the U.S. before completing your educational program. Students who need to buy insurance to meet this requirement should contact ISS or the Insurance office in the Student Health Center.
- Students who wish to complete another degree - Students who must return to their home country for 2 years upon completion of their program cannot be issued a DS-2019 or an I-20 unless they have written permission to continue from their sponsor or a waiver of the requirement from the U.S. State Department. Students who have been sponsored by their government or by an agency of the U.S. government are almost never excused from the requirement while they are in the U.S. Occasionally students are permitted to return to the U.S. to study for another degree after they have returned to their home country. For advice and guidance, please contact a staff member in the ISS office well in advance.
- Students wishing to obtain a home residency requirement waiver - The purpose of the 2 year home residency requirement is to prevent the exchange visitor from staying beyond the time needed for their specific educational objective and to ensure that the visitor will impart his/her learning to people in his/her home country. Students seeking advice about the waiver process should contact ISS for directions.

## **Leaving the United States**

- Students leaving temporarily - If the DS-2019 is signed by a Responsible or Alternate Officer in the ISS office at OSU, your DS-2019 can be validated by a staff member in the ISS office (if you are eligible to return to OSU). If the DS-2019 is signed by an administrator who is not an OSU employee, check with the person/agency in charge of your program.
- Students who have completed their program, withdrawn, or finished their academic training - Regulations require that the J-1 and all dependents depart the U.S. within 30 days of which ever date is earliest: the last enrollment, completion of program requirements, or expiration date on the DS-2019.

## EMPLOYMENT

All individuals working in the United States are required by the employer to complete Immigration Form I-9 showing that they are eligible to accept employment. This is required for both on and off-campus employment.

### 1. On-Campus

On-Campus - An F-1 or J-1 student may accept employment only after obtaining an OSU work permit from ISS. On campus employment 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 a week) during summer and official university holidays.

- Obtaining On-Campus Work Permit - To obtain clearance for on-campus employment, bring the following documents to ISS:
  - Valid Passport
  - Valid I-94
  - Form I-20 or DS-2019
  - J-1 students must bring sponsor letter indicating permission to accept on campus employment
- Assistantships - Graduate students who have assistantships also need to obtain an ISS on campus work permit.

### 2. Off-Campus: F-1 Students

#### Optional Practical Training

- Twelve months available after each level of education (BS, MS, Ph.D.)
- Authorized for a 12 month period of time
- Authorized part-time when classes are in session or full-time during summer months, prior to completing a degree
- Must apply within 60 day of the graduating semester or prior to the completion date.
- Student must have been a full-time student, maintained F- 1 status for at least one academic year and be “in status”
- Application for optional practical training begins with a recommendation from the ISS staff.
- If the student is eligible for practical training, ISS will recommend Optional Practical Training via SEVIS and student will apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) at the USCIS office having jurisdiction over his or her place of residence.
- For up to date information on OPT guidelines please check the following web link <http://iss.okstate.edu/new-optional-practical-training-opt-rules-f-1-students-and-cap-gap-provision-h-1b>

### 3. OPT Stem Extension

- Student must complete a BS, MS, or PhD in an academic field of science, technology, engineering or mathematics and are currently engaged in post-completion practical training.
- Authorized Employment is an additional 24 months.
- Must be employed with an E-Verify Employer.
- For up-to-date information on OPT Stem extension use the following link on the ISS website: <http://iss.okstate.edu/new-optional-practical-training-opt-rules-f-1-students-and-cap-gap-provision-h-1b>

### 4. Curricular Practical Training

- An internship requirement must be an integral part of the student’s academic coursework, which includes degrees that require internships for completion of the degree.
- Must have been in F-1 status a minimum of one academic year
- If the student participates in full-time curricular practical training for 12 months or more, he/she will not be eligible for optional practical training

**5. Severe Economic Hardship**

- After it is determined that a student's financial situation has changed due to an unforeseen and temporary event beyond the student's control then the student may apply for Economic Hardship Employment.
- To qualify an F-1 student must be in status for one academic year; and enrolled full-time
- Employment will not interfere with carrying a full course of study
- Student applies via SEVIS with assist from ISS and documentation is submitted to USCIS for an approval.
- If approval student receives and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS.

**6. Off-campus: J-1 Students**

- Can be authorized by the Responsible Officer who issued the DS-2019, if the student meets one of these criteria:
  - If employment is pursuant to terms of scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship
  - If employment is needed due to serious, urgent, unforeseen economic circumstances

**7. Academic Training**

- Can be authorized for up to 18 months (36 for Ph.D.) by the Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer who issued the DS-2019 following completion of degree.
- The student must be full-time, "in status," and otherwise eligible. See ISS staff for further directions Immigration.

# Chapter 6: Legal Rights and Responsibilities

## Rights & Responsibilities

International students need to understand their rights and responsibilities both as students and as member of Stillwater community. Refer to OSU's student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Students Behavior: <http://www.okstate.edu/ucs/SCEA/>

As an international student, you are expected to uphold federal, state, and city laws as well as University rules just like any other student at OSU. Any criminal offence or other serious legal problem could jeopardize your status at the university and /or with USCIS.

There are times when you may need to seek advice before you make a decision on legal matters. The International Students and Scholars Office can help you find proper legal assistance.

The Student Government Association (SGA) has a part-time attorney to advise OSU students free of charge. The SGA attorney can give advice, but cannot represent a student in court. Call the Student Government Association, 744-6500 or go to 211 Student Union to make an appointment.

If you need to contact a private lawyer in Stillwater, look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Attorneys".

Although everyone assumes that your stay in the United States will be free from legal entanglements, you should be aware of certain laws or policies which may be different from those in your home country.

## Drinking

Consuming beer or other alcoholic beverages is prohibited on campus, including in University housing. The legal age for the purchase and consumption of beer or any alcoholic beverage in Oklahoma is 21.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious crime and offenders can be jailed for such an offense. Do not drive if you have been drinking alcoholic beverages.

Never have an open container of any alcoholic beverage in your car. If you must transport a container that has been opened, make sure the liquor is placed in the trunk of the car. Anytime you operate a vehicle and you are determined legally intoxicated by a police officer, you may be charged, fined, and/or taken to jail.



## Illegal Drugs

The possession, use of, and/or attempt to sell illegal drugs such as marijuana ("pot"), PCP, cocaine, or any narcotics are strictly prohibited. Being convicted of drug crimes results in imprisonment and may be cause for deportation when the sentence (time served in prison) is completed.

## **Smoking**

Smoking (and often other tobacco use such as chewing) is prohibited in a number of public areas, including the OSU campus, libraries, elevators, buses, planes, restaurants, churches, and most doctors' offices. In the United States one must be 18 years or older to purchase and/or use tobacco products.

## **Disturbance**

Disturbing the peace of a town, neighborhood, or family by loud or unusual noise, or uses of abusive or profane language, or threats to fight, quarrel or shooting of firearms can result in an arrest by a police officer. If a person uses profane, violent, abusive, or insulting language toward or about another person, he or she can be found guilty of disturbing the peace and can be fined or imprisoned upon conviction.

## **Assault and Battery**

Assault is an attempt to inflict bodily injury upon someone and is a basis for civil action and criminal prosecution. Battery is the intentional touching of an individual, which causes physical injury. It is considered a criminal offense.

## **Guns and other Weapons**

Weapons are not allowed on campus. Possession of a weapon off-campus must comply with state laws.

## **Indecent Exposure**

A person who exposes or assists anyone else in exposing his or her private parts in public, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, will be punished by a fine or imprisonment.

## **Dating and Harassment**

Persons from different cultures can easily misunderstand the thoughts and gestures of another person, especially in a dating (male-female) relationship. Please keep this in mind when you interpret someone else's actions. For example, although American women may appear friendly, very few develop a relationship with a man quickly. If a man makes any kind of advance too early, his actions can result in a criminal charges being filed. In Oklahoma, the age of consent for sexual activity is 18. Being involved in consent sexual activity with a minor (someone that is below the age of 18) is statutory rape. However, regardless of age, if a woman feels obliged to respond sexually against her will, she may believe she was threatened with rape and can make a legal complaint against the person initiating the threat. Do not assume anything.

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination and is prohibited by law. For additional information on sexual harassment, refer to the sexual harassment brochure. It is essential that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at OSU.

## **Court System**

In Stillwater, the District Court is responsible for most of the civil and criminal proceedings for Payne County. However, the Small Claims court can be used for civil matters involving claims up to \$2,500 or a criminal offense that is a misdemeanor. If you must appear in court, but are uncomfortable speaking English, you may wish to take a native English speaking friend with you to court. It is important to arrive on time. The District Court and Small Claims Court are both located in the Payne County Courthouse at 6th and Duncan Streets.

*For more detailed information on legal rights and public safety, please visit the OSU Police Department at:*

Address: 1<sup>st</sup> floor USDA, Stillwater, OK 74078

Phone: (405) 744-6523

Website: <http://www.osupd.okstate.edu>



# Chapter 7: Housing

## On-Campus Housing

### Students without dependents

The Residential Life Office is located in Iba Hall. Please contact the personnel in that office for information and room reservations. Freshman students under 21 years of age are required to live in the residence halls. To request an exception to this policy, please find the form required at <http://reslife.okstate.edu>.

### Married Students, Graduate Students or Single Parents with Children

Students, who are accompanied by their families, may apply to live in the University Apartments. The types of apartments vary; as do the rents. Utilities are included in the rent payment. Contracts are for one year and tenants must renew their contracts 4 to 6 weeks before the end of the semester. To be eligible for University Apartments, at least one spouse must be a full-time student during the academic year. To apply for an apartment, file an application with a deposit at the University Apartments office in Iba Hall. The applicant's name is placed on a waiting list until an apartment is available. It is wise to apply early, as space may be limited. The first month's rent is due when the apartment is assigned to the tenant. University policy maintains that persons of the opposite sex may not share the same apartment unless they are married. Thus, University Apartments personnel will ask to see your marriage certificate if your spouse lives with you. If you did not have a civil ceremony, a letter from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country recognizing the marriage may be required.

For further information regarding on-campus housing: [www.reslife.okstate.edu/](http://www.reslife.okstate.edu/)

### Signing a Student Housing Contract

In order to live in a residence hall, students are required to apply online at [www.reslife.okstate.edu](http://www.reslife.okstate.edu) and sign a contract. A \$50 application fee and a \$150 deposit can be paid by credit card online. Please read the contract and accompanying materials very carefully. Since the contract is a legally binding document, it contains the terms and conditions of which you are expected to honor. Please note that the contract is for the entire academic year, fall and spring semesters. Late arrivals are obligated to occupy a residential hall room till the following May unless you withdraw from the university. For more information pertaining to housing please refer to the Housing and Residential Life Handbook available online at: <http://www.reslife.okstate.edu/policies/>. You can apply for a payment plan at the bursar's office (113 Student Union) if you would like to pay the same amount each month during a semester.

Please remember that room and board payments do not include the "break" periods (when classes are not in session).

### Housing and Residential Life

100 Iba Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
Phone: (405) 744-5592  
Email: [reslife@okstate.edu](mailto:reslife@okstate.edu)

### Continuous Housing During University Vacation ("Breaks")

Some housing will be open during the fall, winter, and spring university breaks.

## Food Service in the Residence Halls

If you are a freshman, you are required to purchase meal plans worth \$1000. All other students, excluding freshmen, interested in purchasing contract meal plans may buy any amount between \$850 and \$2000. Non-contract meal plans are also available as low as \$1000. The plan you choose allows you that amount in dollars of meals each semester when classes are in session. All plans include service on weekends, excluding Sunday evening. Upper classmen (sophomore and above) also have the option to take the "room only" plan, no food service. For more details contact the University Dining Services (212 Student Union) or check their website at: [www.dining.okstate.edu](http://www.dining.okstate.edu). Students living in residence halls who require special diets for specific medical needs such as diabetes, ulcers, and liver problems should contact a dietician in the Student Health Center.

## Year Round Housing

OSU offers housing in some dorms 12 months a year. The residential halls that are open year round vary from year to year, so students should check with Residential Life for a complete list. Single graduate students, upper classmen, and students at least 21 years of age may live in University Apartments depending on availability. Some University Apartments are made available to single graduate students or undergraduates who are juniors or seniors. Families have first preference.

## Off-Campus Housing

Finding suitable housing off-campus may be frustrating and time consuming. It is important to look at several rental properties within your price range before making a decision. The Off-Campus Student Association (OCSA), 211 Student Union, publishes an annual Off-Campus Housing Guide which compares apartment sizes, cost, amount of security deposits, whether or not utilities (gas, water, electricity) are paid for by renter or landlord, whether or not furniture is provided, etc. You may also look for rental housing by reading the "Want-Ads" in the local newspaper.

You can make an appointment by telephone to see the properties that are of interest to you. When you inspect the property, take note of any repairs that need to be made and ask to see a copy of the lease you will be expected to sign. Take photographs of the damaged areas in the apartments and date them. Keep them in your file till the lease ended and you finally vacate the apartment. (Most leasing agencies will provide a "damages" sheet, but if they do not, one is available through OCSA).

Most landlords will expect you to sign a lease, a written contractual agreement between you and the landlord. The lease specifies what the landlord will do and what the renter will do. It is essential that you understand the lease before you sign it. A lease protects you from having your rent increased for the term of the lease, and provides an opportunity for you and the landlord to have written advanced agreements about repairs, etc. Take a copy with you to read carefully. Safely keep all important documents, your signed lease, photographs, and a checklist of the apartment in your file. (The SGA attorney is also available by appointment if students feel they need legal counsel).

When you inspect a rental property notice or inquire about:

- What (if any) utility payments are included in the rental fee?
- How much will the security deposit be?
- Use the Housing Condition checklist (from OCSA) to evaluate the condition of the property.
- Note the location with respect to stores, Laundromats, etc.
- If you will be paying your own heating or cooling cost, try to find out what the actual costs were for these utilities last year. If the thermostat is not located in your property, find out where it is located and who will monitor it.
- Check appliances (stove, refrigerator, and air conditioner) to make sure they are clean and working.
- Find out who will be responsible for repairs to the property and appliances and who will maintain the grounds. (Make sure this is written in the lease).

Once you have decided on the property you want to rent, **READ THE LEASE CAREFULLY** and do not hesitate to question anything you do not understand or agree with. If a potential landlord tells you that the lease is “just a form,” or that something won’t “apply to you,” **BEWARE!** That is a sign of potential problems ahead. (Unless alternations are made to the lease and both the renter and the landlord initial beside it, the requirements of the lease apply to you. Verbal contracts are not legally binding. Get absolutely everything in writing, signed by all participants, dated, and make sure everyone involved has a copy.) Once you sign the lease, it is a binding legal contract. If you (or the landlord) violate it, serious disagreements can arise which might have to be resolved in a court of law at considerable cost to you. (Check your lease—there may be a section that states you will be responsible for the court fees).

If you have any doubts or questions about a lease you are almost ready to sign, bring it to the Renter’s Advisory Council, 211 Student Union, and ask for advice (405-744-7283).

In addition to the Apartment Comparison Sheet, the OCSA has other printed information sheets, which will be extremely useful to you. Take the time to stop in that office to obtain information and advice before you decide to rent off-campus housing.



## Chapter 8: Financial Affairs

### Payments and Funds

#### Transfer of Funds

The Bursar's Office will provide one official letter (with the University seal), per semester to any student requesting written verification of tuition and fees which may be required to expedite receipt of money exchanged or scholarship funds from your home country/sponsor. Funds for academic fees and maintenance may be sent and deposited in your name at:

OSU Bursar's Office  
113 Student Union  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74078

It is important that you request funds well before they will be needed in the United States.

#### Payment of Tuition and Fees

The Billing Receivable System (BRS) produces a monthly statement that itemizes all charges for the month with payment being due by the 15th of each month. Students' accounts must be paid in full before they are eligible to enroll for subsequent semesters, or to receive any student record from the University.

If you are unable to make full payment by the deadline, you will be assessed a finance charge of 1.5% monthly. Statements for unpaid charges will be emailed to a student's Oklahoma State University email account.

Payments made with international drafts are accepted in Bursar Accounting located in 113 Student Union. Payments may be made by mailing or delivering a check to the Bursar's Office (address above). Credit Cards (VISA & MasterCard) are also accepted by phone or in person. Teller hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students may also wish to fill out an Payment Option Plan (POP) in which your Bursar Bill is automatically billed each month. To find out more about setting up a POP you can visit the Bursar's website at:

<http://bursar.okstate.edu>

## **Banking Services**

### **Short-Term Emergency Loans**

Short-term emergency loans up to \$300, less a \$10.00 service charge, are available for educationally related expenses such as off-campus rent, utilities, books, etc. To be eligible, you must be enrolled at least halftime at OSU and must be making satisfactory academic progress.

Loans must be repaid on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the following month or a penalty of 1.5% per month will be charged. The Office of Student Financial Aid located in 119 Student Union, supplies applications for short-term emergency loans. Please note that all loans are NOT guaranteed.

### **Banking Services and Money**

There are several banking institutions in Stillwater. Banks offer interest-bearing accounts and non-interest bearing checking accounts. Savings and Loan Associations offer interest-bearing savings accounts as well as interest-bearing checking accounts. Check with the banking institution you choose for their hours of operation. Most institutions offer ATM machines that are available 24 hours a day. Although banking institutions vary in the type and quality of service, most offer services commonly needed by international students such as checking accounts, savings accounts, international drafts, and travelers' checks.

### **Checking and Savings Accounts**

There are many types of checking and savings accounts in U.S. banks and different institutions that offer different services. When opening an account, make sure you understand the terms and services of the account. Ask the bank about penalties and service charges before you agree to place your money in any account.

It is advisable to keep money for daily living expenses -- food, and utilities in a checking account. Extra money you bring with you for school expenses should be deposited in a savings account and later transferred to a checking account when needed. Do not keep large amounts of money with you or in your room.

### **Checking Account**

Money is deposited in a checking account for convenience and safety; as it is more prudent to pay for large purchases with a check than with cash. Paying by check eliminates the need to carry large amounts of cash and a canceled check is a valid receipt that payment was made. A small service fee may be required for a checking account. Checks can be cashed at banks, at the Student Union Hub (on the first floor of the Student Union) and at some grocery stores.

To open a checking account, you must provide the bank with your name, local address, and immigration documentation such as your I-94 or Visa depending on the institution. You will also be asked to present one form of identification such as your passport, state driver's license, or valid OSU ID Card. The bank keeps your signature on file to verify signatures on checks written against your account. When you open an account, you will receive a supply of temporary checks until personalized checks are printed for you.

### **Savings Account**

If you wish to save money, you may deposit it in a savings account where it will earn interest. The staff at the bank can advise you about several ways to save money. For example, deposits can be mailed and funds transferred between a checking and savings account. Checks written in another country's bank usually take 12 to 28 days to actually be deposited in your U.S. account. Plan for this time lapse so that you will not encounter difficulties while waiting for your money to arrive. See the yellow pages in the telephone directory for a listing of banks.

## **ATM/Debit Cards**

In order to make it easier to obtain money from your bank account, your bank will probably offer you the choice of using an ATM or Debit card.

ATM stands for Automated Teller Machine. These machines are located all over Stillwater and in other cities and states as well. They are useful because they enable you to get cash out quickly and are open 24 hours a day. If you use an ATM card, you will be given or asked to choose a PIN (Personal Identification Number) which is a security measure to ensure that if you lose your card others cannot take money out of your account. If you are allowed to choose this number, select one which would not be easy to guess but one that is easy for you to remember. Also, keep in mind that some banks charge a fee for using an ATM.

Consult your bank to determine when and where you will be charged a fee.

Also, be careful about keeping your PIN number secure by not allowing strangers to observe you when you enter your PIN number into the ATM, and use ATM's only in places and at times when the environment around you feels safe.

## **Banking Tips**

Maintain accurate and prompt records of deposits and payments so you will have an up-to-date account of your checking balance. If your checkbook does not balance, the customer service clerk at the bank will assist you.

- Treat your checks as you would cash. Keep them as secure as possible.
- Don't make changes on the face of a check issued to you or accept a check that appears altered. The bank may refuse to cash such checks.
- Avoid carrying checks made out to "cash" and never sign personal checks until you have filled in the amount and the payee. If the check is lost or stolen, there is no control over who can cash it.

## **Special Types of Checks**

- International Drafts: If you need to send money in your home currency you must order it in advance. The process takes about three days and you must pay a service charge at the time of ordering.
- Chase Manhattan Draft: This draft is offered in U.S.dollars only. The service charge is slightly less than the international draft.
- American Express Money Order: A money order is sold only in U.S. dollars.
- Cashier's Check: A cashier's check can be used when a regular check is either not available or not appropriate, or when funds must be guaranteed.  
The individual receiving the check must have a bank account in order to cash the check at a bank.
- Travelers' Check: Travelers' checks are available from bank tellers, usually for a service charge depending on the institution. It is possible to order travelers' checks in standard currencies other than the dollar (yen, pound, franc, mark). Your institution will be able to tell you the service charge for such transactions.
- Sending Money by Mail: The safest way to send money by mail is by personal check, bank draft, or money order purchased for a small fee at the post office or bank.
- Transfer of Funds: If you have a check or bank draft payable to Oklahoma State University, take it to the Bursar's Office in 113 Student Union where an account will be setup for you and the funds deposited in your account.

If the check is not drawn on a U.S. bank and has no routing numbers, it must be sent for collection. This may take three to four weeks. If you have outstanding debts at the university, you may be able to obtain a deferment until the collection process is complete by signing an agreement to pay all your obligations before withdrawing the funds. No advance of funds is permitted while the draft is in the collection process.

- **Get It in Writing:** In the United States, a written record, rather than a verbal agreement, is almost always required as documentation of any transaction. It is very important to keep receipts, canceled checks, bank statements, and written records as a confirmation that specific actions were taken or agreed upon. If there has been a misunderstanding, a breakdown in communication, or if you believe certain services for which you paid have not been provided, a written document can help clarify and correct the problem.

- **Bogus Or Bad Checks:** A bogus or bad check is one written without sufficient funds in the bank to cover it. Writing a check without sufficient funds is a criminal offense and many stores take strong action when a check is returned to them. The legal penalty for writing a bogus check can be a fine and/or imprisonment in the county jail. If the check is over \$50, or if several smaller checks are written in a series, the offense is considered a felony and punishment may be a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for no more than 10 years. When a business receives a bogus check, the following procedures are set in motion:

1. The merchant notifies the initiator of the bogus check, usually charging a fee that varies upon the merchant. In addition, the bank charges a fee for a service charge to return the check.
2. If after several attempts the merchant receives no payment, he or she may refer the problem to the Bogus Check Program of the District Attorney's Office.
3. The District Attorney's Office notifies the initiator of the check in writing that if the face amount of the check plus court costs for a misdemeanor (usually around \$45 -\$50) are paid within 15 days, no criminal charges will be filed.
4. If there is no response to the District Attorney's letter, criminal charges are filed.

Both merchants and the District Attorney's Office attempt to resolve the problem of a bogus check without resorting to filing criminal charges. If you write a bad check, either unintentionally or intentionally, it is important to take care of the matter immediately.

## **Income Tax**

In general, anyone who works must pay U.S. Federal and State income tax. The employer will withhold a percent of your earnings and send it to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and to the State. If the amount withheld for taxes is more than the amount you are required to pay for the year, you are entitled to a refund. By the end of January, you will receive a summary statement of your earnings and the taxes withheld for the preceding period from January —December.

Whether or not you are entitled to a refund of your state and federal taxes, you must file (submit) an income tax return form. The Office of International Students and Scholars (ISS) can help you with this. We have tax preparation software for the federal tax return. A volunteer presents weekly workshops from February through April 15 on how to use the software and how to prepare the Oklahoma tax return. The deadline for submitting tax forms is April 15.

## **Social Security Numbers**

Everyone who works must obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) including international students and scholars. However, students in F-1 status must now show proof of employment.

When you find a job on campus, your employer must complete a letter with specific information about the job you have been offered. The letter must be printed on the Department's letterhead with an original signature. The letter must then be brought to the ISS office for another original signature by a Designated School Official. This letter, along with your passport, I-94 and I-20 must be taken to the Social Security Administration office.

International students in J-1 status must obtain a letter from the sponsor stating that the student has permission to work. If you are an exchange student and OSU is your sponsor, see an ARO in 250 Student Union.

F-2 dependents are not eligible for a social security number because they are never permitted to work in the U.S. J-2 dependents may apply for a social security number only if they have employment authorization from USCIS and an EAD card (Employment Authorization Document) in hand.

Banks, credit card companies, driver's license offices, and others often use social security numbers for their identification numbers. If a bank or credit card company requests a social security number, but you, as an international student, are not eligible for one, the institution (bank or company) is supposed to assign you a customer number. Some institutions will accept the Campus Wide Identification Number (CWID) which OSU has assigned to you.

OSU's bus service can take you to the Social Security Administration office. Check the bus schedule for the most update information regarding bus lines and times.



## Chapter 9: Telecommunications

### Phones and Faxes

#### Telephone

The location of your residence determines what you must do to begin and maintain local telephone service.

**Off Campus** If you live in off-campus housing, and wish to connect a land telephone line, you need to arrange for local telephone service with telecommunications company. First, buy a telephone from a shop such as Wal-Mart, Radio Shack, or Ace Hardware.

Then, place your order to have it connected by contacting a service provider:

- ATT: Call 1-800-464-7928 or go online to [www.att.com](http://www.att.com)
- Chickasaw Telecommunications: Call 405-533-2111
- Suddenlink: Call 405-377-7785

When you call, be ready to provide the following information:

- 1- Passport number and expiration date.
- 2- Permanent home-country address.
- 3 -Telephone number of any relatives or friends in the United States.
- 4 -Social Security number, if you have one or student identification number.
- 5 -Stillwater address.
- 6 -Major Field of study.
- 7 -Academic advisor at OSU.
- 8 -Long distance carrier.

There is an installation charge and a deposit is required if you have never had telephone service in Stillwater. You will be charged a monthly rate, which includes unlimited local calls.

**On Campus** If you live in university housing, a telephone line will already be installed in your room or apartment, but you will need to have it activated.

Contact OSU Telecommunications Services (Telephone Customer Services),  
113 Math & Sciences Building, 744-3460.

The monthly charge for local phone service will be included in your housing costs, but you will need to make arrangements for long distance to other U.S. area codes or for International service. International service is available only to countries that have direct dial capabilities and requires a deposit of \$200.

**Long Distance Service** All long distance calls are handled by long-distance companies. You may wish to employ one of the following companies for your long distance needs:

- Action Telecommunications 1-800-588-2222
- AT&T 1-800-222-0300
- US Sprint Dial One Service 1-800-877-4646
- Westel, Inc. 1-800-580-5585

In order to determine which company best serves your needs, call them to learn about their services.

International students need to consider

1. Whether the company offers international service,
2. Cost,
3. Billing procedures,
4. Operator services,
5. Fee for installation or for changing companies, and
6. The amount of deposit.

The cost of long distance calls varies with the company you use, the area you are calling, the time of day, and day of the week when a call is placed. Usually the least expensive time to call long distance is on the weekend and on weekdays after midnight or before 7:00 a.m. All numbers with an 800 or an 888 prefix are toll-free.

**Mobile Phones** It is becoming increasingly popular for students to forego land line telephones and purchase mobile phone plans, or for students to have a mobile phone in addition to their land lines. There are several different stores from which you can purchase mobile phones and mobile phone contracts in Stillwater. Some options are:

Store	Phone Number
AT & T	405-372-9797
Radioshack	405-377-6444
US Cellular	405-533-1800
T-Mobile	405-372-4033
Verizon	405-377-1212

If you plan on making international phone calls on your mobile phone, make sure you ask the provider you choose for different international calling plan options. Making international calls without selecting a program for such calls can result in large bills that you may not be expecting.

## Telegrams and Cablegrams

You may send telegrams and cables by calling Western Union at their toll free number, 1-800-325-6000. A night letter is less expensive than a telegram, but it usually arrives 24 hours later than a telegram. For information on other telegraph services, contact the Western Union Telegraph Agent: Consumers, IGA Inc, 909 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Stillwater, OK 74074, Telephone: 405-372-2511.

## **FAX Messages**

You may send and receive FAX messages from several places in Stillwater and on campus.

B&C Office Supply  
706 S. Main St  
Phone: 372-3882  
FAX: (405) 372-3893

Cowboy Copy Center  
514 S. Washington  
Phone: 372-8099  
FAX: (405) 372-8250

FedEx Kinkos  
307 N Perkins Road  
Phone: 743-0806  
FAX: (405) 743-4459

International Students & Scholars  
250 Student Union  
Phone: 744-5459  
FAX: (405) 744-8120

Postal Pack & Ship  
601 S. Washington  
Phone: 743-4800  
FAX: (405) 743-4802

Different FAX operators charge different prices for sending the same message. Each of these companies charge for the fax plus the telephone call for messages sent to international locations.

ISS can also send faxes at a cost of \$1.00/page within the USA and \$2.00/page outside of the USA. Some International fax rates may vary dependent upon the country.

## Important Contact Numbers

Contact	Phone
Ambulance	405-372-4171
Bursar's Office	405-744-5993
College of Agricultural Sciences	405-744-5395
College of Arts and Sciences	405-744-5663
College of Business Administration	405-744-5064
College of Education	405-744-9465
College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology	405-744-5185
College of Human Environmental Science	405-744-5053
Colvin Recreational Center	405-744-5510
English Language Institute	405-744-7519
International Students & Scholars Office	405-744-5459
International Teaching Assistantship Test	405-744-6229
Lost & Found	405-744-6527
OSU Campus Directory	405-744-5000
OSU Career Services	405-744-5253
OSU Fire Department	405-744-7241
OSU Information Technology (Help Desk)	405-744-4357
OSU Library	405-744-9729
OSU Police Department	405-744-6523
OSU Residence Halls	405-744-5592
OSU Health Center	405-744-7665
OSU University Apartments	405-744-5353
OSU Writing Center	405-744-6671

# Chapter 10: Mailing and Shipping

## Postal Services

### United States Postal Service

The United States is divided into postal zones designated by a Zoning Improvement Plan, ZIP codes. Stillwater has five ZIP codes: 74077 for OSU, residence halls, 74078 for the remainder of OSU, 74074 and 74075 for off campus, and 74076 for post office boxes. ZIP codes should be used as part of your return address whenever you send letters or packages. Your correspondents should include the ZIP code in your address whenever they write you.

The main post office is located downtown at 809 South Lewis Street. If you change addresses often, you may want to rent a post office box to receive your mail at the main post office. Mail is delivered off-campus once each day, except Sunday and legal holidays. .

Important letters and packages, for which you wish a record of delivery, should be sent by “certified mail” in the United States and by “registered mail” outside the U.S. Mail with a value (currency, jewelry, etc.) sent within the U.S. should also be registered. For a small additional fee at the time of mailing, you can request a “return receipt,” a return postcard to notify you that the piece has reached its destination. For further details, contact the main post office.

Rates for mailing packages within the United States are determined by the weight of the package and the distance it is sent. The package must not be larger than 79 inches, length and girth (measurement around the width) combined. As maximum weight varies from country to country, check with the post office before you ship a package outside the U.S. No letters or messages may be included in such a package; however, a letter with appropriate postage affixed may be attached to the outside.

1. It is wise to get postal information before sending anything home. You may find that tariffs are prohibitive or postage costs so great that the purchase may not be worth it. Books may be sent for lower rates than other packages. The package must be clearly marked “books” and may contain no messages.
2. A package mailed to a U.S. address may be insured against loss for a small additional fee. Not all packages mailed to another country are insurable. Check with postal authorities.
3. Packages in plain (no printing on outside), sturdy boxes, need not be wrapped in paper. All packages must be sealed with sealing tape or strapping tape. Do not use string, masking tape, or “scotch” tape.
4. When mailing packages overseas, be sure to arrive at the post office before 3p.m. to allow ample time to complete various documents.
5. When you are ready to send your household goods, automobiles, etc., to your home country at the end of your stay, you may wish to get in touch with one of several private shipping agents. The ISS Office or your own embassy has the pertinent information and addresses.

## **United Parcel Service (UPS)**

UPS is a package delivery company which delivers parcels to every state in the United States. Each package is automatically insured for \$100.00. Deliveries made by surface transportation are usually made within 3 to 6 days, depending on distance. Air transportation of parcels, either next day service or second day service, is also available, though it is more expensive. There is a UPS Office located in 060 Student Union. The hours are: Monday – Friday: 8am to 8pm and Saturday: 10am to 2pm. Their contact information is 405-372-2346 and [print6556@theupsstore.com](mailto:print6556@theupsstore.com). There is another UPS location in Stillwater at 3910 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Their phone number is 405-624-8400.

## **FedEx Kinko's**

FedEx is a package delivery company which delivers parcels to every stay in the United and States and most countries abroad. The FedEx Kinko's office is located at 307 North Perkins Road in Stillwater. For more information regarding their services, call (405) 743-0806.

## **FedEx in the Student Union**

FedEx is available in 060 Student Union. This location offers a complete range of printing and copying solutions as well as packaging and shipping services. The Student Union location is open Monday through Friday, 8am to 6pm.

# Chapter 11: US Customs and Culture

## Social Relations and Customs in the U.S.A

The United States is a young country. Many aspects of its social life are still changing, including religious beliefs, local customs, moral values, and supporting technology. Variety and diversity characterize the geographical area as well as its peoples and their lifestyles.

It would be inaccurate to form an opinion of the United States by contact with just a few of its citizens, since the people are so varied in their backgrounds.

However, these diverse peoples are united by a feeling of shared nationality, a pride in country and its founding institutions, and a common conviction in democratic process revealed in its founding documents. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America, which emphasize freedom, equality, and the supreme dignity of each individual.

Some U.S. customs may seem mystifying at best, absolutely frustrating at worst.

To help you avoid difficulties, possible embarrassment, misunderstanding, or miscommunication, some customs and behaviors are listed which you might encounter. Always remember to take nothing for granted and do not assume that every U.S. national will respond exactly as described.

**Clothing:** Dress is relatively informal in the United States and you will see many different styles of attire on campus and at social events. "Informal" or "casual" indicated on an invitation usually means that you may wear the same type of clothing you wear to class: jeans or slacks and a sport shirt for men, a blouse or sweater and skirt, slacks or jeans for women. You may ask your hostess what to wear if the invitation does not specify. Your national dress is usually appropriate for most social occasions.

**Conversation:** Casual conversation between U.S. nationals can be confusing.

For example, "How are you?" is not primarily an inquiry about your health, but rather a greeting such as "Good Morning," or "Hello." In response, you may simply answer, "Fine, thank you. How are you?" Phrases used when departing can be equally confusing. "See you later," "Drop by sometime," or "Let's get together sometime" are often meant as friendly good-byes, rather than actual invitations.

Upon first meeting, Americans may easily share information that might seem quite personal to you; however, some topics such as age and salary are usually avoided.

**Dating:** Dating customs vary across the United States and depend greatly on the individuals involved. A date may be as formal as an invitation to a dance, dinner, or movie, or as informal as a spontaneous offer for coffee, a drink at a bar, or a tennis game. Men still initiate most date invitations, but sometimes a woman will ask a man. Although the man usually pays for the expense of the date, many women now pay their own expenses. The custom of sharing expenses is called "Dutch treat." If the woman initiates the date, she typically pays the expenses.

In the United States, students often begin dating in early adolescence.

Although dating has become a common form of social activity in high school and college, it is not necessarily a serious matter. You may find that some individuals date many persons without commitment to anyone, while some maintain an exclusive relationship. And you may find some unmarried couples who live together. Some international students might believe that one or two dates establish a commitment, but this is seldom true for Americans. Even after several dates, no emotional attachment may be felt and no shared expectation for a common future may develop. Some couples go out together repeatedly on a "platonic" basis, that is, just as friends.

In recent years, women in the United States have gained more equal stature in social relationships. Women can now have various types of relationships with different men, including friendships, which do not include romance or physical intimacy. The amount of commitment in any type of relationship depends on the mutual consent of the individuals involved. Women here expect honesty in a relationship, and they usually date several men before considering a long-term commitment or marriage.

The amount of physical contact between men and women usually depends on the amount of affection and trust they have developed for each other. Sexual attitudes, however, are in a state of change. This does not mean that U.S. women or men are promiscuous. Generally, a woman needs time to develop affectionate feelings towards a man, and if pressured to become too intimate too soon, may become offended, distant, and angry. If you have questions about dating customs in the U.S., do not hesitate to ask a U.S. acquaintance.

International students should be aware that U.S. movies and TV programs do not represent “typical” social attitudes and behaviors of U.S. citizens. To understand accepted attitudes and behaviors, the international student is advised to observe people in the community objectively and to validate or refute these observations by talking with U.S. friends.

**Friends:** Different cultures value different forms of friendship and cultivate them in distinctive ways. The way people in the United States make and keep friendships can be perplexing for international students.

While a U.S. national may seem warm and friendly at first meeting, this does not mean an ongoing friendship is intended or a lasting relationship will result. Friendly greeting should not always be interpreted as a desire to get to know you better or even as a wish to see you again.

Though the act of friendship may not be intended to extend beyond that one meeting, the friendliness is still meant to be sincere at the moment.

With friendships based on spontaneous feeling, rather than duty, tradition, or caste, persons in the U.S. move in and out of social groups. These groups often form around common interests such as leisure activities, schoolwork, employment, or places of residence.

As in most countries, close friendships grow from repeated interactions over time as individuals identify similar interests and projects, handle disagreements constructively, and share life experiences.

**Informality:** Most people in the United States interact informally, even with strangers and new acquaintances. People of all ages and levels of responsibility often treat each other with ease and friendliness. The lack of deference should not be interpreted as a lack of respect; rather, it is a manifestation of the ideal of equality, and individual independence, which is pervasive in the United States.

The use of first names (that is, given names) is a common practice, even on first meetings. As a general rule, it is appropriate to use first names with anyone your own age or younger. A person older or higher in status, who would normally be addressed in a formal manner (using “Mr.,” “Ms.,” or “Mrs.”) may invite you to use his or her first name; it is then permissible, but not necessary to do so.

**Invitations:** During your stay, you may be invited to a dinner, to an informal party at the home of a faculty member, host family, fellow student, or to some other kind of social occasion. The invitation may be either written or verbal. If verbal, you may accept or decline the invitation at the time that you receive it, or you may tell the person you will telephone later with your response. If the invitation is written or printed (as it is for weddings, teas, and other formal occasions), you are expected to reply by mail or telephone. Most written invitations will have “please reply” in the lower corner of the invitation, or will request an answer by means of the notation “R.S.V.P” (an abbreviation of a French expression meaning ‘please respond’). It is impolite not to respond to indicate your intention to accept or decline.

Do not accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. If you change plans because of illness or unavoidable problems, be sure to tell your host as soon as possible. When you accept an invitation, be certain you understand where you are going and how to get there.

**Meals:** If you are invited for a meal and there are foods you do not eat, inform your host when you accept the invitation. This will help the host plan food and drink for everyone to enjoy together. If you must refuse something after it is prepared, do so politely.

People in the United States generally eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For most, the biggest meal is the evening dinner. "Supper" and "dinner" generally refer to the same fill evening meal. Supper is not just a snack. This meal is usually between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., although dinner parties are often later.

**Special Party Customs:** "Bring a date or friend" means that you may bring someone with you as your guest without telling your host. If you would like to bring a date or friend and the invitation does not mention this, be sure to ask the host if it is acceptable. "BYOL" or "BYOB" on an invitation means that you are expected to bring your own liquor/beer if you wish to drink an alcoholic beverage. Typically, the host will provide soft drinks, and the guests will bring "hard" drinks (liquor) if they desire. In the United States, it is not necessary for a guest to take a gift to the host, although it is appreciated. Flowers, candy, or a souvenir from your home country are appropriate.

**Promptness:** It is very important in this culture to be on time. Public performances and ceremonies (weddings, funerals, church services, and the like) start promptly at the stated time. You should arrive at these functions five or ten minutes early.

When invited to lunch or dinner, you should arrive at the pre-arranged time, neither earlier nor later. You usually are expected to stay at least an hour after the conclusion of the meal for conversation and pleasantries. An evening party typically lasts a total of two or three hours. This is not a rigid practice, however, and if your host urges you to stay longer and you are having a good time, then stay! At a large cocktail party, a large tea, or an "open house" where an interval of time is stated (for instance: "from 3 to 5 p.m." or "from 5 to 7 p.m."), it is acceptable to arrive anytime between the stated hours. One should leave within 30 minutes of the designated departure time, however.

You must be on time for all appointments with professors, doctors, and other professional persons. Sometimes emergencies may delay these professionals for as long as an hour and you may have to wait. If the delay creates a hardship for you, you may reschedule your appointment.

**Telephoning:** Except in emergencies, it is most polite to telephone after 9:00 a.m. and before 9:30 p.m.

**Expressing Gratitude:** A telephone call or short letter of thanks is appropriate after dinner engagements and especially after staying overnight with a host family or friends. Often only a word of appreciation as you leave is enough. You can determine which option is most appropriate by how well you know your host or hostess. A more formal relationship with your host makes written thanks more appropriate.

**Gratuity/Tipping:** Service charges or gratuities are rarely added to the bill in American hotels or restaurants, but are often expected and needed by the employees. Here are some general rules:

1. Do not tip anyone in a cafeteria or motel, or in any place where you provide your own service. You do not tip on buses or airplanes.
2. In a restaurant, the tip for the waiter or waitress is usually 15% of the total bill. In a hotel, the bellboy who takes you to your room usually gets \$1.00, plus \$0.50 for each extra suitcase.
3. Groups of 6 or more usually will have 15% gratuity mandatory as part of the bill.

## **Gestures in the United States**

A firm handshake, accompanied by direct eye contact, is the standard greeting in the United States. Occasionally, among very good friends who have not seen each other for long intervals, women may briefly hug other women, and men may quickly kiss the cheek of a woman. Males rarely hug one another, however. Occasionally, men may shake hand with the left hands either covering the handshake or lightly gripping the forearm.

Direct eye contact in both social and business situations is very important. Not doing so implies boredom or disinterest.

Americans generally respect queues and will form lines in an orderly fashion. To shove one's way into such a line will probably generate both anger and verbal complaints.

Waving "hello" or "goodbye" is done by extending the arm, palm facing down and waving the hand up and down at the wrist joint. Another variation is to raise the arm, palm outward, and move the whole arm and hand back and forth like an upside down pendulum. This may be important to know because in many countries this is a signal for "no."

There are two well-known insulting gestures in the United States. Both are recognized in all part of America. They are:

- The middle finger thrust
- The forearm jerk

Many Americans become uncomfortable with periods of silence. Therefore, in business or social situations, if a gap occurs they will quickly try to fill in with conversation.

Winking in America can signal diverse messages: flirtation, friendliness, amusement, or to signal "I am just kidding."

When driving, automobiles are equipped with flashing lights as turning signals. If these are not operating, or if cyclists wish to signal for a turn, the proper procedure is as follows: extending the left arm straight out of the driver's window means "I plan to turn to left," but if the arm bent upward it signals as "I plan to turn to right."

Beckoning can be done by either raising the index finger or repeatedly curling it in and out, or by raising the hand (palm facing inward) and wagging the fingers back toward the body. Either is acceptable.

To call a waiter, just raise one hand to head level or above. To signal that you want the check, make a writing motion with two hands (one hand representing the paper, the other making a writing motion).

When dining, many Americans are taught to keep left hand in their lap and eat with the right hand. It is permissible to sit at a table with both wrists resting lightly on the table. When engaged in deep, close conversation, two people might even lean forward, with elbows on the table, but strict practitioners of etiquette in America frown on this.

It is considered impolite to use toothpicks in front of other people.

It has become an important courtesy in the United States to ask permission of your host or hostess before smoking.

<b>UK/Europe/Asia</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>UK/Europe/Asia</b>	<b>United States</b>
Bonnet	Hood	Anticlockwise	Counterclockwise
Boot	Trunk	Autumn	Fall
Car park	Parking lot	Baggage reclaim	Baggage claim
Car Silencer	Muffler	Bill	Check (restaurant)
Cats eyes	Reflectors	Bookings	Reservations
Clock	Odometer	Cashback (noun)	Rebate, cash back
Demister	Defroster	Chemists	Pharmacy, drug store
Diversion	Detour	Cinema Movie	Theater
Dual Carriageway	Divided Highway	Coach	Bus
Engaged	Busy (as in telephone)	Cuttings	Clippings (as in news clippings)
Flyover	Overpass	DIY	Do It Yourself
Full lights	High beams	Dustbin	Trash can
Gear box	Transmission	Fee (for schooling)	Tuition
Dumper truck	Dump truck	Fit (verb)	Equip, fit out
Gear lever	Gear shift	Fix	Fixtures
Hire car	Rental car	Fiat	Apartment
Indicators	Turn signals	Football	Soccer
Lights dipped	Low beams	Gents	Men's room
Motorway	Freeway/interstate	Head master	Principal
Petrol	Gasoline/Gas	Hire (hire a car)	Rent (rent a car)
Propeller shaft	Drive shaft	Holiday	Vacation
Recovery	Towing	Ill	Sick
Roundabout	Circle	In future	In the future
Top up	Fill up	In hospital	In the hospital
Transmission	Power train	"join in train"	"get on the train"
Turning left	Left turn	Lie in	Sleep in
Turning right	Right turn	Lift	Elevator
Unmade road	Dirt road, unpaved road	Launderette	Laundromat
Wind screen	Windshield	Lorry	Truck
Window heater	Defroster	Maths	Math
Wing	Fender	Momentarily	For a short time
Aubergine	Eggplant	Nil	Nothing, zero
Banger	Sausage	Note	Bill (currency)
Candy floss	Cotton candy	Open day	Open house
Chips	French fries	Post	Mail
Conserves	Preserves	Queue	Line
Fish fingers	Fish sticks	Rucksack	Backpack
Jacket potato	Baked potato	Sack	Fire (from employment)
Jam	Jelly	Starters	Appetizers
Jelly	Jell-O	Swear word	Curse word
Mince hamburger	Ground meat	Subway	Underpass
Porridge	Oatmeal	To let	For rent
Pudding/sweet	Dessert	Torch	Flashlight
Trolleys	Cart	Trainers	Sneakers
Tinned	Canned	Trousers	Pants

## Problems to Avoid While in the United States

- **Avoid giving your personal information to an unfamiliar person in the United States.** This information is frequently used by thieves to get credit cards in your name which they use to buy expensive items, or even to borrow money from a bank in your name. If someone contacts you and asks for personal information such as a birth date, social security number, or credit card number you should not give them this information unless you are 100% confident that they are trustworthy. A general rule many people in America follow is to never give this information out on the telephone unless you initiate the telephone call. A legitimate person or business will understand your reluctance to give this information and will suggest means of conducting business that you are comfortable with.

- **Avoid being “conned”**

Conmen and women can be very creative. If you are contacted in person, or by phone call, letter, email or are directed to a website and are informed that you have won something, be very cautious. If you are asked for personal information or are informed that in order to claim your prize you should pay a sum of money, terminate the contact and inform the police. A saying often heard in America is “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn’t true.” Hopefully you will win a million dollars while you are here but be very, very cautious as there are many scams just looking for ways to get your money.

- **Avoid accumulating debt**

Through credit card use or other means many Americans and foreign visitors have found themselves owing more money than they can ever repay. Credit card offers routinely come through the mail or even from representatives on campus. It may be very easy for a person to get many credit cards. With credit cards in hand many people find it very easy to purchase more than they can afford and are not able to pay their monthly bills. This can result in legal action being taken against the person.

- **Avoid financial disasters by purchasing insurance**

You are encouraged to buy a medical insurance as medical costs are exorbitant in the U.S. If you own a car you are required by law to purchase liability insurance for your car. It is required by law but it is also a good way to avoid financial disaster in America. Any major-medical treatment or significant automobile accident will cost more than most people can comfortably afford and the uninsured person in America may find themselves losing all their assets.

- **Avoid being taken to court**

American is a very litigious society. If you sign a contract or apartment lease it has legal force. If your landlord feels you haven’t fulfilled the lease it is likely you will be sued in court. It is the same for other written agreements that you sign. Do not sub-lease your apartment to a friend or anyone else. Should there be some damages to the apartment you are libel even though you are no longer in the apartment. The landlord can take you to court. Should you want someone else to stay in your apartment you and the friend should see the landlord and have him legally sign the lease or contract? Avoid being taken to court by reading all documents you sign carefully and ask questions if you don’t understand something. Always get a copy of documents you have signed.

If you are taken to court over a significant issue, it will be wise to get legal advice. Speak to staff in the International Students and Scholars office for more information about this. In Stillwater, the District Court is responsible for most of the civil and criminal proceedings for Payne County. However, the Small Claims Court can be used for civil matters involving claims up to \$2,500 or a criminal offense that is a misdemeanor. If you must appear in court, but are uncomfortable speaking English, you may wish to take a native English speaking friend with you to court. It is important to arrive on time. The District Court and Small Claims Court are both located in the Payne County Courthouse at 6th and Duncan Streets. Should you need legal advice Student

Government Association has a lawyer that comes to campus once a week. You need to go to SGA office in 211 Student Union and make an appointment.

For more detailed information on legal rights and public safety, please visit the OSU Police Department at:  
Address: 1st floor USDA, Stillwater, OK 74078

Phone: (405) 744-6523

Website: <http://www.osupd.okstate.edu>

- ***Avoid problems in male/female relationships***

Normal misunderstandings in this area may be more frequent between cultures in the United States due to several factors. Many American movies paint an unrealistic picture of American sexual values. American is more liberal sexually than some countries but not nearly as liberal as the characters in American movies and television shows. Also clothing fashions in America may seem very revealing to some. It should be remembered that a fashion is just a fashion and not an advertisement for a sexual relationship. Americans can also be very friendly on a surface level. A smile and a warm hello from someone usually have no romantic or sexual meaning. If someone of the opposite sex is friendly to you, it is okay to smile and speak to them but don't assume anything more. Relationships in America take time to develop to a deeper level. In male/female relationships one should be prepared to take time to build a relationship. Another common saying in America in regards to male/female relationships is "No means No". Sexually if one person tells another person no this must be respected. Failure to do so may very well result in criminal charges for sexual assault. Sexual activity, even with consent, with a person under the age of 18 is illegal and may result in the serious criminal charge of statutory rape.

- ***Avoid problems with alcohol use***

There are laws in regards to alcohol use in Stillwater and the United States that may be new to many. In the United States it is illegal for a person under the age of 21 to purchase alcohol or to be given alcohol by someone other than their parents. Driving a car after consuming alcohol may result in a criminal charge of "Driving under the Influence" which is taken very seriously and carries significant penalties. It is also illegal to have an open container of an alcoholic beverage in the passenger area of a car. In Stillwater drinking an alcoholic beverage of any kind out of doors is illegal. In general alcohol is not permitted on the OSU campus. If you are planning a party where alcohol will be consumed, ask if it is allowed at the place where you are planning to have the party.

- ***Avoid problems with tobacco use***

In the United States using tobacco in many ways is less acceptable than using alcohol. Most public places ban tobacco use or restrict it to specific locations, often out of doors away from building entrances. Smoking in a banned location may result in having to pay a fine. It is best to assume that tobacco use is not allowed unless you are informed otherwise. If you are eating or drinking with friends especially at someone's house it is polite to ask before lighting a cigarette.

- ***Avoid being accused of child or spousal abuse***

Actions to discipline children may be perceived by Americans as abusive. Some Americans spank their children, but striking a child may bring legal charges of child abuse. Similarly, striking a spouse will be considered spousal abuse and is likely to be reported to the police. Also, leaving young children (below the age of twelve) at home without adult supervision may be reported to the police as child neglect.

## Cultural Differences in the Work Place

Although scholars have various ways of defining the term, “culture” usually refers to the ideas, ways of thinking, and customary behaviors that are shared by members of a given group. It is possible to speak of the culture of a nation, of an organization, of a family and even of a classroom. In this manual, we are generally discussing “culture” at the national level.

Scholars have many ways of trying to compare cultures. Everyone agrees that cultures do differ. Indonesians are quite different from Australians, for example, but explaining those differences in a way that is clear to everyone can be difficult. Here we briefly mention four different ways of comparing cultures.

### How Cultures Vary

**Customs.** Everyone knows that “customs” differ from one place to another. When they greet other people, some people bow, some people shake hands, and some people kiss each other on the cheek. Differences in customs appear in countless aspects of human behavior. While it is important for foreigners to learn the main customs that prevail locally and to follow them, or at least not violate them, it is not possible to give a complete catalog of any culture’s customs.

**Assumptions and Values.** Members of a particular culture share certain unquestioned values and assumptions, that is, ideas about how the world operates, human kind’s place in the world, what is right and what is wrong, and what the purpose of living is supposed to be. Some of the assumptions and values that underlie American culture will be discussed later, when we look at the workplace.

**Communicative Style.** Another way in which cultures differ has to do with the way people behave while their talking. “Communicative style” according to the communication scholar Dean Barnlund, includes five matters: the preferred topics of discussion, favored forms of interaction, depth of involvement sought in relationships, channels preferred, and the level of meaning that is emphasized. For some elaboration concerning the communicative style of Americans, see American Ways listed in the bibliography.

**Ways of Thinking.** People from different cultures have different ways of putting information together to reach judgments and decisions. What is “logical” to people from one place might not be logical to people from another. Discussing differences in ways of thinking is difficult, because the subject is abstract. Some comments about typical American ways of thinking appear later.

### What happens when representatives of different cultures meet?

Richard Brislin and his colleagues have written a very good summary of the typical dynamics of an intercultural encounter:

Difficulties inevitably arise whenever there is extensive cross-cultural interaction. People are socialized, in their own culture, to accept as “proper and good” a relatively narrow range of behaviors. Those behaviors not labeled as good are perceived as less desirable and in extreme cases, as absolutely wrong. Further, others who engage in those less desirable behaviors are seen as backward, ignorant, or ill-mannered. In everyday words, people become accustomed to doing things (eating, courting, working, interacting with others) in certain ways, and the behaviors surrounding these activities are seen as proper. But when they interact with people from other cultures, those proper behaviors are not always forthcoming from the others. In addition, behaviors that people consider “improper” are practiced on a routine basis by those from other cultures. Common responses to this confrontation of past learning with present experiences are intense dislike of culturally different others (leading to prejudice), negative labels (stereotypes) and a refusal to interact with the others (discrimination).

This paragraph suggests that intercultural interactions are likely to be negative and distressing, as indeed they often are. On the other hand, encountering cultural differences can be a stimulating and educational experience. It is more likely to be a positive experience if the participants have some knowledge about culture

and cultural differences and if they bring constructive attitudes toward their interactions. The remainder of this manual is intended to convey information and ideas that can make intercultural encounters in the workplace more constructive than they might otherwise be.

## **TWO IMPORTANT BASIC VALUES**

Foreign students who have been in the United States for a time may have become familiar with manifestations of two basic American values, individualism and egalitarianism. The United States represents a fairly extreme position with respect to these two values, when compared to cultures elsewhere.

**Individualism.** Americans are taught to believe that the individual is the building block of the society, and that the individual's preferences and interests should prevail over those of any group. In most other countries of the world, much more consideration is given to the preferences or interests of a group, usually the family, but sometimes a larger group, such as co-religionists, other members of the community, or other employees of the organization. Foreigners often say there is "too much individualism" in the United States. Americans, though, have difficulty understanding how it is even possible to have too much individualism, since they have been thoroughly convinced that individualism and individual freedom from external constraints are supremely important.

**Egalitarianism.** Although they often violate it in practice, Americans deeply hold the idea that "all people are equal to each other". This leads them to behave in informal ways that are inconceivable in many other parts of the world.

## **ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK**

People work, or have jobs, for a variety of reasons. These include earning money, gaining self-realization or self-respect, or being a secure member of a group. In the United States, earning money is probably the most common reason for having a job. Most people are likely to have the idea that if they did not have to earn money to support them, they would not work. It is quite unusual for Americans to have a job with the idea that doing so gives them the opportunity to be a member of a group or an affiliate of a particular organization. Americans are generally very task oriented. That is, their attitude toward work is "there's a job to be done here, so let's do it". People from many other parts of the world are much more relationship oriented. That is, they pay more attention than Americans typically do to maintaining positive relationships with fellow workers, and less attention to carrying out their assigned tasks.

## **TYPICAL U.S BOSS' EXPECTATIONS OF WORKERS**

Students in the United States are quite likely to find that their supervisor will have the following expectations of them:

**Be on time.** Punctuality is highly valued in American culture, and employees can expect to evoke a negative reaction if they arrive late, even if there seems to be a reasonable excuse or explanation for the lateness.

**Follow instructions.** Ask about any instruction that is unclear. Most American bosses would strongly prefer that employees ask about an unclear instruction rather than proceed with a misunderstanding of that instruction. Employees who do not ask about unclear instructions will quickly come to be regarded as incompetent.

**Take initiative within your area of responsibility.** In some societies, employees are expected to do exactly as they are instructed – no more and no less. American bosses, by contrast, generally expect employees to undertake related tasks that need to be done, even if they have not specifically been told to do them.

**Bring to the boss's attention** any problems or difficulties with getting the job done. If you can, make a suggestion for improvement.

**Behave informally.** As experienced foreign students have already come to realize, Americans behave in much more informal ways toward each other than do people in many other societies. Foreign students who insist on behaving formally (for example, by bowing, consistently using the term “sir” when addressing an older or higher status person, or dressing more formally than other employees do) will be regarded as excessively formal or polite, and even as strange. Many Americans believe, quite erroneously, that everyone in the world wants to behave informally.

**Be reasonably respectful** of other workers, of whatever status or gender. Going along with the egalitarianism and informality that characterizes their culture, Americans expect a generally respectful attitude on the part of everyone toward everyone else. In part, this is to say that people at a given level in the organization are expected to be polite and considerate of other workers at their own and other levels within the organization, including other workers of the opposite sex.

**Be respectful toward customers.** An old American saying holds that “the customer is always right”. This conveys the notion that, however a customer might act and whatever a customer might say, the customer’s positive attitude toward the business is worth maintaining, so the employee should always treat the customer politely and respectfully.

**Speak English at work.** Even if there are other people at your workplace who are from your country, be sure you use English when speaking with them. For some reason, Americans tend to respond negatively when people around them who know how to speak English use another language instead. They seem to suppose that they are the subjects of foreign language conversations they cannot understand, and that what is being said about them is negative. You can avoid troubling them by speaking English in their presence.

**Follow local customs concerning hygiene.** This important topic is discussed later; under the heading of non-verbal communication.

## **SURPRISES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS**

Experienced foreign students consistently report on a number of items that surprised them when they entered the work site. Among them:

The boss might work very hard. Many experienced foreign students were quite surprised when they saw their boss joining in the work, even if the work was menial. The supervisor of the work unit might help clean up the room after a staff meeting, for example. In many American organizations, everyone is expected to contribute toward getting the job done. It is perfectly acceptable and even expected for the boss to get his or her hands dirty.

The boss might be a lady. Some foreign students come from places where the females hold supervisory positions, but most do not. For the latter, it can be a shock to find that the person who gives them instructions, supervises them, and evaluates their work is a woman. It can be difficult to overcome the culturally-based assumption that females are unqualified to be supervisors.

Your job description might be flexible or even somewhat vague. Do not be surprised if your supervisor asks or tells you to undertake some task that, as far as you know, is not covered by your formal job description. For example, you might suddenly be asked to run an errand, or go help someone in a different department about which you know nothing. In an American organization, employees are expected to be flexible enough to adjust what they are doing according to the shifting needs of the organization, as interpreted by the supervisor.

**Informality.** Even though they have considerable experience with the informality that prevails in the United States, foreign students entering the workplace still express surprise at the degree of informality, and collegiality that exists among people of different status in an organization. People use each other’s first names,

joke with each other, and discuss somewhat personal topics with each other, even though they represent different statuses in the organization's hierarchy.

**Speed and efficiency.** Although many components of American business and industry are currently being criticized for inefficiency and low productivity, foreign students are likely to find an emphasis on speed and efficiency that startles them. People in the organization will know how to carry out manual operations rapidly and they will have supplies and equipment organized so they can complete their tasks in the fastest possible way.

**Ignorance of other countries.** Again, experienced foreign students will be quite aware of the fact that many Americans are ignorant of other parts of the world, and of international affairs in general. Those students who might have supposed this ignorance was confined to the younger age group with which they have been associating in school are surprised to find that same ignorance among the older people they encounter at the workplace.

### **ASPECTS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Nonverbal communication concerns those aspects of people's behavior that "send a message" even though they are not manifest in spoken or written words. Non-verbal communication is a complex topic, covering larger number of things people do and don't do. Only a few aspects of non-verbal communication are discussed here.

**Clothing and Adornments.** People notice and react to the clothes other people wear, their jewelry and the amount of makeup they use. There is no universally correct way to dress for any given job, or quantity of eye shadow to wear. Students who want to fit into the workplace will want to notice what other people at their level of the organization are wearing and then dress similarly.

**Hygiene.** Most Americans react negatively – even strongly negatively – to people who exude body odors or breath odors that are considered natural in other parts of the world. Unless you bath or shower daily, wear clean clothing, and use deodorant and toothpaste or mouthwash to mask your natural body and breath odors, Americans will never stop viewing you as "foreign" or "different". You yourself might find it perfectly acceptable to be regarded as "foreign" or "different", and not want to adopt American practices concerning personal hygiene. But you should realize that following different hygienic practices can erect permanent barriers to close relationships with most Americans and to getting and keeping a job.

**Personal Space.** Most foreign students have come to realize what Americans believe to be the proper distance to maintain between two people who are talking together or are in a public place together. While they are in the United States, if they wish to maintain constructive relationships with the local people, foreign students will need to adjust their own notions of "personal space" to accommodate those of the natives.

**Gaze.** Americans say they think it is important for people to "look other people in the eye" and indeed they believe that. They do not mean that people who are talking to or listening to other people should gaze continuously into other people's eyes. Doing so causes great discomfort. What they really mean is that a speaker should look from time to time directly in to the listener's eyes and that listeners should look for longer periods into the speaker's eyes.

Foreign students who are unable to bring themselves to look into the eyes of the person with whom they are talking will always be viewed as being excessively shy, polite, deferential, or even dishonest and unreliable. Nonverbal behavior carries powerful messages.

**Touch.** Again, experienced foreign students have had the opportunity to become acquainted with American attitudes toward physical contact between people. They will realize that males rarely touch each other, except to shake hands, and that females might touch each other – usually on the arm or shoulder – somewhat more than males do. They will also realize that male-female touching is quite problematic in this time of heightened concern with "sexual harassment" (Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome physical advances,

touching, making comments of a sexual nature, or requiring sexual favors in return for a positive performance appraisal or for retaining a job.)

**Attitudes toward differences.** From society to society, there are variations in people's basic outlook toward people from other societies. In some countries, people are taught as they grow up, that they are clearly superior to everyone else in the world. In many other countries, people are taught to be more accepting of those who are different. And, there are a few places where people are taught to see themselves as representatives of an inferior country or ethnic group.

Americans tend toward the former orientation, that is, they generally believe they represent a superior way of life. (This may or may not have connotations about the superiority of certain ethnic groups as it does in some other countries.) Along with this attitude goes the notion that people who are different are somehow inferior. Beyond that, Americans are likely to believe that people from most other countries of the world, place the same value on individualism and self-realization that they do, and would truly like to be Americans. This complex of attitudes leads them to suppose that, when they encounter someone who is different, they are encountering someone who is somehow lacking, and who would prefer to become more like Americans are.

The result of this line of thinking and feeling is that many Americans treat foreigners in a condescending way, somewhat like the way they treat children.

### **COPING CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKPLACE**

If you are lucky, you will find, when you reach your job site, that everyone there knows something about your country and culture, is open minded and tolerant of differences, and is happy to have you among them despite the fact that you have ideas and ways of behaving that are different from those to which they are accustomed. More likely, you will not find these conditions at your job site. More likely you will find that you are entering an "American" organization, and that it will be up to you to make some adjustments in order to have a constructive experience. There are four areas in which you can attempt to have your work experience be as beneficial as possible. These four areas are knowledge, attitudes, skills and actions.

#### **Knowledge**

The more you know about American culture in general, about the dynamics of intercultural interactions, and about the particular organization where you are working, the better of you will be.

#### **Attitudes**

Your attitudes have to do with the general ideas or mindsets with which you enter a situation. Four helpful attitudes are:

*Versatility and Flexibility.* It is probably most helpful if you can look upon your work experience as an opportunity to develop and practice versatility and flexibility. That is, you can see the practicum experiences a way to develop a wider range of skills, behaviors and outlooks. With this wider range of skills, behaviors and outlooks, you will presumably make yourself a more flexible individual, qualified for employment in a wider range of situations, and able to participate constructively in social interactions with a wider range of people. Your work experience gives you the opportunity to develop and foster versatility and flexibility within yourself. *You need not violate your personal values.* Everyone has deeply-held, often culturally-based, values they do not wish to violate. These values might entail avoidance of alcohol, avoidance of meat in the diet, avoidance of close relationships with members of the opposite sex who are not prospective marriage partners, and displaying respect for people who are older or who occupy higher status positions. Generally, it is possible to complete your work experience without having to violate your deeply-held personal values. You need only to say, if you are challenged on these matters, that it is important to you to do, or not to do certain things. But you can learn to shake hands instead of bowing, to stand closer or farther away from conversation partners, or to look more directly into people's eyes when you talk to them. You can learn to talk more loudly or more softly, or to use your arms and hands more or less while you talk. Such adjustments as these make you more flexible without requiring you to abandon your basic values.

*Keep your personal goals in mind.* Before you begin your job, it is a good idea to give some thought to the goals you hope to achieve. Your goals might include improving your English, becoming more at ease in dealing with people who are different from you, learning certain information related to the task of your work, and learning certain skills. It is a good idea to enter the job with your goals thinly in your mind, and to pause and reflect on them from time to time, to make sure you are behaving in ways that are most likely to help you get what you want from the experience.

### **Skills**

*Observation.* Any person in a cross-cultural situation has the opportunity to develop his or her observation skills. Observation skills have to do with the ability to watch carefully what other people are doing, and to do so without interpreting or judging that behavior until you are certain what it represents.

The ability to carefully observe what is going on around you can help you in any employment or social situation later in your life.

*Communication.* Certainly, the work experience represents an excellent opportunity for you to improve your communication skills. There are skills in self-expression; clarifying what other people say; summarizing your own and other people's statements, comments or ideas; and confirming, that is, making certain that you and others have correctly understood verbal messages that you have sent or received.

*Technical Skills.* Of course, one of the goals of the work experience is for you to learn whatever technical skills are necessary to carry out the tasks of your job.

### **Actions**

*Practice the skills.* The more you practice them, the better you will learn the skills listed above and any others that you might derive from your work experience. If you make a conscious effort to practice these skills every day, they are much more likely to improve than they are if you leave their development to chance.

*Experiment.* You will gain more from the work experience if you are willing to try new things. As long as they do not violate your basic values, you can try new ways of relating to other people, different ways of dressing, and different ways of thinking about problems. There will come times during your work when you realize you have the opportunity to do something that is new for you. At such times, ask yourself "What is the worst thing that can happen if I do this?" This question will make you realize that an adverse reaction to what you might do is unlikely, and even if there is an adverse reaction, it will probably be quite mild. With this in mind, go ahead and try something new. It will probably help you to be more flexible and versatile.

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# Chapter 12: Other Information

## Weather

### Severe Weather

TV and radio stations announce storm and tornado warnings, and provide updates on developing weather patterns that may pose a threat although tornadoes can occur any time of the year, they are more prevalent in April, May, and June. You may hear the following terms in the announcement. It is important that you know what they mean!

**Severe Thunderstorm:** wind gusts of 50 knots (58 mph) or greater and/or hail 3/4 of an inch in diameter or larger.

**Damaging Wind:** sustained or gusty surface winds of 60 mph or more.

**Funnel Cloud:** a tornado funnel extending downward from the clouds, but not touching the ground.

**Tornado:** a violent storm of short duration with very high speed winds rotating around an axis with a funnel extending from the base of the clouds to the ground. A tornado is destructive only when it touches the earth. Its path may vary from 100 yards to 1 mile in width. Its forward speed ranges from 25 to 40mph. If the formation of a tornado in the local area is imminent, sirens will sound every 3 to 5 minutes to indicate that everyone should take shelter. The “all clear” signal will not be sounded on the storm sirens, but will be given over FM radio stations including KSPI 93.7; Kvro 105.5; and KOSU 91.7.

**Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm WATCH:** an alert that conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes or severe thunderstorms in the designated area.

**Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm WARNING:** an announcement that a tornado or severe thunderstorm has been sighted visually or detected by radar. The location and direction of movement, if known, are given and residents of the designated warning area are advised to take immediate safety precautions.

### SHELTER FROM THE STORM

- In a building: If you are in a building with a basement, go to the basement. If there is no basement, seek shelter in an interior part of the building such as a hall, closet or a ground floor bathroom. Make sure you will be protected from flying glass; keep away from large windows or large areas of glass. The following buildings at OSU are designated as storm shelters: Student Union (not available during renovations), Ag Hall North, Ag Hall East, Classroom Building, Engineering South, and Poultry Science.
- Inside a hut or mobile home: Seek shelter elsewhere. These buildings are not safe during a tornado.
- Outside: If you are outside and far from a safe building, take cover in a ditch or low-lying area.

Information on severe weather procedures is provided to single students in residence halls in the Residential Life Calendar. Students living in family housing are given procedures in the Handbook published by the University Apartments Office. If you live in off-campus housing, ask the landlord or apartment manager, or follow the directions above. If your children are in school, they are under the care of their teachers who are trained to handle storm emergencies.

## Transportation

Traveling in the United States may not be as easy for you as in other countries because many Americans use their own cars instead of public transportation. There is no local public bus system within the City of Stillwater.

## Services

**Taxi Service:** Cowboy Country Cab 405-372-8294

**Buses:** There are buses that travel around Stillwater to and from the OSU campus. More information about the bus system can be found at

<http://parking.okstate.edu/>

There is also a bus that travels to and from the OSU-Tulsa Campus. More information about those bus systems can be found at:

<http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/shuttle.asp>

**Airlines:** The telephone book yellow pages list travel agencies in Stillwater to help you with your travel arrangements. Following is an airline telephone directory:

<b>U.S. Airlines</b>	<b>Phone</b>
American Airlines/American Eagle	1-800-242-4444
Automated Flight Status	1-800-223-5436
Continental Airlines	1-800-525-0280
Automated Flight Status	1-800-784-4444
Delta Airlines/ Conair Atlantic Southeast Airlines	1-800-221-1212
Automated Flight Status	1-800-325-1999
Northwest Airlines	1-800-225-2525
Automated Flight Status	1-800-441-1818
Southwest Airlines	1-800-435-9792
United Airlines	1-800-241-6522
Automated Flight Status	1-800-824-6200

<b>European Airlines</b>	<b>Phone</b>
KLM Airlines	1-800-225-2525
British Airways	1-800-403-0882
Lufthansa	1-800-399-5838
Swiss Air	1-877-359-7947

<b>Asian Airlines</b>	<b>Phone</b>
EVA Air -Taiwan Airlines	1-800-695-1188
JAL-Japan Airlines	1-800-525-3663
KAL-Korean Airlines	1-800-438-5000
MAS-Malaysia Airlines	1-800-552-9264
Qantas-Australian Airlines	1-800-227-4500
SIA- Singapore Airlines	1-800-789-8188
THAI Airways-(Thailand Airlines)	1-800-426-5204

**Car Rental: Following are a list of car rental agents.**

Car Rental Agency	Phone
Alamo Rent A Car	1-800-327-9633
Avis Rent A Car	1-800-831-2847
Budget Car and Truck Rental	1-800-527-0700
Dollar Rent A Car	1-800-800-4000
Hertz Rent A Car	1-800-654-3131
National Car Rental	1-800-277-7368
Thrifty Car Rental	1-800-367-2277

**Will Rogers World Airport Services**

Administrative Office	1-405-680-3200
Airport Parking	1-405-680-3250
Airport Paging	1-405-680-3271
Travelers Aid	1-405-680-3271
Prime Time Travel	1-405-682-0303

**Hitchhiking**

In many places in the United States, it is illegal and sometimes unsafe to hitchhike or signal a passing motorist to get a ride. You may see people doing it, but in contrast to many countries, it may be illegal. In Stillwater, it is illegal to hitchhike (“thumb a ride”).

**Bicycle**

A bicycle is an economical way of getting to and around campus. Stores selling new bicycles are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory. Used bicycles can be found in the want ads of newspapers. Also, the campus police and Stillwater police sell unclaimed bicycles once a year. No license is required for bicycles, but is mandatory to register your bike (for free) with parking and transit services. More information can be found at: [http://parking.okstate.edu/pk\\_bikes.aspx](http://parking.okstate.edu/pk_bikes.aspx).

Bicycle riders must know and obey traffic laws, and ride in bicycle paths when these are marked and available. The OSU Police Department has a free booklet about traffic laws affecting motorists and cyclists. Stop in the OSU Police Department in the USDA building to obtain a copy of this booklet.

Cyclists should wear helmets to avoid serious head injuries should they have an accident. Cyclists riding their bicycles after sundown are required to have operational headlights and reflectors on theft bicycles. Since there is a rather high incidence of bicycle theft, it is important for cyclists to know and record the serial number of the bicycle, and register the number with the OSU police. That will help police to find your bicycle if it is stolen. Bicycles should always be secured with a sturdy lock when left unattended on campus or outside at home.

**Motorcycles**

Driver's and vehicle licenses are required for motorcycles and motor scooters. Motorcycles can be very dangerous to ride. Drivers and passengers should wear helmets. Anyone under 18 is required by law to wear a helmet, but all motorcycle drivers and riders are encouraged to wear helmets to avoid serious head injuries in case of accidents. Please ask for a free booklet describing traffic laws at the OSU Police Department, USDA building.

**Automobile**

Operating an automobile in the United States is expensive. The cost may average as high as \$120 per month or more. This does not include car payments. If you decide to buy a car, you must have a driver's license, liability insurance, a vehicle plate or “tag,” and registration, all of which cost money.

**Buying an automobile (car):** Used cars are usually bought from reputable dealers who guarantee the car or from individuals advertising in the classified section of the newspaper. Be cautious! Used cars sometimes have unseen mechanical defects which will be expensive to repair and which the seller may not tell you about. Pay a garage mechanic to examine the car before you buy it.

If you are interested in buying a new car, look in the yellow pages under "Automobile Dealers .New." You should shop around and go to more than one dealer to find out what models and prices are available. The price for a new car is usually substantially below the listed price; however, this depends on the time of year you are buying a new car. Ask American friends for advice. They will enjoy helping you. Bargaining is acceptable when buying a new or used car. If you have to borrow money to pay for the car, compare interest rates offered by several sources, such as the dealer and banks.

**Car Liability Insurance:** Do not drive your car until you are covered by liability insurance and have a valid Oklahoma driver's license. Without liability insurance, your legal responsibility for injury done to others in an auto accident may result in serious financial and legal difficulty for you. In addition, there are other types of car insurance that protect you against damage to your car. Before buying insurance, consult more than one insurance agency and compare costs and coverage. Rates will vary according to the grade of risk, which applies to you. Read the insurance policy carefully and ask the insurance agent about the wording and the protection the policy provides you. Insurance agencies are listed in the yellow pages of your telephone directory.

**Automobile License:** When you have a car you must also have a legal document, called a "Title," showing that you own the car. If you are selling or buying a car you must transfer the title from the old to the new owner properly in order to obtain a license plate or "tag." The Stillwater Tag Agency, 720 S. Western Road, in the Wick low Professional Center must approve the car's title and insurance before they will sell you a license plate and give you a certificate of registration. In addition to the cost of the tag, the buyer will pay a sales tax. If you need directions about how to properly transfer a car title, the Tag Agency will be glad to advise you before you sell or buy a car.

**Traffic Laws:** The United States has many traffic laws that are enforced, sometimes strictly. Speeding tickets (citations) and traffic violations can be expensive. Accumulating several violations may cause you to lose your driver's license.

**Automobile Accidents:** If you are involved in an accident, you should call the police immediately. Do not move the cars until the police instruct you to do so. The names of the persons involved in the accident should be written down, along with the names of the insurance companies. When you are issued a ticket (citation) for an accident; you may be considered legally responsible for damages.

### **Driver's License**

Anyone who drives a car must have a valid driver's license Under current Oklahoma law, a non-resident, full-time student at OSU may continue to use his or her home country driver's license as long as the license is valid; however, most insurance companies in Stillwater require an Oklahoma driver's license before insurance will be issued. The "international license" is not accepted in Oklahoma.

To get an Oklahoma driver's license, you must take a written examination on Oklahoma traffic laws, a vision test, and a practical driving test. You must present your passport and I-94 as well as proof of insurance on the car you will be driving. (If you have a driver's license from another state, you will be asked to surrender it, as you may hold only one U.S. driver's license at a time). For further information, contact the Department of Public Safety, 1207 W. Airport Road, 377-0951, or the OSU Police Department, USDA building. You can visit their website at

<http://www.dps.state.ok.us/dls/>.

## **OSU Automobile Laws & Regulations**

**OSU Vehicle Registration:** All students must register their vehicles (this includes cars, bicycles, motorcycles, and trucks) with the OSU Police Department upon bringing the vehicle to the Oklahoma State University campus (regardless of day or time).

**OSU Traffic and Parking Regulations:** All students must comply with OSU traffic and parking regulations when driving or parking a vehicle on campus. Traffic tickets (citations) will be issued if regulations are violated. For full information on this matter, read the Parking and Traffic Regulations Handbook. This handbook is available at the OSU Police Department (USDA Building).

**Parking Regulations:** On some streets you are required to put money in a parking meter; some streets have time limits for the parking space. If you do not place money in the meter or do not move the car within the time limit, you may receive a ticket (citation) and have to pay a fine (penalty). Lock your car when leaving it and carry the key with you.

**Winterizing Cars:** Before November 1, you should have your car “winterized.” This consists of adding an antifreeze agent to the radiator and making sure that the oil is light enough to circulate in cold temperatures.

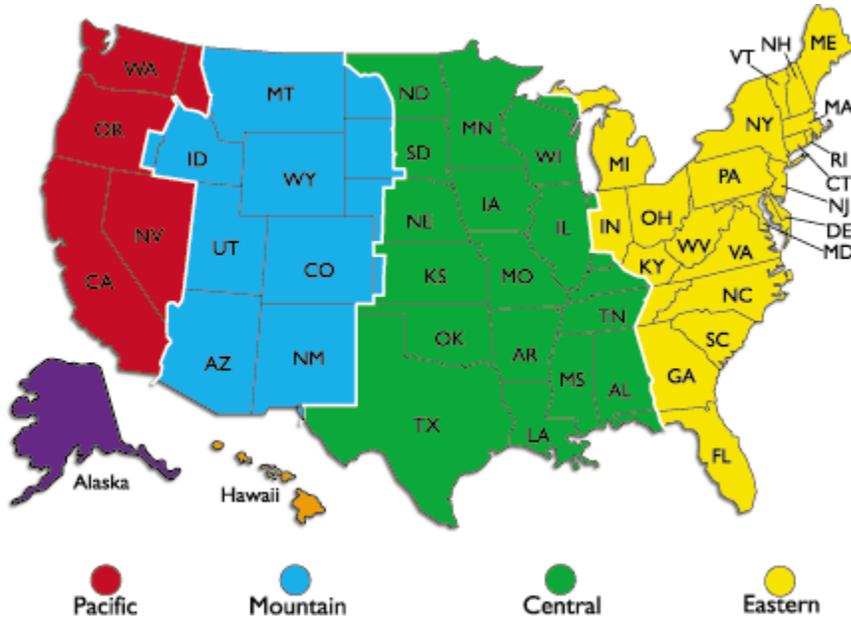
## Shopping

- **Types of Stores:** There are many types of stores in Stillwater. Listed below are the major kinds of stores with examples of what they sell:
- **Department Store:** Items needed for the house and for personal use such as clothes, cosmetics, dishes, toys, towels, and jewelry.
- **Discount House:** Almost everything except large items such as automobiles.
- **Drug Store:** Prescriptions furnished by a doctor and prepared by licensed pharmacists, camera supplies, magazines, newspapers, greeting cards, sanitary goods, baby needs, etc.
- **Hardware Store:** Carpentry and garden tools, cooking utensils, tableware, electrical supplies, appliances, radios, clocks, etc.
- **Specialty Shop:** One type of product or service such as cameras, furniture, books, or shoe repair.
- **Supermarket:** A complete selection of foods such as meats, vegetables, fruits, bakery goods, dairy products, and a variety of small household items.
- **Variety Store:** Sewing supplies, toys, cosmetics, school supplies, light meals (sometimes), and a wide range of other small items.
- **Sales:** Stores advertise “sales” with prices reduced in order to encourage people to buy. They may offer lower prices on regular merchandise, reduce prices on seasonal or soiled goods, or offer items with small defects (“seconds”). On some sale items, there may be no savings at all.
- Evaluate your purchases.
- **Clothing Sizes:** Clothing and shoe sizes in the USA may be different than those of other countries, so it is a good idea to try on these items in the store before you buy. In case the article does not fit or proves defective, return it promptly to the store with your sales receipt. Bathing suits, underwear, and hosiery may not be returned if they have been tried on at home, but may be exchanged if they are defective.
- **Sewing Supplies:** Fabric shops, department stores, variety stores, and discount houses all sell fabrics, patterns, thread, and buttons. Pattern sizes vary, but measurements are listed on the envelope. Sewing machines may be rented. See the Yellow Pages of your telephone directory under “Sewing Machines Household.”
- **Buying to Take or Send Home:** Before you shop, check on shipping charges and customs regulations. International tariffs can double or triple the original cost of an article and inconveniences the recipient.
- **Shoplifting:** Shoplifting, stealing merchandise, is a problem in the United States and shoplifters may be punished severely. Many stores are “self-service” with few clerks. All items that you select must be paid for; penalties for non-payment could include arrest by a police officer, cash fines, and/or imprisonment.
- **Credit Buying:** Buying “on credit” seems an easy way to get everything you need at once, but it can be very costly. Some stores and credit cards charge 18 percent interest and higher, so investigate thoroughly before signing any purchase agreements.
- **Charge accounts** allow you to pay for your merchandise after the purchase. If the full amount is paid when due, there is usually no extra charge.
- **Installment buying** (advertised as “small monthly payments”) allows you to pay for merchandise over a period of time. Interest is added to the payments and can be as high as 18 percent or more.
- **“Lay-away”** means you choose an item, pay a part of the total price, and ask the store to hold it for you until it is paid in full. Some stores add service charges for this method of buying.
- **Buyer Beware:** Sometime during your stay you may receive a phone call or letter saying that you have been picked as a “winner” in a contest and may now claim a prize. Often you need to purchase merchandise to get the free gift or you may receive what looks like a check but you have to purchase an item from the company at a much greater cost than it is worth. Be careful! Before you respond to any of these offers you are welcome to come to ISS to find out if this is a genuine offer or just a scheme to get your money. Almost any purchase may be returned or canceled within 3 working days.
- **Door to Door Salesmen:** Sales persons may telephone or come to your door. They may offer free gifts or pose as researchers. Some are honest, with good merchandise or services, but if you do not wish to

answer questions or see their products, simply say that you are not interested and end the conversation. Be particularly cautious of schemes to “give “you expensive merchandise at big savings or allowing a salesman to enter your home for any reason, such as a demonstration of the product. This merchandise is usually higher in cost than buying a similar product in a store.

- **Bargaining:** It is usually not acceptable to bargain when shopping in the United States unless you are buying a car or shopping at a flea market, garage sale, or auction.
- **Auctions:** Several auctions offering household goods, meats, and animals occur weekly in the Stillwater area. Make sure you know the rules of the auction and understand for what you are bidding. If allowed, you should ask to examine the merchandise before you bid. When at an auction, remember “Buyer Beware)”
- **Garage Sales:** Household items, clothing, and other miscellaneous items are sold at garage sales throughout the year, though most sales are held in spring and fall. Garage sales are at homes of people who sell their own items at inexpensive prices. Garage sales are listed in the classified ads section of the Stillwater News Press and can also be found in the weekly paper, Shop and Swap.
- **Food Shopping at a Supermarket:** A supermarket can seem confusing because there are so many choices to make. Explore and inquire; soon you will find the products you need and discover interesting new foods. Store employees will usually carry the groceries you purchased to your car without charge. If you do not have a car, it may be worthwhile to purchase a metal grocery cart from a hardware store. The following is some useful information for persons who do their own shopping for groceries.
  - By law packages and can labels must indicate the net weight and the ingredients of the contents. Carefully read the labels before you buy. Many labels give recipes and directions for preparation. Even if larger sizes are relatively cheaper, they are more economical only if you make use of the extra quantity before it deteriorates.
  - Many kinds of meats are already packaged. If you do not find what you wish, use the bell or the buzzer at the meat counter to signal the butcher to come. He or she will cut the meat to your order or answer your questions.
  - Margarine and nondairy cream are substitutes for butter and real cream. Half and-half is half cream, half milk.
  - Frozen foods must be used at once or stored in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator. Never re-freeze foods that have been thawed. Frozen foods appear more expensive than fresh foods, but since they are prepared and ready to cook and serve there is no waste plus you save time.
  - Convenience foods are prepared foods that are on grocery shelves and in the refrigerated sections of the store. Often the cost is not much greater than buying the ingredients separately and preparing the food yourself; occasionally it is cheaper. It may not be more nutritious, however.
  - Delicatessen departments in supermarkets offer ready-to-eat foods at lower prices than you would pay for the same food in a restaurant, but higher than if you prepared it yourself.
  - Supermarkets have baked food sections. Some bakery products are in the frozen foods section and there are specialty shops that sell only baked foods. See “Bakers-Retail,” in the telephone book Yellow Pages.
  - Advertisements of food specials appear in the Wednesday edition of the local newspaper, the Stillwater News Press. In addition, the Family Living section of the paper provides recipes and helpful household information. Many food advertisements also appear in the Sunday papers.
  - Health food stores sell mainly a variety of natural foods such as herbs, spices, nuts, whole-wheat flour, yogurt, vitamins, and teas. The names of health food distributors are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory.
  - As this part of the United States has no natural iodine in the soil, there is no iodine in the drinking water. To compensate for this lack and thus to prevent goiter, use iodized salt: IODIZED SALT is clearly marked on the package.

## Time Zones



Continental USA is divided into four time zones: Pacific, Mountain, Central, and Eastern. When traveling from west to east, set your watch ahead one hour for each time zone passed. For example, when it is 1:00 in California, it is 2:00 in Colorado, 3:00 in Oklahoma and 4:00 in New York. Daylight savings is a plan by which clocks are adjusted one hour (forward in spring, back in fall), to provide more waking hours of daylight. Public announcements will inform you of the days to change the clocks.

## Holidays

The following are some major holidays celebrated in the United States and others celebrated throughout the world:

**New Year's Day (January 1)** marks the beginning of a new calendar year.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day (the 3rd Monday in January)** is a national holiday celebrating the birth of America's prophet of nonviolence. Dr. King found an imperative of nonviolence in the Christian scriptures and applied this to his civil rights work. Reverend King was murdered as his efforts turned from civil rights to the war in Vietnam and the injustices of the American economic system.

**Valentine's Day (February 14)** is observed by exchanging "Valentine cards" and sweets with friends and loved ones.

**Presidents' Day (third Monday in February)** is a national holiday honoring two presidents who played especially important roles in U.S. history. George Washington, the first president of the Republic, was a leading general in its revolutionary war. Abraham Lincoln, once a poor rail-splitter, guided the Union through its bloody civil war and delivered the famous Emancipation Proclamation freeing the black slaves.

**Easter (March or April)** is the Christian celebration on Sunday of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Young children expect a mythical "Easter Bunny" to hide a basket of candy or colored eggs for them.

**Memorial Day (the last Monday in May)** is a national holiday honoring Americans who died for their country during war.

**Independence Day (July 4)** is a national holiday in the United States celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. There are usually parades and displays of fireworks.

**Labor Day (first Monday in September)** is a national holiday set aside to honor workers. The counterpart to International May Day, it originally was set to commemorate workers killed in the early struggles for workers' rights in the U.S.

**Halloween (October 31)** is an evening when young children dress in costumes and go from house to house saying "trick or treat." Adults then give "treats" such as candy to the children. It is a time when people make sport of the supernatural and mock death; ghosts, skeletons, witches, and devils are frequent motifs.

**Thanksgiving (Fourth Thursday in November)** is a national holiday marking a tradition in the United States begun by the early settlers from Europe to express their thanks to God and to native peoples for providing them food and security. This important festivity usually includes a turkey dinner with pumpkin or mince pie. Although the dinner is primarily a family gathering, guests are often invited.

**Hanukkah (November or December)** is the Jewish holiday celebrated for eight days and nights, by lighting menorah candles every night.

**Christmas Day (December 25)** is a Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. On Christmas Eve (December 24) or Christmas morning, many families make a tradition of decorating and lighting their Christmas tree, and exchanging gifts. Many attend religious services. The main course of the traditional Christmas dinner is turkey or ham, but it may be any meat or fowl. Christmas dinner is usually served in late afternoon on December 25.

**Kwanzaa (December)** is based on the first harvest celebrations of various African cultures. In addition to reaffirming roots in African culture and celebrating the bonds between Blacks, each day of the holiday celebrates one principle.

**Ramadan (date changes every year)** is the holiest time of the year for people of the Islamic faith. During this period, Muslims atone for their sins by fasting and refraining from marital relations from sunrise to sunset.

**THE UNIVERSITY IS CLOSED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY, MEMORIAL DAY, INDEPENDENCE DAY, LABOR DAY, THANKSGIVING, AND FROM JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS UNTIL JUST AFTER NEW YEARS' DAY**

## **Schools for Children**

Public School information can be found in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under "schools." See "Stillwater Public Schools." You can also visit their website at <http://www.stillwaterschools.com/>.

## **Stillwater Health Services**

Stillwater Medical Center: 1323 West 6th St. (phone: 405-372-1480)

The Stillwater Medical Center has 145 beds and 43 physicians (medical doctors) working at the hospital. Most medical specialties are represented. Payments for patient services are made at the general business office of the hospital.

The hospital administrators suggest that students whose dependents are not eligible for medical care on campus select a family physician when they arrive in Stillwater. Physicians are listed in the Yellow Pages of the Stillwater Telephone Directory. When you wish to see a doctor, call his or her office to make an appointment.

If an emergency arises when your doctor is not available, the emergency room at the Stillwater Medical Center provides emergency care 24 hours a day. The minimum cost of using the emergency room is approximately \$100.00. If you need an ambulance, call 911. Give your name, address, and type of emergency. After treatment, payment of services is made with the out-patient clerk at the emergency room. An additional charge is made for ambulance service.

**Stillwater City/County Health Unit:** 1321 W 7th (phone: 405-372- 8200)

**The Payne County Health Unit** is open on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5p.m. It is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The services of the health unit are available to all county residents and include the following:

**Family Planning Clinic:** contraceptives and examinations by appointment only

**Immunization Clinic:** vaccinations against diseases for children and adults Tuesday only from 8:30 .11:00 a.m. and 1:00 .4:00 p.m.

**Nursing Services:** health counseling and health education

**Well Child Program:** routine physical check-up for babies

**Pre-Natal Care:** routine visits with nurse and physician

**The County Health Unit** has a number of other services such as testing for venereal diseases, HIV, and sickle cell anemia.

**Dental Care:** Look in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under “Dentists” or ask a Mend to recommend one. Health insurance does not usually cover dental expenses. It is important to discuss the expense with the dentist before the work is done. Dental work is very expensive.

**Eye Care and Glasses:** Look in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under “Optometrists” (fitting of eyeglasses only) or “Ophthalmologist” (care of all eye problems including surgery and fitting glasses). It is important to discuss the expense before work is done. Eye care can be quite expensive.

**Student Health Center:** Farm Road and Lincoln (phone: 405-744-7013)

For use by enrolled students and spouses who pay the health center fee.

The Student Health Center maintains a staff of physicians, pharmacists, clinical and counseling psychologists, registered nurses, laboratory and x-ray technicians, a physical therapist, dietician, and other necessary personnel who make a specialty of providing for students the best possible medical care at the least possible expense. In addition to the Fulltime staff, the part- time staff includes a specialist in internal medicine, a psychiatrist, a social worker, and three radiologists. Enrolled students may see a physician for a nominal fee of \$20.00. Adult dependents may also be treated there, if they pay the semester fee which is charged to students. Children cannot be treated in the health center.

The Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## Household Information

The information in this section is particularly for individuals who have never lived alone and for families who are living in the United States for the first time.

**Appliances:** Find out whether your landlord or you are responsible for the maintenance and repair of facilities. Ask your landlord for the location of circuit breakers or the electrical fuse box and how to replace fuses if necessary.

**Appliances You Brought With You:** Electrical outlets in the United States usually give 110 volt alternating current (“A.C.”) at a frequency of 60 cycles. This may be different from your country and not suitable for appliances that you may have brought to the United States. If you buy appliances here to take or send home, be sure that they will work on the voltage and frequency supplied by your country. You may buy converters at electronics stores that adapt devices to different power standards.

**Gas Stoves:** The gas used in cooking stoves is highly explosive. Most stove models have automatic pilot lights and safety features, which make the operation of gas stoves easy and safe. Some apartments, however, may have older models, which require special precautions.

If the pilot light goes out, you may light it again with a match, but be sure that all control knobs are in the "OFF" position. If you have no automatic pilot light in your oven, hold a lighted match over the small hole in the floor of the oven (or wherever the gas enters), and at the same time slowly turn the oven control knob to "ON." If the gas does not light, immediately turn the control knob to "OFF" to prevent gas from escaping, and then repeat the same procedure.

If you have a question about your stove, or any other gas appliance, ask your landlord or call the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company, 3424 North Perkins Road, telephone 372-4711. The emergency number for nights, holidays, and weekends is 372-2600.

**Oven Cleaning:** There are special products to clean ovens. Follow the directions on these products carefully. Food spills are much easier to remove before they dry or burn. Warning: Overheated grease (oil, fat) is a common cause of kitchen fires. When cooking with grease, use a low flame, watch it carefully, and clean any grease spots.

**Refrigerators:** If your refrigerator does not defrost automatically, it should be defrosted once every two or three weeks. Read the instructions for maintaining your refrigerator. Generally, refrigerators may be defrosted in the following manner:

1. Turn the control dial to "DEFROST" or "OFF" or unplug the electric cord.
2. Remove all food and all containers, including ice trays, vegetable and meat bins, and the like. Keep frozen foods as cold as possible by stacking items compactly and wrapping in newspapers.
3. There is a wide pan just below the freezer section. Be sure it is in place to catch melted ice. Place a small pan (preferably metal) of hot water inside the freezer. You may need to replace the hot water 2 or 3 times since the water cools. After the ice on the freezer sides melts away, empty the wide pan.
4. Wash the inside with baking soda and cool water. Wipe dry.
5. Turn refrigerator on. Clean and dry the containers. Replace the containers and then the food.

If you will be away from your apartment for more than two weeks, remove perishable foods and turn the temperature dial to a warmer setting. Warning: Never turn off the refrigerator and leave the door closed. Even in a clean refrigerator, mold will form.

**Disposal of Garbage:** Ask your landlord or manager which day garbage is collected, and where and how to dispose of it. City employees collect garbage on regularly scheduled days.

If there is a garbage disposal unit in the kitchen sink, operate it carefully and it will serve you well. Here are some general recommendations for using garbage disposals:

1. Turn on cold water faucet ("tap").
2. Switch disposal on.
3. Feed waste into disposal in small pieces. If necessary, poke it in carefully with a wooden stick or rubber spatula.
4. Use plenty of cold water and let the water run for 30 seconds or more after the switch is off.

Only food wastes should be put in a garbage disposal. Disposal units cannot grind fibrous or very hard items.

Do not try to grind corn husks, corncobs, peach pits, large bones, olive pits, pea pods, artichoke leaves, celery, flower stems, paper, string, or metal objects. **Warning:** Never put your hand in the unit without making sure the switch is OFF. If any metal object falls into the unit, turn it off immediately.

**Bathroom:** Sink and tub can be kept in good condition with cleaners. Toilet bowls should be cleaned with a preparation specially designed for toilet bowls. These cleaners are caustic and can be dangerous. Carefully follow product directions and keep chemicals away from children.

**Floors:** Different flooring materials such as wood, vinyl, linoleum, ceramic, and tile need different sorts of care. Your landlord will be delighted if you ask how to care for the floors.

**Cleaning Aids:** Many cleaning preparations are poisonous. Be sure to keep them out of the reach of children, and follow the directions on the containers carefully. Never mix two cleaning agents; poisonous gas may result. Here are a few brands of cleaners .you may find others you prefer.

- Ovens: Easy-Off, Oven-Off, Oven-Brite
- Stoves, pots, and pans: SOS pads, Brillo pads, Scotch-Brite
- Dishes: Ivory Liquid, Dawn, Joy, Vel, Palmolive
- Fine fabrics: Woolite, Deli-care (mild dish soaps may also be used to clean fine washable)
- Clothes washing machines: All, Tide, Cheer, Fab, Bold For bleaching white clothes: (a) chlorine-based: Clorox, Purex (b) oxygen-based: Oxone, Clorox 2 (may be used to brighten some colored fabrics)
- Sinks and tubs: Ajax, Comet, Bon Ami
- Inside of toilet bowls: Sno-Bol, Vanish, Saniflush
- Refrigerators: Arm & Hammer Baking Soda
- Softening water: Calgon, Spring Rain

**Laundries and Dry Cleaners:** Most students wash their own clothes at a nearby laundry. Self-operating laundry equipment is provided in all residence halls and OSU apartments. Laundry services are also provided for tenants of most apartment complexes. Other locations are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

Here are some useful hints for people who do their own laundry:

1. Read instructions on the washing machine and ask another student or the attendant for help if you have a problem.
2. Do not overload the washing machine. The clothes should be able to move freely in the water or they will not get clean.
3. Do not mix colors with whites or colored clothes will stain the white clothes.
4. Use approximately one cup of detergent to wash a load of clothes. Follow the directions on the machines or on the detergent label. An excess of detergent cleans clothes no better, and leaves a residue, which may irritate the skin.
5. Use chlorine bleach only on whites; chlorine bleach will fade colored clothes or cause the colors to run and stain other garments. Check garment labels for washing instructions.
6. Do not apply bleach or softener directly to clothes; let the machine fill with water, and then add these products to the water.
7. When using a clothes dryer, do not use high heat with permanent press or synthetic fabrics, as it may ruin the fabric.

A dry cleaning service will clean and press all your non-washable clothes such as silks and woolens. They will also wash, dry, and press other clothes such as shirts and undergarments. Most people dry clean only non-washable items such as suits and coats and other finery, since the service can be very expensive.

If you do not wish to wash and iron your own clothes and can afford to take them to a laundry or dry cleaner, you will find such services to be quite convenient. Your clothes will usually be ready in two or three days, although some cleaners offer one day or one hour service.

**Diaper Washing:** If it is inconvenient to wash cloth diapers each day, rinse them well in the toilet and soak them in a covered diaper pail in water with baking soda or borax.

**Dangers to Children:** Children have died when they climbed into unused refrigerators left in hallways or basements. Remove the door from any unused refrigerator.

The United States abounds in plastic bags and wrappings. Keep them away from children. Children have been smothered because they played with plastic bags and wrapped them around their faces.

**Insect Control:** In Oklahoma's warm climate, household insects can be a nuisance. Their presence has little to do with lack of cleanliness, although a clean house with garbage properly disposed and food tightly sealed will attract fewer insects.

In most apartment complexes, the managers will periodically exterminate insects (about every three or four months). If your manager does not exterminate, insist on it or report the manager to the County Health Department. You can also pay for a professional exterminator yourself. Several insect killing products -sprays, powders, fogs, and liquids -are available in grocery stores and variety stores (Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and the like). These products vary in effectiveness and are usually formulated for specific varieties of insects. When using these products, make sure that food, dishes, and eating utensils are well covered. Leave the house or apartment after you have sprayed and stay away for a few hours. Upon return, wash the dishes and ventilate the area. Be sure to keep these and all poisons away from children and pets.

# Chapter 13: OSU-Tulsa Resources

## International Students Services Office-Tulsa

North Hall 130

Academic Advising Center

OSU-Tulsa

Phone: 918-594-8521, Fax: 918-594-8202

*To make an appointment: 918-594-8445*

## TCC advisor at OSU-Tulsa

Tulsa Community College has an advisor in the OSU-Tulsa Academic Advising Center. They take walk-ins, can print official transcripts, help with the enrollment and answer general questions. They can be reached at 918-594-8271.

## OSU-Tulsa Health Clinic

The OSU-Tulsa Health Clinic (<http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/healthclinic.asp>) is located in North Hall 265 and open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8 a.m.-Noon and 1-5 p.m. An advanced registered nurse practitioner and certified medical assistants are available to assist patients with general health care needs on a walk-in basis. To schedule an appointment, call 918-594-8920.

Hearing screening North Hall 391 (918)594-8573 or email [slpservices@okstate.edu](mailto:slpservices@okstate.edu)

## OSU-Tulsa Counseling Services

The counseling psychology clinic provides services to children over the age of 15, adolescents, and adults who are residents of the community, including students, staff, and faculty affiliated with Oklahoma State University. Services are provided by Counseling Psychology and Community Counseling Graduate Students, and supervised by faculty members. The office is at Main Hall 2403 or call 918-594-8568.

## OSU-Tulsa Disability Services

Available on both the Stillwater and Tulsa campuses, Disability Services provides support services to students with disabilities and is committed to providing a community that ensures full participation for students. This office provides assistance to students that will facilitate their independence and academic progress. Academic support services include specialized testing, classroom accommodations, accessible textbooks, access to/assistance with Assistive Technology (AT), and other services as necessary. Students may request services by contacting their offices.

Phone: 918-594-8354 [www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/disability.asp](http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/disability.asp)

## OSU-Tulsa Wellness Center

Located in North Hall 116, the Tulsa Wellness Center provides you all the amenities of an expensive fitness club such as exercise machines and weight equipment. If you are not sure how to use equipment, staff will be happy to provide you an orientation as well as help you create a customized fitness program. Also provided is blood pressure screening, and health education information.

[www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/wellness.asp](http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/services/wellness.asp)

## Bursar Office

To make payments on your bursar statement or for questions regarding your bill, you can refer to the Bursar Office, 1<sup>st</sup> floor administration Hall, 918-594-8320.

## Enrollment Services

To obtain an official transcript, get a student ID, or to turn in Add/drop or Trail study cards, please visit the office of Enrollment Services, 1<sup>st</sup> floor Administration Hall, 918-594-8100.

### **OSU-Tulsa Learning Services Center**

North Hall 103, 918-594-8232

50-minute writing sessions are available from 12 to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

- Math tutoring is handled on an appointment basis. Call for available times.
- Study Skills workshops will be held each month beginning in February. Watch for more information around campus, and be sure to sign up early.

### **OSU-Tulsa Graduate Student Services**

Information, Admissions, Enrollment, Matriculation, and Graduation.

Your Liaison to Colleges/Programs and the Graduate College

Main Hall 1101

Phone: 918-594-8445 | Email: [osutgssc@okstate.edu](mailto:osutgssc@okstate.edu)

### **OSU-Tulsa Testing**

North Hall 103, (918)594-8232

email: [tulsa.testing@okstate.edu](mailto:tulsa.testing@okstate.edu)

Proctored testing for online exams or exams from other universities/organizations.

Administration of several examinations, including but not limited to the following:

Miller's Analogy Test (MAT)

Residual ACT

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Test of English Language Proficiency (TELP)

GRE subject exam Compass Placement

Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT)

Praxis Series

Make-up exams

OSU Independent Study Exams

OSU Distance Learning Exams

### **OSU-Tulsa Library**

918-594-8130

Hours of Operation (fall semester)

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

More information: <http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/library/hours.htm>

### **OSU-Tulsa Computer Lab**

Computer Lab Location: Main Hall, 2302

Student Help Desk Phone: (918)594-8043

### **OSU-Tulsa Student Organizations**

African American Student Association (AASA)

American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)

Early Childhood Education Club (ECE Club)

ECO OSU-Tulsa

Educational Psychology Student Society (EPS<sup>2</sup>)

Hispanic Student Association

Human Development and Family Science Club (HDFS Club)

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

International Student Association (ISO)  
MBA Association  
Master's in Counseling Society  
National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA)  
Omicron Tau Theta  
OSU-Tulsa Entrepreneurship Club (E-Club)  
Phi Beta Lambda  
Student Government Association (SGA)  
Tau Sigma National Honor Society

*For more information, please contact Campus Life: ( 918 ) 594-8450*

### **OSU-Tulsa Campus Police**

Main Hall 1401  
Emergency Number: 918-594-8123  
Non-emergency Number: 918-594-8124

### **Other Useful Resources**

#### **Notary Services on Campus:**

North Hall <u>Nancy Hammons</u> Central Services Basement 918-594-8253	North Hall <u>Wanda Rountree</u> Central Services Basement 918-594-8443	North Hall <u>Pam Jackson</u> Campus Police Room 1401 918-594-8123
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#### **Fax location on campus**

Student Services  
North Hall 130  
Ph: 918-594-8355

#### **Tulsa Area Social Security Office:**

4750 S. Garnett Rd, Tulsa, OK 74146  
Phone: 866-931-7106

#### **Oklahoma Driving School**

5970 East 31st Street, Mall 31 Suite U, Tulsa, Oklahoma.  
<http://www.oklahomadrivingschool.com/>  
(918) 622-6500

#### **Vaccination Options**

Tulsa City-Country Health Department  
4616 E. 15th Street, 15th & Yale (Expo Square Health Center)  
918-595-4106  
MMR---\$20/shot (two shots required)  
Hep B--\$50/shot (three shots required)  
TB Test--\$5/test (only required for students who meet policy criteria)

## **Discounted Entrance Fees for OSU Students:**

### ***Free Admission***

- Free admission Gilcrease Museum
- Free admission Philbrook Museum

Simply show your OSU I.D. at either of these museums and enjoy free admission.

In addition to free admission, the Gilcrease Museum also provides a discount in the museum store, The Restaurant at Gilcrease and on enrollment fees for classes or seminars. A valid photo I.D. is required.

### ***Discounted Tickets***

Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum

Children's Tickets \$1.00 (limit 3/semester)    Adult Tickets \$3.00 (limit 2/semester)

Oklahoma Aquarium

Tickets \$6.00 (limit 5/semester)

Dickinson Movie Theater Tickets

Tickets \$3.00 (limit 5/semester)

*\*Most movie theatres offer discounts to students with a valid student I.D.*