**Welcome to the Office of International Affairs!**

**Our Mission**

The Office of International Affairs’ (OIA) mission is to enrich and foster the educational and work experience of Texas A&M University-San Antonio’s international community. The OIA serves as a welcoming presence for international students, staff, and faculty. The role of the OIA is to provide international admissions and immigration support to international students seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree, and to facilitate the immigration process of foreign faculty and staff hired at TAMU-SA. The OIA protects the integrity of the university by upholding institutional policies and compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

**OIA Services**

The OIA offers a wide variety of services to our international students and foreign faculty and staff. Some services include:

* Immigration advising,
* International student health insurance management,
* Informational workshops on OPT, CPT, STEM OPT, and more,
* Cultural events/ programming,
* Advise on different visa categories, e.g., F-1, J-1, H-1B, TN, O-1A and filing for permanent residency,
* Facilitate with employment-based permanent residency sponsorship, and
* Act as a liaison for institutional departments and government agencies

**Did You Know?**

Did you know you can book an appointment with the Office of International Affairs in a variety of ways? Find out the many different ways you can book an appointment with us by watching the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgMI0mIMK-g> (we could make a video similar to this but prob not with the animation, also stolen from https://www.tamusa.edu/internationalaffairs/index.html)

## International Student FAQs

#### What's on This Page

* [General](https://global.utsa.edu/students/faq/#general)
* [Health Insurance](https://global.utsa.edu/students/faq/#health-insurance)

### General

##### I have been admitted for the fall 2021 semester. Due to the closures and slow reopening of the U.S. Embassies, what are my options for the upcoming semester?

**Option 1:** Apply and obtain the F1 student visa to enter the United States. Once physically present in the United States, attend the fall semester at UTSA. Initial status students will be required to have at least 1 or more Face-to-Face/Hybrid courses to maintain valid F-1 visa status.

**Option 2:** If you are unable or nervous about traveling to the United States for the fall semester, you could enroll online and complete the semester from your home country. F1 visa is not required for this option and International Student Services (ISS) will defer your I-20 start date to the spring 2022 semester. You would be permitted to arrive in the United States up to 30 days prior to the I-20 start date for the spring 2022 semester. Earliest arrival date would be December 11, 2021.

**Option 3:** You could defer your admission to the spring 2022 semester or fall 2022 semester if desired. Students who decide to defer admission will require a deferred I-20 from ISS showing the spring 2022 or fall 2022 start date. Make sure to contact either International Undergraduate Admissions or Graduate Admissions with your decision.

##### How will I receive my form I-20?

I-20s will be distributed electronically and signed with an electronic signature. Students who prefer to have the original document mailed, please notify ISS for additional instructions.

Make sure to print the I-20 in color, sign, and date with blue ink. A printout of the I-20 will be required to enter the United States.

##### I am currently outside of the United States and do not intend to return for the fall semester. What are my options for the upcoming semester?

**Option 1:** Enroll in a full-course load of online courses. ISS has been instructed to keep your SEVIS record ACTIVE to allow for re-entry to the United States for the spring 2022 semester. Continuing students who decide to return home and enroll in online courses from outside of the United States will require an updated form I-20 with the following remarks “Outside of the United States Due to COVID-19”. Contact International Student Services immediately if you decide to enroll online from outside of the United States. Contact us at: [international.services@utsa.edu](mailto:international.services@utsa.edu). Please allow 3-5 business days for ISS to process and respond to the request. It is recommended to plan ahead.

**Option 2:** Request a leave of absence if you want to take the semester off. Student can then contact ISS to request reactivation of the previous SEVIS record to return to the United States for the spring 2022 semester.

##### My home country has limited technology resources; therefore, I will not be able to complete my online semester. How will this impact my current F1 visa status?

F1 visa students unable to complete the semester online due to the lack of available technology resources should notify ISS. ISS is permitted to keep records Active in SEVIS if the student intends to resume their program during the next available semester.

Still need assistance?

Please schedule an appointment with an advisor at [Appointments](https://global.utsa.edu/Appointments.html)

##### I am a continuing student and will be traveling back to the United States. How can I receive an updated I-20 with a travel signature?

Before requesting your I-20 with travel signature, check the second page of your current I-20 to determine if a new signature is needed. If the signature is more than 12 months old, then please continue with the travel signature request process. I-20s with a signature less than 12 months old do not need an updated signature to re-enter the United States.

Request your I-20 through our International Student Request Portal: [international.utsa.edu](https://international.utsa.edu/)

I-20s will be distributed electronically and signed with an electronic signature. Students who prefer to have the original document mailed, please notify ISS for additional instructions.

Make sure to print the I-20 in color, sign, and date with blue ink. A printout of the I-20 will be required to enter the United States.

##### What will the fall semester look like at UTSA?

During our previous communication, it was stated that UTSA is incorporating a hybrid approach to the fall semester. UTSA will offer in-person, online, and hybrid courses. As the COVID-19 exemption issued by DHS during the spring semester is still in effect and extended through the end of the spring 2022 semester, our continuing students will be fully compliant with federal regulations.

Students who started at UTSA after March 2020 will require at least one in-person/hybrid course each semester until the expiration of the current enrollment exemption (spring 2022). **This does not include transfer and change of level students.**

##### I plan to graduate this fall semester, but I am currently outside of the United States. Will I be able to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) from my home country?

As an F1 visa student, you must be physically present inside the United States to submit an OPT application to USCIS. We recommend that any student outside of the country interested in applying for OPT return to the United States prior to the end of the semester (12/10/2021). Returning to the United States after the end of the semester will not be possible as student will be on their 60 day grace period and OPT application will be denied by USCIS.

##### I am graduating in the fall 2021 semester and I need to apply for OPT.

Questions regarding OPT will require an appointment with an International Student Advisor. Please use the following link to schedule for your virtual appointment: <https://global.utsa.edu/Virtual-Office.html>

For general OPT information, please use the below link for an overview of the process: <https://global.utsa.edu/forms/Guidance_for_OPT.pdf>

##### I need to apply for my social security number.

Regarding the SSN, please submit a copy of the department hiring letter in our International Student Request Portal: (Please select "letter request") [international.utsa.edu](https://international.utsa.edu/)

Here is a link to our template for the department to complete: <https://global.utsa.edu/forms/Letter_of_Hiring_Template.pdf>

When ISS receives the letter, ISS will also generate a letter for the students to take to the local Social Security Administration Office to request the SSN.

Here is some additional information regarding the SSN: <https://global.utsa.edu/forms/Applying_for_a_Social_Security_Card.pdf>

The UTSA Payroll can also assign a temporary number to get the appointment in the system while you wait for the issuance of the SSN. Contact Payroll at [payroll@utsa.edu](mailto:payroll@utsa.edu).

##### I have questions about Health Insurance

Waiver Deadline: September 13, 2021

Apply for Waiver: <https://utsa.myahpcare.com/waiver>

Insurance Information: <https://utsa.myahpcare.com/>

Contact: [Insurance.advisor@utsa.edu](mailto:Insurance.advisor@utsa.edu)

Coverage Dates for Fall:

Continuing Students – September 1 through December 31

New Students – August 1 through December 31

Cost for Fall:

Continuing Students – $1,066

New Students – $1,066 + $272 (month of August)

**Health Insurance automatically billed at the time of class enrollment**

(FAQ STOLEN FROM INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FAQ OF UTSA)

# Study in Texas

As anyone who has ever visited Texas will tell you, this state has much more to offer international students than modern day American cowboys riding their wild horses through cactus-sprinkled, sun-kissed desert landscapes (although that’s a pretty exciting part of its cultural heritage as well!). The truth is less than 10% of Texas is desert terrain. That said, the most populated towns and major cities of Texas (which include Houston, San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth, Greater Houston, El Paso, and the state’s capital, Austin) are spread along its prairies, grasslands, forests, and coastal regions.

The life blood of Texas is certain to be found in its rich American history of rebellion from foreign rule and fiery drive for freedom. What is more, it fuels the identity and personality of the free-spirited, fun-loving Texas people! For international students in Texas, getting to study in Texas and interact with its vibrant people is the doorway to experiencing all kinds of exciting adventures and, with a population of over 24 million residents, getting to meet these adventurous young souls while you study in Texas should be easy! Mix, mingle, and make your dreams of southwestern-inspired adventure known—then get ready to embrace the amazing sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of southwestern charm and entertainment!

In northern Texas, you may find yourself at Dinosaur Valley State Park (famous for its preserved dinosaur tracks), Fossil Rim Wildlife Refuge, the Dallas Zoo, Creation Evidence Museum (housing an exhibit dedicated to evidence for Creationism), Cavanaugh Flight Museum, Six Flags World Famous Amusement Park, the annual State Fair of Texas, and Billy Bob’s Texas (one of the world’s largest nightclubs!). Should you find yourself studying in Houston or eastern Texas, you’ll want to check out the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, the Texas State Railroad (where you can take a ride on an authentic old steam train), and NASA’s Johnson Space Center (where you can tour and learn about the U.S. space program).

If you need additional funding to study in Texas, explore financial resource options like scholarships and loans.

[Learn More](https://www.internationalstudent.com/international-financial-aid/)

International students who study in Texas also plan trips to southern Texas and the coast where they visit San Jacinto Monument & Museum (and learn all about the Texas struggle for independence) and the USS Lexington Aircraft Carrier Museum in Corpus Christi. Many international students in Texas choose to reside in the San Antonio area and make sure to visit the (official) Texas State Arts & Crafts Fair (which takes place over Memorial Day weekend each year), Vanishing Texas River Cruises (which offers cruises through river canyons and breathtaking scenery), Natural Bridge Caverns (authentic hill country caverns), the Institute of Texan Cultures (museum exhibiting the varied ethnic heritage that makes up Texas), and the 777 Game Ranch (which offers weekend nature vacations, desert sports, hunting, and fishing).

Finally, international students in Texas may find themselves living in or being brought to West Texas to explore the stunning Caverns of Sonora (underground formations near the town of Sonora) or the Permian Basic Petroleum Museum (to learn about the history and future of petroleum in this oil-rich state). Maybe your new Texan peers will want to take you on a wild adventure of river rafting through Texas canyons, or hiking, biking, and four-wheeling through the Big Bend area.

While in Western Texas, make sure to also visit Buffalo Gap Historic Village (an authentic pioneer village), the Confederate Air Force Flying Museum (which displays various antique aircraft), view ‘Texas! The Musical (#1 outdoor musical in America), see the stars at the McDonald Observatory high in the mountains, check out the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, investigate the mysterious Marfa Lights (ominous lights supposedly haunting the small town of Marfa), visit the Fort Davis Historic Site, or tour the Alamo Village (where the movie ‘The Alamo’ was filmed!).

Along with these attractions, and regardless of where in Texas you choose to live and study, also get ready to enjoy the amazing, southwestern inspired fine-dining cuisine, world-famous fairground foods, and country, home-style cooking that Texas is notoriously famous for (just watch those waistlines!). Wherever international students decide to live and study in Texas, they will find adventurous people, incredible places, and new experiences await all their senses!

(text stolen from: <https://www.internationalstudent.com/study_usa/state_guides/texas/>)

* **Texas offers some of the nation's top-rated private universities and public colleges.**
* **Texas is among the most popular states in the nation for international students.**
* **International students can find a wealth of outdoor activities and entertainment venues.**
* **The second-biggest state in the nation is also one of the most culturally diverse.**

More international students attend colleges and universities in the U.S. than in any other country. In the 2021-2022 academic year, before pandemic-related travel restrictions, [over 948,000 international students](https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/enrollment-trends/) enrolled in U.S. institutions.

These students travel to the U.S. for many reasons, including its top-rated universities, cultural diversity, and student support. About [77,000 international students](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/international-students-united-states-2020#geographic_distribution_leading_inst) made Texas their home in 2019, representing the third most popular state in the nation for study abroad.

In Texas, international students can find top research facilities and educational programs, great year-round weather, a vast and diverse landscape, and some of the friendliest people in the country. Texas is among the states with the most Fortune 500 companies. It also offers a lower cost of living than many other states.

According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_330.20.asp) (NCES), full-time nonresident undergraduate students attending colleges in Texas in 2020-2021 paid, on average, about $25,471-$37,450 in tuition and required fees.

Use this guide to learn about [studying in the U.S.](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/study-in-united-states/) and the [best colleges in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/colleges/).

## Why Study in Texas?

Students find many [reasons to study in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/reasons-to-study-in-texas/). Texas offers an array of academic choices, including prestigious private institutions that work closely with NASA and leading public research universities.

The state also claims the [ninth-largest economy by gross domestic product](https://businessintexas.com/news/texas-enters-2021-as-worlds-9th-largest-economy-by-gdp/) in the world and ranks 15th among U.S. states with the lowest cost of living.

As the second-largest state in the nation and one of the warmest, it also provides extensive year-round outdoor activities. Students can find beaches, deserts, and mountains within its borders.

Rodeo is the state sport of Texas, and students can find many opportunities to ride horses throughout its many state parks. Other popular activities include rock climbing and hiking as well as swimming, kayaking, and rafting in the many rivers and lakes.

Texas also offers some of the top live music venues in the nation, and students soon learn that Texas barbeque is a way of life. If you're wondering if it's [worth studying in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/is-studying-in-texas-worth-it/), the answer is a resounding yes.

### Studying in Texas: Pros and Cons

#### **Pros**

* **Cultural Diversity:** A study conducted in 2021 ranked Texas as the fourth most culturally diverse state in the nation.
* **Academic Quality and Opportunity:** Students can choose between prestigious private universities and top-ranked public colleges.
* **Cost of Living:** Texas [ranks 15th in states](https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series) with the lowest cost of living, falling below the national average in all costs except utilities.
* **Access to Entertainment and Outdoor Recreation:** Texas offers year-round outdoor activities and world-class music festivals.

#### **Cons**

* **Tuition Costs:** While Texas falls below the national average for out-of-state tuition at public colleges, private institutions are above average.
* **Unclear Admission Requirements:** A [study in 2019](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1234714.pdf) found college websites in Texas particularly difficult to navigate for international students.
* **Transportation:** As the second biggest state, Texas offers some challenges in public transportation.
* **Affordability:** Austin, one of the most popular cities for college students, sees significantly [higher-than-average rental costs](https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/city/texas/austin).

## How Much Does It Cost to Study in Texas?

The [cost to study and live in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/studying-living-cost/) varies considerably by area and institution. For example, according to NCES, the average tuition and required fees for out-of-state students attending public universities in Texas in 2019-2020 came to almost $25,000. At private institutions, it was just over $36,000.

By comparison, the average tuition and required fees in the U.S. for nonresident students at public and private institutions totaled about $27,000 and $32,800, respectively.

Some of Texas' highly regarded private universities come with high tuition. For example, the total cost for attending [Rice University](https://financialaid.rice.edu/cost-attendance) in 2023-2024 came to about $78,278. This included room and board, books, and personal expenses.

Room and board at public colleges in 2019-2020 in Texas averaged about $10,100, falling below the national average. For students looking to live off-campus, rents vary considerably by city. For example, the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment is about [$1,109 in College Station](https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/college-station-tx) and [$1,599 in Austin](https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/austin-tx) as of March 2023.

## How Do I Choose a College in Texas?

International students in Texas should consider several factors when [choosing a college](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/choosing-a-college/). This includes ensuring the college offers programs that suit their academic and career goals. Additional considerations include the level of international student support services and a school's accreditation.

The following steps can help international students decide which college is right for them.

### Identify Your Interests

Whatever college you choose may be your home for four or more years. Make sure it's a good match by considering if it aligns with your passions and interests. In addition to areas of study, this includes real-world opportunities, a school's culture, and student activities on and off campus.

### Research Your Options

Students can narrow their options by researching colleges and programs via reputable resources and [college rankings](https://www.bestcolleges.com/rankings-guide/) that utilize best practices. Visiting a prospective college's website can also give you an idea of the institution's offerings, culture, and support services.

A few of the data points to consider include the school's admission, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. These factors can help determine a college's student success rate. Additionally, research your programs of interest, including the courses, concentrations, and fieldwork and internship requirements.

Take a look at the student-to-faculty ratio, the size of the college, and the number of students. You can find international students in Texas at some of the [best colleges in Austin](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/austin/), College Station, [Dallas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/dallas/), [Houston](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/houston/), and [San Antonio](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/san-antonio/).

### Determine Location

International students can discover Texas' top-rated colleges in big cities and small towns.In fact, many of the top-rated universities are located in the [best college towns in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/best-college-towns/).

For example, College Station, a town of just over 120,000 people, is home to Texas A&M University, where more than [6,000 international students](https://admissions.tamu.edu/apply/international/international-freshman) attend college. At Rice University in Houston, the largest city in Texas, international students make up [14% of the class](https://admission.rice.edu/apply/class-profile) of 2025.

Consider the size of the town and the school as well as its location when determining the right college for you.

### Evaluate Your Eligibility

Make sure to review a college's admission requirements and assess your eligibility before applying. These may include a qualifying GPA, official SAT or ACT scores, and proof of English proficiency. Students may demonstrate proficiency through minimum TOEFL or IELTS test scores and minimum ACT English or SAT evidence-based reading and writing scores.

### Consider Cost

NCES reported that the average cost for tuition and required fees at Texas colleges for nonresident undergraduates ranged from about $25,000-$37,000 in 2020-2021.

International students should also consider the cost of textbooks, transportation, health insurance, rent, and food. Cities throughout Texas vary widely in these costs. For example, the cost of living in Dallas, home to the University of Texas at Dallas, comes in at about [3% above the national average](https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Texas-Dallas), as of March 2023, according to Payscale. Houston has a cost of living that is [8% lower](https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Texas-Houston) than the national average.

While international students may not receive federal financial aid, some colleges and third-party organizations fund scholarships for these students. Students may also be eligible for employment opportunities, such as on-campus work.

### Review Support Services

Some colleges excel at offering support services for international students. These resources can play a significant role in a student's success.

A few of the student services to look for include pre-arrival support, extended orientation programs, English as a second language programs, and [mentorship programs](https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/college-mentor-student-success/). [College academic advisors](https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/ask-an-academic-advisor/) can also act as guides, helping you achieve your educational and career goals.

## How Do I Apply to College in Texas?

Students should carefully review each school's requirements since the [undergraduate application process](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/undergraduate-application-guide/) varies by school and program. Typically, students apply through a school's website. Many institutions also accept the [Common Application](https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/what-is-common-app/), an online platform that lets you apply to multiple schools at one time.

In addition to the application form, many colleges require ACT or SAT scores, [college entrance exams](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/college-entrance-exams/) that test a student's readiness for higher education. For nonnative English speakers, applicants may need to submit [TOEFL](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/toefl-ibt-test/) or IELTS scores to show English proficiency.

Additionally, candidates must submit official high school transcripts. If not in English or patterned after the U.S. grading system, applicants may need to obtain a certified English translation and an evaluation of grades based on U.S. standards. Additional requirements may include a [college application essay](https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/college-application-essays/) and 2-3 letters of recommendation.

## How to Obtain a Student Visa to Study in Texas

International students must obtain a [student visa](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html) to study in Texas. The F-1 visa is the most common visa issued to students for academic studies. Before students apply for their visas, they must be accepted by a school approved by the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).

Once accepted, the school provides students with an I-20 certificate of eligibility. Prospective students must pay an application fee and complete the DS-160 nonimmigrant visa application form. Next, applicants schedule an F-1 visa interview with the U.S. embassy or consulate in their country.

Applicants bring these two forms and a valid passport to the interview. Additional requirements may include proof of financial resources and evidence of their intent to depart the U.S. after finishing their studies.

## Frequently Asked Questions About International Students Studying in Texas

* Collapse All

* Expand All

### Is Texas good for international students?

Texas is the third most popular state in the U.S. for international students. They attend college in the second-largest state in the U.S. for several reasons, including the top-rated colleges, great weather, and an abundance of outdoor activities. Texas also ranks as one of the most culturally diverse states.

This vast state is also known as the oil capital of the U.S. and a growing hub for technology, biomedical sciences, and aerospace. Texas is among the U.S. states with the most Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, many places in the state offer affordable education and a low cost of living.

### Is Texas expensive for international students?

The average tuition and fees at public colleges for nonresident undergraduates in Texas is less than the national average. Additionally, while the average tuition for public colleges is slightly higher than states like Arkansas, Florida, and Missouri, Texas offers lower rates than many other states, including California, Michigan, and Vermont.

The cost for international students in Texas also varies significantly, depending on the school and its location. Some public colleges in small towns offer reduced tuition rates and a lower cost of living. For example, the cost of living in [Lubbock, Texas](https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Texas-Lubbock), is lower than the national average, according to Payscale.

### What are the best colleges for international students in Texas?

The best colleges vary depending on students' academic and life experience goals. Texas is a large state with over 140 colleges and universities. Some of these schools are known for their engineering, technology, and agriculture programs, while others are nationally ranked research institutions.

Some of the [colleges in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/features/) with the largest percentage of international students include Rice University, Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at Dallas, and the University of Texas at Austin.

However, the best college for international students is the one that offers a program that ignites their passion and provides the activities and culture they enjoy.

### What are the cheapest universities in Texas for international students?

Students can find many [affordable colleges in Texas](https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/affordable-colleges/). Some of the cheapest universities in Texas for international students include the University of Houston-Downtown, the University of Houston-Victoria, Sam Houston State University, and Tarleton State University. Undergraduate tuition and fees at these schools can range from about $12,000-$22,000.

Remember that room and board at these institutions can add on another $10,000-$11,400. Additional cost considerations include insurance, books and supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. In towns with a lower cost of living, students might reduce costs by rooming together in an apartment.

### How do I get a student visa for Texas?

The F-1 visa is the most common visa issued to full-time college students in Texas. First, prospective students must apply to a SEVP-approved school and get accepted. Once accepted, the school issues an I-20 certificate of eligibility form.

Students schedule an interview at their country's U.S. embassy or consulate and take the 1-20 form, along with the nonimmigrant visa form DS-160, to the appointment. Additional documents include proof of sufficient funds to cover all educational and living expenses and their plan for returning to their home country after graduation. Applicants must also possess a valid passport.

text taken from:

https://www.bestcolleges.com/united-states/texas/international-students-guide/

also, anything from this link: <https://www.uiw.edu/studyabroad/incoming-students/index.html> and subsequent nests, some of which is here below:

<https://www.uiw.edu/studyabroad/incoming-students/course-offerings.html>

<https://www.uiw.edu/studyabroad/incoming-students/nomination-and-application.html>

<https://www.uiw.edu/studyabroad/incoming-students/housing-and-meals.html>

<https://www.uiw.edu/studyabroad/incoming-students/visa-and-insurance.html>