

ABOUT:

After you've savored every moment of your red-carpet welcome (not really, but we do get you home safe & sound!), and after you've gotten over your initial homesickness, you need to think about starting your school life here. Some tips that'll help you through your first few months at UTSA.

As soon as you reach, it is best you call home and let your parents know of your safe arrival. Ask a senior or the person coming to pick you up and they will advise you on how to call.

Important:

Try to make as many friends as possible. The best way to get through your first few months in UTSA is having good company and good friends. Seniors here are extremely helpful, so try your best to get to know them!!

APARTMENT:

Most of the Indian students will end up staying on campus in either Alpine apartments or in Chase Hill Apartments. These apartments are in great demand and hence you need to book one as soon as possible. However, in case you applied for one early you should be able to get one. There are few other good apartments close by where you could stay. You do have a UTSA shuttle service operating and in case you do not fall in its route you could always use the VIA (transportation system – which is free for city wide travel once you login with your UTSA email address on the app). In case you stay in apartment close by, you could probably get yourself a bike to commute to and from the university too. Do check out the housing section for more information on the options available.

GROCERIES:

Groceries + Desi Joints

An integral part of our lives out here is doing grocery shopping! There are some local grocery stores like HEB, Walmart which are really close by. We can easily reach to these places by bus. You can also request one of seniors to give you a ride, since everyone needs to go there anyway. There are some great Indian grocery stores as well where you can find all kinds of Indian readymade masala (like Parampara or Badshah masala). You can get some Indian homemade spices if you wish and other spices (like cloves, chili powder, etc.) These are a little far and your visits to these places will be less frequent. Even these are readily available in the Indian store; you might want to get something if you wish, so that you don't have to go to the Indian store as soon as your apartment is set up. The bottom-line is groceries are not a problem at all, and you can get everything out here easy. You'll be amazed on seeing the quality of vegetables etc. and more so by seeing their size!!! For the true lovers of India food, there are not many Indian restaurants close to the campus, but you can always move around for the love of food. There are numerous fast food joints, sandwich places, pizza hangouts close to school. Also, you do not need to get stock of dal/rice from India which would last you for a week. The seniors with whom you will be staying with will have these. Unless you plan on moving in immediately into your new apartment, you are pretty much fine not bringing such stuff.

BANK ACCOUNT:

It is best you open your bank account as soon as possible. A few of the banks being Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Frost Bank, etc. Once you reach UTSA, seniors here will be able to give you more information on the bank accounts and the different banks. Opening a bank account here is simple and normally takes around 30 to 45 minutes.

REGISTRATION:

Orientation: Attend the orientation. It really does help. Not only do you get a lot of info but you meet others who are in the same boat which makes life easy, since it is always better to do things together; that way you are sure that you have not missed anything. You will also get some stuff such as the school map, which will be your savior for the first few weeks when you start hunting around for your classes, and some other info that you'll need to know as an international student.

Social Security Number & Texas ID: At the orientation, they will tell you about trips to the public safety office to get your social security card as well as the Texas ID. Just tag along with these groups and your work will be done easily. Note that social security numbers are issued only to students having an on-campus job.

Registration: You need to register for 3 courses (some brave ones register for 4), but 3 is a must for graduate programs. Check your admission letter to see if you have a conditional admit and whether you must take any pre-requisite courses. If you have done these courses during undergrad, you can waive off these pre-requisites with the approval of a graduate advisor. During registration, you will be allotted a graduate advisor, who will be able to help you or at least guide you to the right person. Seniors are a big help when it comes to choosing courses. They'll tell you which courses are programming intensive and so on. This will help you decide the course combination that you will be able to handle during the semester. Just ask questions; you'll find most people to be genuinely happy to help you in any way they can.

RA/TA: It is a good idea to get in touch with professors with the help of seniors to apply for TA/RA positions. The sooner you apply, the better the chances of getting those positions.

Non RA/TA: It is a good idea to start approaching profs asking them to help you choose courses for the semester. You can also ask them whether they could consider your application for assistantship. They will not commit immediately but they may suggest that you take specific courses. Your good performance in these courses in the first semester might land you an assistantship in the second semester. You should also try for on-campus employment. For this you will have to fill out an employment form at the human resources office. Prepare a work resume (1 page preferably). Also visit the cafeteria, bookstore and other places where there is a good possibility of getting a part-time job (your seniors will be able to guide you in this regard, once you are here).

Holds: Before registering you will have to clear several holds. You will not be allowed to register until all holds are cleared. Clearing these holds as soon as possible is imperative since otherwise, you might miss out on a popular course. Some common holds are:

- 1) Official transcripts not submitted
- 2) Health insurance hold- TB test not submitted

You'll have to do a little bit of running around, but it'll get done. Find out what your holds are and get them cleared as soon as possible. This will save you a lot of trouble during registration. The best place to inquire about your holds is the Records office, in the basement of the library building. Once your holds are cleared and you have registered for your courses, you are all set for the grind during the semester. We are all looking forward to meeting you. Come join our student family!