International Programs

International cross-cultural awareness and understanding on the part of all UTSA students and scholars is crucial to their attainment of effective leadership, competitiveness, prosperity, and success in a global world. Making it possible for international students and scholars to attend and teach at UTSA and offering UTSA students and scholars the opportunity to study abroad at other universities greatly promotes international awareness, understanding, and the exchange of world knowledge.

Additionally, the office processes and coordinates all international academic agreements between UTSA and foreign institutions in coordination with the Vice Provost for International Initiatives.

The core mission of the Office of International Programs (http://international.utsa.edu/office-of-international-programs/office-of-international) is to enhance cross-cultural understanding among UTSA students by:

- welcoming and supporting international students and scholars attending UTSA from other countries while assisting them in meeting the visa requirements set forth by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service and the Department of State;
- encouraging UTSA students to seek out and participate in educational opportunities abroad;
- strengthening scholarly UTSA exchange programs with universities in other countries;
- mobilizing UTSA resources toward the support of international students, scholars, and education; and
- influencing university policy toward embracing and institutionalizing the globalizations of UTSA curriculum, faculty, and student body.

International Student Services

Support and assistance are provided to all international students before and after their arrival at UTSA. International Student Services (ISS) (http://international.utsa.edu/about-iss/about-our-services) conducts orientation programs to help new international students understand federal regulations governing their stay and to inform them about services available at other UTSA offices. ISS advisors assist students with maintaining proper status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency and the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) that is managed by the federal government. Immigration information, forms, and advice are provided to international students who are employed at UTSA and off-campus with proper authorization.

Border County Program

The Border County Program (http://international.utsa.edu/financial-aid-resources/border-county-program), coordinated by the Office of International Programs/International Student Services, enables students from Mexico who have limited financial resources to enroll at state institutions at resident tuition rates. A Border County student must be a citizen or permanent resident of Mexico, meet the admission requirements of UTSA, demonstrate financial need, and re-enroll into the program each year.

Education Abroad Services

The Education Abroad Services (http://international.utsa.edu/education-abroad-services) staff helps students study abroad by providing assistance, support, and resources on program options. Participating in international learning experiences offers life-changing opportunities, such as living with a host family and learning a new language in Spain, participating in an engineering research project in Germany, or serving as an intern in a clinic in Costa Rica. Participation in education abroad programs allows students to build knowledge skills, cultural awareness, and self-confidence.

These programs provide the opportunity for students to study internationally while acquiring academic credit toward a degree at UTSA. The Education Abroad Services staff assists UTSA students in finding the right program to match their academic and personal interests. Education abroad programs can help meet major or minor requirements, fulfill general education requirements, or help a student achieve proficiency in a second language. Students may also be able to participate in an internship or conduct research for a final thesis while abroad.

International Exchanges

UTSA maintains bilateral exchange and consortia agreements with a number of international institutions, including Canada, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Spain. Under these programs, participants pay tuition to UTSA and all other costs to the partner university or host locations.

International Scholar Services

International Scholar Services (http://international.utsa.edu/utsa-policy/about-international-faculty-scholar-services) provides support and assistance to University faculty and staff in the recruitment and hiring of foreign nationals. The International Scholar Services staff maintains the most current knowledge of issues related to immigration and nationality law, U.S. Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, and taxation of foreign nationals in order to assist international faculty and scholars in achieving their goals and objectives while at the University. Additionally, the International Scholar Services ensures University policies and guidelines are observed and that these policies and guidelines conform to federal and state governmental rules and regulations. The International Scholar Services staff ensures effective working relationships with federal and state agencies such as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of State. The International Scholar Services conducts professional consultation and training for University departments on issues related to the hiring of foreign nationals.

Health Insurance for International Students

The University of Texas System Board of Regents (http://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules-regulations/rules/50402-health-insurance-requirements-international-students) requires all international students to have medical insurance compliant with the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). All international students holding a nonimmigrant visa status are required, except under certain circumstances as outlined by The University of Texas Board of Regents, to purchase and maintain the UT System-approved comprehensive Student Health Insurance Plan (UT SHIP) while enrolled at UTSA. International students are automatically enrolled in the UT SHIP at the time of registration. The charge for the insurance coverage appears as a required fee on the student fee bill. The policy, recommended under the UT System, offers unlimited maximum benefits per covered person, per policy year in major medical/hospitalization for each illness, accident, and injury, with a $500 deductible. Medical evacuation and
repatriation benefits are also provided. It is necessary for students to have comprehensive health insurance to ensure that they have the best possible health care and to protect them from unexpected financial crises.

The UT System has established criteria in which an international student can request a waiver to the student health insurance plan by providing alternate health insurance coverage. In order to be approved for a waiver, the alternate health coverage must meet or exceed the requirements as set in the UT System regulation.

Those international students classified as Texas residents for tuition purposes must still enroll in the UT System Health Insurance Plan unless approved for a waiver according to the UT System established criteria.