

International Student Handbook

Chattahoochee Technical College



WELCOME

Welcome to Chattahoochee Technical College. Thank you for choosing Chattahoochee Tech to further your education. We look forward to helping you have a rewarding experience here.

This handbook is designed to help you learn more about our college, the greater Atlanta area, what the International Office can do for you and what you can expect when you attend Chattahoochee Technical College. It is our desire to provide you with helpful information to make your experience at Chattahoochee a good one. The International Office is here to assist you so it is our pleasure to be of service to you and answer your questions.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

We offer admissions assistance, immigration assistance, and support services to our international students on student visas and to all other students who are not native to the United States. In addition we support faculty and staff to enhance and support the intercultural and international aspects of the college. In order to ensure the College's compliance with federal laws and to enhance international retention rates, we offer the following services to non-immigrant students: Admission services, orientation programs, immigration advising and services, personal advising, advocacy, student programming, and leadership development

Location:

Main Campus: Chattahoochee Technical College
980 South Cobb Drive
Marietta, GA. 30060
Building G
Fax: (770) 528-5817
Website: www.chattahoocheetech.edu/prospective/internationaladmissions/

Mailing Address:

International Office
Chattahoochee Technical College
980 South Cobb Drive
Marietta, GA 30060

Staff:

Greg Moor, International Services Coordinator
770-528-4528
gmoor@chattahoocheetech.edu

Ingrid Galinat, International Student Advisor
770-528-5804
igalinat@chattahoocheetech.edu

Advising:

The International Office is open Monday- Thursday 9:00-5:00 pm. and Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm.

SOME COMMON INTERNATIONAL OFFICE PROCEDURES

Please call the International Office to make an appointment and to discuss documents you will need to bring to the meeting.

International Admissions

3 to 4 months before you wish to enroll in Chattahoochee Tech contact the International Office for international admission information. Carefully review the information on the CTC website, click on Prospective Student, click on International Students, click on International Admissions. Find the student admission category that applies to you. Contact the International Office with any questions or needs.

Travel Signature

2 weeks prior to International travel, have most current I-20 and current passport.

SSN Letter

Student must be in the USA a minimum of 10 days, in SEVIS for 2 days, & have an employment letter.

Optional Practical Training

Make appointment with International Office 4 months prior to finishing degree, or before completion of 60 day grace period. See OPT handouts for complete information on procedures.

Other Work Options

On campus work is permissible for in status student visa holders. However work availability is very limited at CTC. After 2 completed semesters one may apply for off-campus work permission in the Pre-Completion Practical Training or Economic Hardship category. Check with the International Office for details and qualifications

Transfer Out

Within 60 days after end of final term at CTC and /or acceptance letter from school you will transfer to.

Request for Reduced Course Load

Before you drop any class, get approval from International Office F-1 or M-1 advisor! You must obtain letter from academic advisor or letter from doctor.

Reinstatement

Must be handled immediately to avoid arrest or deportation proceedings

Change of Status

3-4 months before you wish to change status and begin classes. Student may change status within the U.S. by application or apply for F-1 or M-1 status outside of US.

Change of Program

Notify office of any change of program. Bring new financial documents as well as complete admission steps for new program.

Change of Address

Immigration requires you notify Immigration or International Office of any change in address within 10 days of change.

YOU NEED TO KNOW

Student Support Services of CTC has published an excellent Student Resource Guide that can answer many of your questions regarding college resources, college telephone numbers and community resources. The International Student Handbook is designed to provide information helpful to student visa holders and other non-native students who are new to the United States and the local area.

DRIVER'S LICENCE

In order to get your license, visit the address below to find the Driver's License Customer Service Center closest to you. Check the website for office hours before you go.

<http://www.dds.ga.gov/locations/dllocations.aspx?csc=56>

You will need the following items:

- Passport
- I-94 card
- I-20
- Proof of local residence (signed lease agreement, utility bill with your address and name, bank statement with your address and name)
- \$20
- Social Security card

If you do not have a social security number, you will need to obtain a Social Security Number Card DENIAL NOTICE from a local Social Security Administration office before applying for a driver's license. Take all your immigration documents with you and tell the agent that you would like the denial notice. Bring the denial notice when you apply for a driver's license.

Here is information on the Marietta office.

Address: 1605 County Services Pkwy
Marietta GA. 30008

Tuesday - Friday 7:30 - 6:30
Saturday 7:30 am - 12 noon

Weekday knowledge

tests

must begin by:

CDL: 5:45 pm

All Others: 6:00 pm

Saturday knowledge

tests

must begin by:

CDL: 11:15 am

All Others: 11:30 am

Full-time student visa holders who wish to drive in Georgia have the option of using an existing home country license or obtaining a Georgia driver's license. If you decide to

drive with your home country license, you will need to keep your CTC card and proof of current CTC enrollment in your vehicle at all times—this is required by law. You will also need to keep a copy of the regulation 40-4-21(b) in your car at all times. A drawback to keeping your existing license is that car insurance will be higher for you than with a Georgia license.

If you decide to get a Georgia driver's license, you will be required to give up your foreign license to the Department of Driver Services. Students who do not have a license from their home country but who wish to obtain a Georgia license must take the written and road driving tests.

EMPLOYMENT

F-1 students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week on campus as soon as your studies begin. You will learn more about employment at the mandatory International Student Orientation. If you have questions about working on or off campus at any time during your stay at Chattahoochee Technical College, stop by the International office and talk with an advisor.

The CTC Career Center can help you find a job on campus or an internship position off campus. They can help you practice and prepare for a job interview, refine your resume (CV) and cover letter, learn how to network, and many other things. The Career center also offers job listings.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS (SSN)

Who is eligible for a SSN?

An F-1 or M-1 student visa holder may obtain a Social Security Number ONLY if you have an offer of employment on campus. You cannot apply until you have an actual job offer. If you are authorized for OPT or CPT you are eligible to apply for a social security number. Students with F-2, H-4, B-1 or B-2 status may not be employed and cannot obtain a SSN. For noncitizens of the U.S. the SSN is for the employer to use for wage and tax reporting and for you to use for Internal Revenue tax returns.

SSN Application

You must receive a formal job offer letter from your potential employer which includes the employer EIN#. Student visa holders request a letter from the International Office to support your SSN application. You will need to provide us with a copy of the employer letter.

Prepare the following items to take with you when you apply

Passport, I-94 Card, and completed Form SS-5 (available on the SSA website at

<http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html>) Student visa holders take valid Form I-20, employer letter, and International Office letter.

Wait at least 10 days after you initially enter the United States to visit the Social Security Administration (SSA) office. If your application is successful the card will be mailed to you in approximately two to four weeks.

You will find banks, apartment owners, telephone companies, and many other businesses may ask you for a SSN even though you may not be eligible for one. Those businesses should be able to provide you the service without a SSN. However if they do not want to help you, the International office will write a letter explaining why you cannot obtain a SSN.

TAXES

Filing federal income tax forms is the personal responsibility of each international student. All F-1 or M-1 students and their dependents, regardless of whether or not they have earned money, are required to file an annual tax form. Tax forms must be postmarked no later than April 15 of each year.

If you were present in the U.S. for one day or more as an F-1 or M-1 student, you must complete a tax report called a Form 8843. Complete the federal tax Form 1040NR-EZ.

If you have to file a federal tax return, you must also file a Georgia state tax return.

For more information on Federal taxes, visit www.irs.gov. For information on Georgia taxes, see www.dor.ga.gov.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

All student visa holders are required to attend the International Student Orientation held usually the day before your first semester begins. At the International student orientation you will be notified of any outstanding immigration documents you need to submit to the International Office. Topics covered include F and M visa regulations. You will be required to sign the responsibility form signifying you understand the regulations pertaining to your status. Other topics will provide information to assist you with cultural transition to life in the United States. You will learn what to expect in a CTC classroom and learn about campus services and programs. Any questions you have will be answered.

An additional benefit of the international orientation is the chance to connect with other new students to form friendships and meet current students for advice and support.

Bring to the International Student Orientation your passport, I-20, I-94 card and any other immigration documents (including dependents' documents) that you may have.

Remember that U.S. immigration regulations will not allow international students to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date on the Form I-20 so prepare to come to the U.S. in plenty of time to get settled, register for classes and attend the International Student Orientation.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Currently, the college does not require international students to purchase health insurance but it is highly recommended you do. In the United States, the government does not pay for health care. Health care in the United States is very expensive so health insurance is a wise investment in case a medical need occurs.

Health Insurance Plans that you can purchase:

International Student Health Insurance Plans

www.isoa.org

Compass International Student Scholar Health Insurance Plan

www.compassbenefits.com

TW Lord

www.twlord.com

HEALTH CARE

For any kind of emergency, call 911.

Hospitals

<http://www.wellstar.org>

WellStar Cobb Hospital- Austell

WellStar Douglas Hospital- Douglasville

WellStar Kennestone Hospital- Marietta

WellStar Paulding Hospital- Dallas

WellStar Windy Hill Hospital- Marietta

OTHER MEDICAL RESOURCES

The Cobb & Douglas Public Health Centers provide personal health services for children, adolescents, and adults. To make an appointment or for more information about services, call the Public Health Center nearest you.

All services are provided to Cobb and Douglas county residents without regard to age, color, creed, national origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, race, religion or sexual orientation. Fees are income based. Medicaid and Medicare for services are accepted.

<http://www.cobbanddouglaspublichealth.org/AboutUs/CenterLocations/index.php>

POST OFFICE

Marietta
257 Lawrence St. NE
Marietta, GA 30060-9998
(800) ASK-USPS
(800) 275-8777
(770) 590-9771
Fax: (770) 424-1091

Business Hours: Monday -Friday. 8:30am-6:00pm. Sat. 8:30am-1:00pm. Sunday closed

Last Daily Collection : Monday-Saturday.5:00pm

Some Ways to Find Off-Campus Housing

- Pro-move: 404.842.0042
- A&A Apartment Locators: 770.394.2088
- www.craigslist.com/atlanta
- www.ajchomefinder.com/apartments

Government Links

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): www.uscis.gov

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): www.ice.gov

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS): <https://egov.ice.gov/sevis/>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP): www.cbp.gov

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ): www.usdoj.gov

U.S. Department of State (DOS): www.state.gov

Bureau of Consular Affairs-U.S. Department of State: www.travel.state.gov

U.S. Embassies and Consulates: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

Non-U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Washington D.C.: www.embassy.org/embassies/

All Embassies and Consulates Worldwide (U.S. and Non-U.S.): www.embassyworld.com

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL): www.dol.gov

Department of Education: www.ed.gov

ACADEMICS

You may find the educational system in the United States and at Chattahoochee Tech to be different from what you experienced in your country. Here are some useful tips.

The Student/Instructor Relationship

The student/instructor relationship in the U.S. is generally more informal than in other countries. It is acceptable and expected for students to ask questions and discuss topics with the instructor. In some classrooms the instructor may allow students to speak without raising their hand and being recognized.

Academic Adjustment and Success

The instructor may prefer students to discuss ideas rather than just sit and listen. The manner in which you express yourself is important so acknowledge the instructor or fellow classmates' position on a topic before you offer your viewpoint.

Usually on the first day of the semester the instructor will hand out an outline of course objectives, due dates for assignments, how the grade will be determined and other pertinent information. This outline is called a syllabus.

Missing Class

The course syllabus will usually explain the instructor's policy on missing classes. In general you are expected to go to class on time, to notify your teacher ahead of time if you will be absent. It is better to be late to class than to skip class. If you must miss class because of illness, you may need a doctor's excuse, especially if you have a long illness and you miss several classes.

Grading

Grades are on a 4.0 scale.

A = 4.0 - Excellent

B = 3.0 - Good

C = 2.0 - Average

D= 1.0 - Poor

F= 0 - Failing

W = Student withdraw from class with a passing mark. This grade will not be included in the GPA.

Before withdrawing from a course consult with the International Office for advisement. Taking less than 12 semester hours is a violation of student status and you are subject to losing your immigration status.

WF = Student withdrew with a failing grade. The F will be averaged into the GPA.

GPA = Grade Point Average is computed by multiplying credit hours by the class numerical grade and then dividing total credits into the total grade points.

Plagiarism means using another person's writing word for word in your work without attributing the copied work to the person who first wrote it. If you plagiarize, you may suffer serious consequences.

Paying your School fees

Student can make in person payment to Cashier window using cash, money order, credit card or check payable to Chattahoochee Technical College.

Deadlines

See college website for deadlines. You are responsible for paying tuition and fees for all classes registered unless you drop them by the deadline.

Shopping

In most cases in the United States prices are fixed on items sold in stores which mean that you cannot bargain for a lower price. The exception to this is buying very expensive items such as a house or car. The posted price generally does NOT include sales tax, which must be calculated in when you make your purchase. The sales tax varies by county, but is usually 6-7% of the purchase price.

Whenever you buy something, ask for a receipt. The receipt proves that you have purchased an item on a particular day in a particular store. If the item is damaged or unsatisfactory and depending on store policy you may be able to return the item and receive your money back if you have the receipt.

Bargain shopping: Goodwill stores sell used clothes and furniture at very low prices. You may find other thrift stores around Atlanta also selling donated items at very low prices. In the summer and during warm months, students who live in suburban areas may come across yard sales and garage sales. In the U.S. many families sell their used furniture, clothes, and many other things in front of their homes for one or two days. This may be the cheapest way to buy items, so don't be afraid to stop and look! While it is not normal to negotiate with sellers in most stores, at yard sales you are free to negotiate prices.

Transportation

Bus services in the Atlanta Metro Area

Fulton County: www.itsmarta.com

Clayton County (C-Tran)
www.web.co.clayton.ga.us/ctran/index/htm

Cobb Community Transit (CCT) www.cobbdot.org

Gwinnett County Transit (GCT)
www.gctransit.com

Xpress services Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb,
Douglas, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Paulding,
and Rockdale counties
www.xpressga.com

Driving

You must have a valid drivers' license to drive a car in the United States.

You are required by law to wear a seatbelt while driving or riding in a car.

You are required to buy and maintain up to date automobile insurance.

Before you buy car insurance, compare prices at different insurance companies. You can visit www.bankrate.com/brm/rate/insurance_home.asp to compare many companies.

Terms you should know about car insurance

Collision: This category covers damage to your vehicle if you are at fault in an accident.

Deductible: If you have a deductible of \$500, for example, you pay the first \$500 towards repairs of your vehicle in case of an accident. The higher your deductible, the cheaper your car insurance rates will be.

Comprehensive: This category covers events other than accidents. Comprehensive insurance includes theft of your vehicle, theft of car stereo etc., or incidents such as if a tree falls on your car, if your windshield is shattered by a rock, etc. As with collision insurance you pay a predetermined deductible.

Money and Banking

Opening a Bank Account: When you open an account, the bank will likely ask you for your passport, Form I-20, and Social Security Number (SSN). If you do not have an SSN, you can tell the bank that international students are not allowed to have SSNs

unless they are employed. If the bank refuses to open an account for you, the International Office can write a letter for you to give to the bank explaining your situation.

U.S. Money Facts

The dollar is also called a buck or a one.

Names of American coins

Penny = 1 cent

Nickel = 5 cents

Dime = 10 cents

Quarter = 25 cents

Half-dollar = 50 cents

Dollar = 100 cents

How to Write a Check

It is customary to use checks rather than paying cash for big purchases. When opening your bank account, you'll be given a check book. Using a check book for paying rent, utility bills etc. help you to keep track of payments.

Here are steps to follow when writing a check:

1. Write the date on which you are "issuing" or writing the check.
2. Write the name of the person or business to which you are making the payment, and draw a line after the name so no one can add to the name.
3. Write the dollar amount in numerals (e.g. \$20.53). Put the first number directly after the dollar sign so that there is no room for someone to add another number between the dollar sign and the first number.
4. Write out the dollar amount, and draw a line to fill the space.
5. Sign your name as it is printed on the check (don't sign in Chinese, Japanese etc.).
6. Write down the purpose of the check in the lower left hand corner, e.g. Groceries, or if it is for payment of an account, write the account number in that space.

Identity Theft

Some thieves take your private information to purchase items using your credit cards or your credit or accessing your bank accounts. Do not give out our credit card numbers, Social Security Number, birthday, address, and other personal information to others unless you trust them. If you believe that someone has stolen your personal information immediately call all your credit card companies and banks to alert them.

Social and Cultural

International Club

The International Club acts as an active support group of the International Community. It serves as a focal point for International student initiatives, concerns, and social functions. The Club sponsors an annual international festival highlighting the cultural diversity of the college and its educational programs of interest. Club members practice cross-cultural skills as they learn to be global leaders and participate in service projects. Selected Club members participate in the annual Georgia International Leadership Conference.

AMIS

The Atlanta Ministry with International Students (AMIS) is a community group that provides friendship and hospitality to international students from all around the Atlanta area. The AMIGO program AMIS has established allows you sign up to spend time with a local family. The family will show you around Atlanta and help you get to know American culture.

You can also sign up for AMIS' Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. During the traditional American Thanksgiving holiday, you can enjoy a special dinner with a host American family. Through the Christmas International House program, you can spend two weeks over the winter holiday with an American family in a different state. For more information on any of these programs, visit <http://www.amis-inc.org/about.asp>

Friends of Internationals

Friends of Internationals is a similar organization to AMIS but it is based closer to the campuses of Chattahoochee Tech. This organization offers transportation to many of the events planned for international students. Events are free or low cost to the student. The events are open to all international students and their families regardless of race, nationality or religious preference. Call Phil and Carol Friesen at 770-617-2840 or Steve and Julia Ringsmuth at 678-457-0927.

Intercultural Community Organizations

- Alliance Francaise, 404.436.1211
- Association Purtorriqueleno de Georgia, 770.436.5750
- Atlanta Holland Club, 404.231.8553
- Chinese Community Center, 770.451.4456
- Cuban Club, 770.451.3477
- Eastern European Social Adjustment Services 404.622.2235
- Goethe-Institute of Atlanta, 404.892.2388
- Pan Asian Community Center, 770.220.0741
- Indian American Cultural Association, 770.436.3719
- Latin American Association, 404.638.1800
- Pan African Orthodox Community Service Center, 404.752.6125
- Persian Community Center, 770.409.8966

Cultural Adjustment to the United States (from Georgia State University International Office)

Everyone who moves to a new country experiences a period of adjustment and adaptation to the new culture. This is sometimes referred to as “culture shock” because of the difficulty of leaving your home culture and living in a new culture. It includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people, and learning the ways of a different country. It also includes being separated from the important people in your life, such as family, friends, colleagues, or teachers.

Culture shock is entirely normal, usually unavoidable, and it does not mean anything bad about you or your new home. Actually, it can be a very significant learning experience, because it makes you more aware of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you in many ways in the future—it’s part of the benefit of international education.

Some typical symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Loneliness
- Avoiding contact with other people, especially with Americans
- Negative feelings and hostility toward American culture and people
- Anger, frustration, confusion
- Tiredness or need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Boredom
- Inability to concentrate or work
- Loss of appetite

- Loss of enjoyment in daily activities
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Depression and feelings of helplessness

Although you can't stop culture shock, there are some things you can do to make yourself feel better. Here are some ideas:

Understand that your reactions are normal Be open-minded and curious about your new environment. Talk with an International Student Advisor about your feelings
 Make friends with Americans and other international students. If you struggle with academics, talk with your professors and advisors.
 Stay busy with academics, hobbies, friends, and other interesting activities.
 Exercise or participate in sports. Try a new activity that you can't do in your home country. Don't forget the reasons you came to America. Be patient with yourself and your new culture.

When culture shock hits you, just remember that it is a normal part of being an international student. You will pass through periods of ups and downs, but in the end it will all be worth it. Try to focus on all the positive and rewarding aspects of your experience!

For more information on American culture and living in the United States, take a look at the following links:

<http://www.inform.umd.edu/ies/resguide/society.html>

<http://www.leaderu.com/isr>

http://www.leaderu.com/isr/lifeinamerica/howtosurvive/tableofcontents_all_linked.html

http://www.isep.org/Family/helping_before.asp

<http://www.internationalstudent.com>

<http://www.lifeintheusa.com/>

U.S. Holidays

- January 1 – New Year's Day. Beginning on the evening of December 31, Americans celebrate the New Year.
- Third Monday in January – Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This holiday celebrates the life of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a leader of the U.S. civil rights movement.

- Third Monday of February – Presidents’ Day. This is a day to remember past U.S. presidents; George Washington, the first U.S. president and Abraham Lincoln.
- February 14 – Valentine’s Day. This holiday is a celebration of love and romance. Valentine cards, candy, or gifts are exchanged.
- March 17—St. Patrick’s Day. Named for the patron saint of Ireland, this day is often celebrated with parades and parties. Many people wear green clothing and put up decorations, even if they’re not of Irish decent! If you do not wear green on this day, classmates may pinch you.
- Springtime (date varies)—Easter. This is a traditional Christian holiday, children decorate Easter eggs and are visited by the Easter Bunny.
- Last Monday in May – Memorial Day. This holiday is a time that Americans remember all of those who died in war for the United States.
- July 4 – Independence Day. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, a document the United States used to declare its independence from England, was signed. Americans celebrate this holiday with picnics and fireworks.
- First Monday in September – Labor Day. This holiday recognizes the efforts of American workers.
- October 31—Halloween. People often celebrate this holiday by wearing costumes and carving scary faces on pumpkins. Children dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating to get candy.
- Last Thursday in November – Thanksgiving. According to legend, the first European settlers of the United States gave thanks for their first harvest season by eating a feast with Native Americans. This is a traditional time for families and friends to eat a big turkey dinner together.
- December 25 – Christmas Day. A traditionally Christian holiday is a time for most people to exchange gifts, decorate homes, and attend gatherings and parties for the few weeks preceding December 25.

MEASUREMENT EQUIVALENTS

Weight

1 Kilogram = 2.2 U.S. pounds = 4 3/8 cups = 1000 grams

454 grams = 1 U.S. pounds = 16 ounces = 1 cup

100 grams = 3.5 ounces

28.3 grams = 1 ounce = 2 tablespoons

Capacity

1 liter = 4 cups + 3 1/2 tablespoons = 1.06 quarts (liquid)

1 cup (liquid) = 2.4 deciliters

1 deciliter = 7 tablespoons

1 cuillère a café ou the (coffee spoon) = 1 teaspoon = 2 grams

1 cuillère a dessert (dessert spoon) = 2 teaspoons

1 cuillère a soupe (soup spoon) = 1 tablespoon

Length

1 meter = 1.0936 yd. = 3.3 feet = 39.37 inches

100 centimeters = 1 meter

91.5 centimeters = 1 yard

30.5 centimeters = 1 foot

2.54 centimeters = 1 inch

1 centimeter = .3937 inch (approx. 3/8 inch)

1 kilometer = .62137 mile (approx. 5/8 mile)

1.6093 kilometers = 1 mile

1 hectare = 2.47 acres

1.4 hectares = 1 acre

