

Chattahoochee Tech

Where you thrive.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO CHATTAHOOCHEE TECH

Chattahoochee Technical College provides a range of two-year associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs. Chattahoochee Technical College is a member of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The college is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS). The college's eight campuses are spread across six counties including Bartow, Cherokee, Cobb, Gilmer, Paulding, and Pickens counties.



8 campus locations serving Bartow, Cherokee, Cobb, Gilmer, Paulding and Pickens counties.

Milena Eneva, PDSO

Associate Director for International Services

Email: Milena.Eneva@chattahoocheetech.edu

Marietta Campus - Building G

Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Friday, by appointment

In case of emergencies:

Jonathan O'Sullivan, DSO

Associate Director of Intensive English Program

Email: Jonathan.Osullivan@chattahoocheetech.edu

International Services and Your Status

As an international student on a student visa, you are required to follow certain federal laws that give you permission to live and study in the United States. International Services is here to help you understand immigration rules and support you as much as possible, **but ultimately, maintaining your status is YOUR responsibility!**

The best thing you can do to be responsible for your status is to spend some time getting familiar with the information in this booklet. Also feel free to go online to ***Study in the States*** website <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/resource-library> for more detailed explanation of some of the immigration laws concerning F-1 students.

When to Contact International Services:

- **Within 10 days AFTER Change of address or telephone**
- **Within 10 days of receiving a letter of employment**
- **30 days BEFORE traveling outside the country**
- **30 days BEFORE changing majors**
- **30 days BEFORE current I-20 expires**
- **10 days AFTER getting a letter of employment**
- **Immediately AFTER being placed on academic or non-academic suspension.**

Contact us by email to set up an appointment if necessary.

InternationalServices@ChattahoocheeTech.edu

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

ACADEMIC YEAR

- Chattahoochee Technical College observes two full semesters: **Fall** and **Spring**. Both semesters are **16 weeks long**. Fall Semester usually begins the second week of August and ends the first week of December. Spring Semester begins the first full week of January and ends the first week of May. Please check the school calendar for specific dates. Classes that are 16 weeks long are called **Term A**.
- Within the full semesters, there is a limited number of classes that are offered for 8 weeks only. If they are offered the first 8 weeks of that semester, the term is called **Term B**. If they are offered the last 8 weeks of the semester, the term is called **Term C**. There is a separate registration and payment deadline for **Term C**. F-1 students can register for courses in **Term C**, but these courses will not count towards the required 12 credit hours for full-time enrollment.
- **Summer semester** is an optional semester for most international students. It is 10 weeks long and usually starts the second half of May and ends the last week of July. F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time in Fall and/or Springs semesters do not need to enroll in the Summer Semester, **except when required by a specific program's calendar or under special circumstances, outlined below.**

CONTINUED ATTENDANCE

- F-1 students must register for 12 credit hours during the full **Fall and Spring Semesters (Term A or B)** to maintain their status as international students.
- If an F-1 student needs to take a class offered **ONLY in Term C**, that class **needs to be in addition to the 12 credit hours** required to maintain full-time status, unless a specific program requires and offers that class only in C term.
- Within the first 30 days of the beginning of a semester, International Services must register each student's records in SEVIS. Therefore, it is important that tuition and fees are paid in full by the posted payment deadline each semester.
- Only one online course (3 credit hours) can count toward a full course of study for an F-1 student during each term or semester

VACATION

- F-1 students may take summer semester as their official vacation time if they have been enrolled full time in Spring and Fall semesters.
- F-1 students on official vacation are not required to enroll in any classes. If they choose to enroll, they can enroll in less than 12 credit hours and take as many online classes as they want.
- F-1 students should inform international services of their intent to observe a vacation term by the end of each Spring Semester

FULL-TIME SUMMER ENROLLMENT

- Full-time summer enrollment is required for F-1 students who have received their Change of Status approval after Spring semester registration has closed.
- Full-time summer enrollment is required for students who choose to start school in the summer.
- Some college programs may require students to be enrolled full-time in the summer.
- Full-time summer enrollment means that the student is NOT taking a vacation and needs to be enrolled in 12 credit hours, where only 3 credit hours are allowed to be online.

REGISTRATION

- F-1 students are strongly advised to register as early as possible because some face-to-face classes fill up quickly.
- Chattahoochee Technical College has three registration periods: **Early/Priority, Final (Regular) and Late;**
 - **Please check the current college academic calendar for the exact dates of each registration.**
 - During the first few days of Early Registration, only current students can register for classes. Afterward, registration is open for both current and new students.
 - Students register themselves for classes. All available classes are posted on the college website and can also be viewed through *BannerWeb*
 - If you are not sure what classes to take, consult with your **Academic Advisor**. Each student is assigned an Academic Advisor based on program of study. Also check your ***Degree Works***- a program embedded in your *BannerWeb* account. It will give you a list of the classes you need to complete.
 - Some classes require pre-requisites, which means you must take another class first before taking that class.

PAYMENT DUE DATES

- **F-1 students are strongly advised to register and pay as soon as possible to remain in the classes they have chosen**
- Each registration period observes a separate payment deadline. If students do not pay by the payment deadline for that registration period, they are automatically dropped from classes and must re-register.
- A hold will be placed on the student's account. Hold periods are based on the respective registration period. Students are not permitted to register during the registration-hold period
- Payment can be submitted online or in person at the Marietta Campus (Building G), North Metro Campus (Building A), Paulding Campus (Building A) or Appalachian Campus (Building A).

NO-SHOW COLLEGE POLICY

- All students are required to attend all classes during their first week and complete an activity as proof that they have attended the class. Students who fail to complete that activity are considered "no show" and are dropped from classes for failing to attend the first week of class. Once dropped for no show, students cannot register again for classes because late registration is closed.
- **F-1 students who are dropped from classes because of no-show will have their SEVIS record terminated if their overall credit hours fall below 12 credit hours.**

DROPPING OR WITHDRAWING FROM CLASSES

- It is possible to drop or withdraw from a class during the semester. However, it is not possible to register for another class offered in term A or B after registration has closed the first.
- F-1 students **MUST not** drop or withdraw from classes if that will lead to less than 12 credit hours.
- Prior to dropping or withdrawing from class, F-1 students should could consult with international services.

REDUCED COURSE LOAD (RCL)

In special circumstances, students can be allowed to take less than 12 credit hours:

- **Academic Difficulties**
 - This option is available only for one semester during the first year of study.
 - Students need to show difficulty with the English language or reading requirement; unfamiliarity with the U.S teaching methods, or improper course level placement.
 - Students are allowed to reduce their course load to **6 credit hours**.
- **Medical Condition**
 - Students need to present a letter from a licensed medical doctor, clinical psychologist, or doctor of osteopathy that justifies the need for reducing the course load.
 - Up to 12 months per education level are allowed.
 - Each semester on medical leave needs a new letter from a doctor.
 - Students can take a reduced course load or no coarse load at all.
 - **Pregnancy:** A normal pregnancy or delivery is NOT considered a medical condition eligible for RLC, unless there are medical complications outside the normal pregnancy/delivery.
- **Completion of a course of study**
 - Students in their final semester can take only the number of courses they need to graduate.
 - If the student has only one course left to graduate, **it cannot be an online course**
- **Special Student Relief**
 - The SSR is granted to students from special countries listed in the Federal Register (FR) notice.
 - Students must enroll in at least 6 credit hours. One of the courses may be online.

All students need to apply to International Services 30 DAYS PRIOR to being granted REDUCED CORSE LOAD. RLC is granted for the following term, not the current term. Unauthorized drop below full course load in the current term will lead to a termination of the student's SEVIS record.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Chattahoochee Technical College classifies students in different categories based on their academic performance.

- **Good Academic Standing:** a student who has a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher. GPA is calculated as follows: A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, D=1-point, F=0 points.
- **Warning:** the student's GPA falls below 2.0 for the first time;
- **Probation:** the student continues to have a GPA below 2.0 for a second semester after the warning.
- **Suspension:** the student has a GPA below 2.0 for a third consecutive semester after being on probation. At the end of that third semester the student is suspended from school, in other words, the student is not allowed to enroll in the following semester (Fall, Spring, or Summer).

SUSPENSION AND F-1 STATUS

Academic suspension from college may impact negatively the F-1 student status depending on when the suspension happens.

1. **Summer Semester Suspension** will not affect F-1 status if the student was eligible for a summer vacation.
2. **Spring or Fall Semester Suspension** will require from the student to either leave the country or transfer to another school.

NOTE: Students on suspension are required to meet with *International Services* to discuss options and time limits.

REINSTATEMENT OF ACADEMIC STATUS

Enrolling back after a suspension is not automatic. During the suspension period, the suspended students should think carefully about the circumstance that led to the academic difficulties. To be readmitted in Chattahoochee Technical College the suspended students need to:

- Submit and pay for a new application fee.
- Submit transcripts from the school that they were enrolled during the suspension period.
- Submit all international documents required for readmission. Contact [International Services](#) for a full list of the documents.

EXTENSION OF I-20

If you are unable to complete your program of study by the expiration (program end date) on your form I-20, you must:

- Submit an online extension request form **30 days BEFORE** the date of completion indicated.
- Meet with your academic advisor and come up with a written **academic plan** on what classes you will need to take each semester to graduate from your current program.
- Schedule an appointment with [International Services](#) to discuss the reasons for the delay of graduation. The delay should be a result of either unexpected academic circumstances or medical reasons. **Delays caused by academic suspension or failure of classes are NOT acceptable reasons for program extension.**
- Prior to the appointment, email your academic plan, new banks statements for the last three months and a new Affidavit of Financial Support for the length of time you will need the extension (either one semester or one year)
- The maximum extension granted the first time is one academic year.
- If a second extension is needed, it will be given for a period of one semester.

If the date on the I-20 has expired and the extension has not been requested, students are “out of status”. They will then have to request reinstatement.

CHANGE OF PROGRAM

Students should contact International Services **BEFORE** they change their major to discuss how that will affect their F-1 status. If the change in major will require an extension of the I-20, students must submit a new Affidavit of Financial Support form and new bank statements to International Services before the extension is granted and the change of program entered in SEVIS.

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS CHECK LIST

DO's	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintain a Valid Passport ✓ Register for full course of study (12 credit hours) during full semesters ✓ Make 'normal' academic progress ✓ Remain in good academic standing ✓ Update address, name changes, dependent status changes within 10 days of change ✓ Request for an extension 30 days BEFORE your I-20 expires ✓ Obey state and federal laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * work without authorization * drop or withdraw from classes * register for less than 12 credit hours without authorization * register for more than one online class * drop below 2.0 GPA * overstay your I-20 permitted time (usually 60 days between programs and after completing a program) * break local, state, and federal laws

TRANSFER OF F-1 STATUS

Students who have an active F-1 status can transfer to or from CTC.

- Transferring into Chattahoochee Tech:
 - Submit all documents necessary to be accepted at Chattahoochee Technical College.
 - Receive an acceptance letter from International Services of Chattahoochee Tech.
 - Give a copy of that acceptance letter and the Transfer Clearing form to the DSO at the first school.
 - Either you or the DSO will have to email the completed form back to [International Services](#).
- Transferring out of Chattahoochee Tech to another SEVP- approved school.
 - Inform [International Services](#) that you plan to transfer at the end of the semester.
 - Apply to the other school and obtain an acceptance letter from them.
 - Email the acceptance letter to [International Services](#) together with the new school's Transfer Form.
 - Chattahoochee Tech will release your record at the requested transfer release date (usually the last day of the current semester or any day after that)
 - Continue to attend your classes at Chattahoochee Tech until the transfer date. F-1 student cannot transfer in the middle of a term or stop attending classes. Such an action will result in termination of the student's SEVIS record.

Note: An F-1 student is permitted to remain in the United States when transferring between schools or programs as long as the student begins classes at the transfer-in school in the next **available term or within five months** of his or her day of classes at the transfer-out school, whichever is sooner.

If you are just arriving in the USA and would like to transfer, you can do that **within 30 days** of your arrival. Otherwise, you will have to start the semester at the school that issued you the initial I-20.

TERMINATION OF F-1 STATUS

Your SEVIS record is terminated and you must depart the United States immediately, even though your F-1 visa may still be unexpired. You will not be able to enter the United States with a terminated SEVIS record.

International Services is required to terminate your record in the following situations:

- **Absent from country for five months-** student departed and expected to return, but exceeded the five-month limit
- **Authorized drop below full course time exceeded-** student did not enroll for a full course of study when a previously reduced course load period ended.
- **Authorized early withdrawal-** student requested permission in advance to withdraw from school and departed the United States prior to program completion
- **Death**
- **Expulsion-** student is expelled from school
- **Failure to report while on OPT-** student failed to validate their address and employment with their DSO at their six-month mark
- **Suspension-** student was suspended from school
- **Unauthorized drop below full course-** student took less than full course of study without prior DSO approval
- **Unauthorized withdrawal-** student quit attending school without notifying a DSO
- **Unauthorized employment-** student was employed without authorization.
- **Failure to enroll- student did not enroll**
- **No show-** initial student who arrived in the USA failed to report to school
- **Transfer student no show-** Transfer-in student failed to report to school within 15 days of a new program start date.

Currently Chattahoochee Technical College is not accepting students from other colleges in terminated status.

An international student from Chattahoochee Tech on a terminated status can transfer to another SEVP institution, but ONLY at the allowance of the new school.

REINSTATEMENT

Reinstatements are done on a case-by-case basis. Students whose status is terminated or who are out of status should contact [International Services](#) to determine if they qualify for reinstatement and to learn about the steps to reinstatement. Reinstatement is possible only within the **first 90 days** of the status violation. If the reinstatement request is denied by immigration, students need to leave the country immediately.

ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS

Students on F-1 visa status are required to inform [International Services](#) when they file an **Adjustment of Status form I-485**. Their SEVIS record will remain active until the adjustment is approved. After the adjustment is approved, the student needs to provide the new **A-number** or **Receipt number** to [International Services](#) and the DSO will then terminate the student SEVIS record for Change of Status.

EMPLOYMENT WHILE ON AN F-1 STATUS:

Nonimmigrant students are admitted into the United States to study. For these students to work in the United States, specific authorization must be obtained. Working without authorization will result in termination of the SEVIS record and could jeopardize future visas.

On Campus Employment

Work that takes place on any of our 7 campuses and is offered through the college job center. It can also be work offered by an on-campus businesses that are contractually affiliated with the school (such as a bookstore or cafeteria) as long as the on-campus work directly provides services for students.

- Employment cannot exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- F-1 students may work up to 40 hours per week during school breaks and official vacations as long as they plan to enroll full-time in the next semester.
- Students can begin work up to 30 days before their program starts.
- Students do not need to get prior authorization from the DSO before obtaining the job.

Social Security Number

The Social Security Number is given ONLY to students who have an offer of employment on campus. You may apply for your Social Security Number only after you have an actual job offer.

Applying for a Social Security Number:

1. Ask the office that is hiring you to write a letter that includes: the position you are hired for, start date, number of work hours, and supervisor's name and the telephone number.
2. Ask the office of [International Services](#) for a letter that identifies you, confirms your I-20 status, and identifies your employer and the type of work you will be doing.
3. Wait at least 10 days after you enter the United States to visit the Social Security Administration Office.
4. Go to the Social Security Administration Office with these two letters, your passport and visa, your I-94 form and a completed form SS-5 (Application for Social Security Number). You can print the form from the <http://www.ssa.gov/forms> or it may be possible to obtain one at the specific office location.

**The closest Social Security Office is located at:
200 Chastain Center Blvd Suite 250,
Kennesaw, GA 30144**

Check online for work days and work hours and go early, as the office is usually quite busy. When you enter the office, you will have to take a number and wait for your number to be called.

5. If your application is successful, you will receive your social security card in the mail within two to four weeks. You will be able to work on campus while you wait for your Social Security Card. The Social Security office can provide you with a letter if you need one.
6. Keep your Social Security Card some place safe and do NOT carry it with you in your wallet.

OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT/SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

- Off-campus employment requires prior DSO authorization. It is granted on a case-by-case basis, only to an F-1 student who can prove that new, unexpected circumstances have created severe economic hardship.
- F-1 student must be enrolled for at **least one academic year** before applying for off-campus work authorization.
- The student needs to explain the economic hardship situation, in a written form [to International Services](#).
- The DSO will enter then recommendation for Off-Campus Employment in the student's SEVIS record.
- The student files and pays for **form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization** with USCIS in SEVIS
- The student cannot begin while the Form I-765 is pending.
- After Form I-756 is approved, the student will receive an EAD card.
- The student is authorized to begin work outside campus, for up to 20 hours per week when school is in session and 40 hours per week during holidays, breaks or official vacation time.
- Off-campus employment is granted in **one-year increments**. If an F-1 student needs to continue employment off-campus beyond one year, the student needs to re-apply to USCIS at least 90 days but no more than 6 months before the current EAD card expires.

NOTE: working more hours than authorized or beyond the dates authorized by the current EAD card will result in termination of the student's SEVIS record.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

- OPT is available to F-1 students while completing (pre-completion) their program of study or upon completion (post-completion) of their program of study.
- OPT needs to be **directly related to the program of study**.
- Students **need to be enrolled for one full academic year** before beginning their OPT.
- Students can apply **90 days prior** the completion on one academic year for pre-completion OPT, or 90 days prior to completing their program for the post-completion OPT.
- Students in pre-completion OPT who are also taking classes are limited to 20 hours per week of employment when classes are in session.
- A total of 12 months of OPT is given per each education level.
- Part-time work counts towards the maximum 12 months at one-half the rate of full-time employment.
- Students applying for post-completion **OPT have 60 days after the end of their program** to apply for OPT.
- Post-completion OPT is limited to an aggregate of **90 days of unemployment**.
- The DSO will enter the OPT recommendation in the student's SEVIS records.
- The student files and pays for Form I-765 with supporting documentation.
- If approved, the student can begin employment **AFTER** receiving the EAD card and/or **AFTER** completing the program.

OVERVIEW OF COLLEGE LIFE

Student ID Card

All students can receive a student ID card from **Building C, Room 1106 on Marietta Campus**. Students need to bring a valid ID and their student number. Student ID cards may be used in museums, theaters and other venues to receive a discount.

Office of Student Involvement

The office of Student Involvement located in **Building C, Room 1105 on Marietta Campus**. It provides information about various clubs, events, and organizations that are active on campus and open for you to join. Also check our website for:

- [REGISTERD STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS/CLUBS](#)
- [E.A.G.L.E. LINK](#)

International Club

The club is free and open to all Chattahoochee Tech students. It meets each month on Marietta Campus. Its goal is to connect international students and address issues they may face. Meeting times may vary, so consult the website of Student involvement with the latest dates.

Q&A College Life:

Please check the webpage of the Chattahoochee Tech- library for more questions and answers.

Q: I don't know which classes to take.

A: Check the college catalog for an overview of your program and the classes necessary for completing that program. Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor.

Q: I cannot register for a specific class.

A: If you cannot register for ANY class, you probably have a hold on your account due to some issue. You can check holds in your *BannerWeb* account. If it is only a class or two that you cannot register, check *Degree Works* to see that these classes are in your program. Finally, check each class to see if there is a pre-requisite.

Q: Can I make a partial payment?

A: The college participates in a payment program. You can sign up for the payment plan through your *BannerWeb* account after registering for courses. Please contact the Bursar for additional information about the payment plan.

Q: Are there any scholarships for international students?

A: Chattahoochee Technical College does not offer scholarships or other financial help for international students. However, opportunities may be available through the Chattahoochee Technical College Foundation.

Q: I need academic help with some of my classes.

A: The Academic Center provides free tutoring for many of the general education classes: math, English, computers, biology, etc. Check the website for on campus and online tutoring schedules.

Q: I cannot print anymore on campus.

A: You have probably reached the limit of your free printing pages. You can refill your account by paying at the library.

Q: How do I change my password?

A: If you do not have a social security number, you will have to submit a Help Desk Request Form and explain at the bottom of the form that you do not have a SSN and need a manual password reset.

Q: I have a new phone and the OKTA multi-factor authentication is not working.

A: Please submit a Help Desk Request Form for additional assistance. When completing the form, please select "I have a problem not listed" and in the type box, write, "new phone need Okta reset." Afterwards, you will receive an email from CTC that your account has been reset. Similar technology related questions are answered at Technology Answers page of the CTC Library section (Services/Library/Answers/Technology)

Q: Can I stay after classes and study?

A: For security reasons, classrooms are usually locked after students finish classes. You can visit to the Library, Success Center, or the common sitting areas in various buildings. Check with the campus police to see when buildings are usually closed at night.

Q: I lost my bag/wallet/jacket on campus. Who do I ask for help?

A: Each campus has a campus police office. Contact them to see if someone has not turned in your lost items.

Q: Someone on campus is making me uncomfortable.

A: You could talk to campus police or to any faculty or employee on campus. They will direct you to the person who can help you.

Campus Police

Please call campus police at **770-529-4596** or dial **911** on any phone if you are on campus and you need help with an **emergency**.

If the situation is **not an emergency**, but you still need to see a police officer, you may call police dispatch at **770-529-2311**. Use this number to report loss of property, or if you need help with re-starting your car.

EMERGENCIES:

Tornado Alarm Sounding

- Move away from windows and glass doorways.
- Go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest possible floor.
- Do not use elevators because the power may fail, leaving you trapped.
- Protect your head and make yourself as small as possible by crouching down.

Fire Alarm Sounding

- Calmly exit the building.
- Once outside, walk at least one hundred (100) feet away from the building to a safe distance away from emergency personnel.
- Do not leave the campus until your instructor counts you as safe.
- Wait for instructions from staff.
- Inform staff of any injuries.

Campus Lockdown/ Active Shooter Event

- Immediately cease all activity (Instructors will stop teaching)

- If outdoors, depart campus or go into the nearest building and/or proceed to an area that can be secured.
- If inside a building, enter the nearest classroom, office or secure space.
- If the door will not lock, barricade it with chairs, desks, and other materials. Turn off lights, televisions, radios, and computer screens. Be calm and quiet. Ignore any fire alarm bells. Stay away from glass doors or large glass windows.

Power Outages

If there is power outage while on campus, students will be sent home if the power outage lasts over 30 minutes.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather (snow, ice, storms or flooding), Chattahoochee Technical College may decide to stop regular operating hours. The information will be on the college website:

www.chattahoocheetech.edu. Local TV stations may also announce school disruptions. Individual instructors may choose to email or text students with updates, but they are not required to do so. Office phones and emails will not work at such times. Please, check the school website and local TV stations for updates.

If You Are Ordered to Evacuate

You should never ignore an evacuation order. Authorities will direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the rising waters. If a flood warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area, follow the designated evacuation routes and expect heavy traffic. Do not attempt to drive or walk across creeks or flooded roads.

Driver's License

The easiest way to move in metropolitan Atlanta is by car. Each state in the USA has different rules for obtaining a driver's license. Your government can issue you an International Driver's License, but in the state of Georgia it is valid only for the first 30 days you are in the United States. After that, you must obtain a valid Georgia State Driver's License.

1. Collect the following documents: passport with stamped visa, I-20, I-94 (a document issued at customs on entering the USA), any bill that shows you are living at the address you gave the school (like phone, electric, gas, rent, credit card). It will take you at least a month of service before you receive a bill from any company.
2. Go to the Social Security Administration office with all the documents and fill an application for a Social Security Card. If you are not eligible to receive one, the office will send you a letter within 2 to 4 weeks SSA-L676, SSN Card Denial/Letter of Ineligibility.
3. Study for the written test. The test includes rules and signs. You can find the Driver's Manual with all the information and practice tests on the Department of Driver Safety
4. Go to the DDS office with all the documents (including the letter from the Social Security Office) and take the written test. You do not need an appointment for the written test, but you may have to wait in line if there are many people. You must begin the test at least 30 minutes before the DDS closes. You must get 15 out of 20 questions correct on the both rules and sign questions.
5. After you successfully pass the written test, you need to schedule an appointment for the road test. Call 678 413-8400, 678 413-8500, or 678 413-8600 to schedule the road test.

6. For the road test, you must provide a car and arrive with somebody who has a valid driver's license. The instructor will go with you in the car and tell you where and how to drive. At the end of the test, he or she will tell you if you failed or passed.
7. You can now apply for your driver's license. The application fee is \$20.00 and you must present all the documents from 1-4.

Driving in the USA:

Laws in Georgia:

- Never drive without a license or with an expired license.
- Carry your passport with you and a copy of your I-20 when driving as a way to prove that you are legally here.
- Your driver's license from your country is valid for only 30 days **in Georgia**. Police will check your passport to see when you entered the country.
- You must maintain insurance in your name for the car that you will be driving. Your proof of insurance must be with you at all times. Police will accept a picture of your insurance policy from your phone.
- If you purchase a car, your car must be registered with the **State of Georgia**. Your registration must be renewed every year on your birthday.
- Before renewing your registration, if your car is more than 3 years old, and you live in Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Dekalb, Paulding counties your car must pass an emission inspection, which is offered at many gas stations and costs between \$20.00-25.00.
- If you see police lights behind you, you must pull aside from the road and stop your vehicle as soon as possible. Do not leave your vehicle. Turn off the radio, lower the driver's window and follow the instructions of the police officer.

Driving in the USA- Cultural Tips:

- Remember that in most cases you can make a right turn even when the light is red.
- If you are a slow driver, move to the right lane.
- If you hear sirens, move to the right and stop your vehicle.
- Stop in front of or behind a school bus with the stop sign extended.
- If you park in the wrong place, you can get a parking ticket or your car can be booted or towed. Parking tickets are paid online. If you wait longer than a week, the parking ticket will increase.
- Driving in the HOV lane is reserved for electric cars or cars with two or more passengers.
- Some left lanes are pre-paid fast lanes. Check the signs before entering them. Others are paid but you will receive a bill later in the mail.
- If you get a traffic ticket, it is best to pay it online if the ticket is not for a serious offense. If you have to go to court, best practice is to plead "no law".
- Never drink or use narcotics and drive. You can go to jail for that and be deported.
- Use your blinker often and try NOT use your horn.
- Be nice on the road, and do not get into arguments.

Public Transportation

Chattahoochee Technical College is a multi-campus college. Most campuses are accessible only by a personal vehicle.

- The only campus with accessible local public transportation system is the Marietta Campus. The system is called *CobbLinc*. You can get information about buses, routes and schedule of busses at www.cobbcounty.org/transportation/cobblinc . Bus #20 stops in front of Building B of the Chattahoochee Technical College, Marietta Campus.
- You can call 770-427-4444 and tell your location and where you want to go and the operator will tell you how to get there using the local public transportation.

- There is an additional transportation service available called *Flex Cobb Community Transit*. It allows you to call and get on-demand curb-side bus service. The bus ride can be from any place in your zone to any other destination within your zone or transfer to Route 30! You have to call **770.528.1053** to schedule your reservation between 2-24 hours in advance.
- Park and Ride locations are available for rapid bus rides (SRTA Xpress) from areas in Cobb County (Acworth, Kennesaw, Mableton, Hiram, Powder Springs, and Marietta) to downtown Atlanta. Check www.xpressga.com/commutertools for fares and schedules.

HEALTHCARE

Health Care Insurance

Currently, *Chattahoochee Technical College* does not require international students to purchase health insurance, but it is highly recommended you do so. 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.

For international students there are several options to purchase health insurance. Check the website of these companies for more information:

- **International Student Health Insurance Plan**
- **Compass International Student Scholar Health Insurance Plan**
- **ExchangeGuard**
- **Patriot Exchange Program**
- **Student Secure**
- **Student Health Advantage**
- **Study USA**
- **Navigator Student**
- **Patriot America**

Health Care Facilities

- Whenever you visit a doctor's office, hospital, clinic, urgent care facility, or emergency room, you should bring your insurance information with you.
- Before going, check to see if the insurance will pay for treatment at that facility, and what percentage of the treatment will be covered. Not all medical facilities will work with a given insurance company. Those that work with your insurance are called "in-network".
- Most visits, other than routine yearly check -ups, require a co-payment before a physician sees you. Check with your insurance to see the amount of your co-pay. It ranges between \$25.00 to \$50.00.
- Some complicated medical treatments may require a deposit from you. You will be informed about that before the hospital or clinic decides to treat you.
- Medical bills for your treatment are typically sent several weeks or months after you have visited the facility. Expect separate bills from each doctor who was involved in your treatment, as well as bills from the hospital where the treatment took place, and from the lab that did the pre or post treatment testing.

Emergency Room

- Emergency rooms are located at hospitals.
- If you have a serious life-threatening medical problem like bleeding, broken bones, or strong pain go to the nearest emergency room or dial 911 for an ambulance.
- Depending on how life threatening your situation is and how busy the emergency room is, you may be admitted immediately or you may wait for hours.

Urgent Care

- These facilities are for non-life-threatening situations like a sprained ankle, a bad headache, or an infection.
- You do not need an appointment. You are admitted based on the number you get when you arrive.

Doctor's Office

- Most people go to see a doctor for annual routine check-ups or specialty non-urgent care.
- If you have an insurance, check to see if your doctor accepts that insurance.
- An appointment is required. The first available appointment may be days or weeks later.
- Preventative routine annual check-ups are usually covered for insured patients, with no co-pay.

Clinic

- You can go there for flu shots, diagnosis of minor issues, or a pregnancy.
- There is usually a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant but not a doctor.
- Some clinics are located in supermarkets or pharmacies; others are in separate buildings.
- Clinics are usually cheaper or may provide free services.

Dental Office

- Dental insurance is separate from health insurance.
- Dental offices are separate buildings from other medical facilities.
- Usually you call and set up an appointment in advance.
- Some dentists may accept walk-in patients if it is a dental emergency.
- If you do not have an insurance, you can pay cash for your dental treatments

Vision Care

- There are vision care centers available in many big box stores, like *Target*, *Walmart* and *Costco* or in the mall. Sometimes, they accept walk-ins, but often an appointment is required.
- These specialists will check your vision and give you a prescription for glasses, contact lenses or minor eye problems.
- If your eye problem is more serious, they will refer you to a specialist.

Lab Testing

- Some routine blood and urine tests can be completed in lab facilities instead of hospitals or doctor's offices. This can be a more affordable option.
- Check the internet for the closest location of
 - **Any Lab Test** (www.anuylabtestnow.com)
 - **Quests Diagnostics** (<https://secure.questdiagnostics.com>)

Cultural Tips

Personal Space

People in the United States feel comfortable when they speak with each other and the space between them is about one meter. This is called their comfort zone. Some countries have a much smaller comfort zone. Try to stay a little further when speaking with Americans. Try not to touch people that are new to you. Hugging and touching is allowed for friends and family. When you are greeting someone, you have not met before, it is best to simply say “hello” or shake their hand.

Culture Shock

All new immigrants will experience a period of time that is known as “culture shock”. It usually starts about a few weeks after arriving in the country. It may be a long or a short period depending on how quickly you can adapt to the new culture. During this period, you will feel sad, nervous, and easily angered by small changes. You will also feel very homesick and look for friends from your country to spend time with. In order to adapt better, we suggest, you try to learn more about the American culture and try to meet American friends too.

Personal Cleanliness

People in the United States are sensitive to body odor. Americans take a shower at least once a day and use deodorants after showering. Perfume is used only on special occasions and in very small quantities. Be careful with strong perfume, since many people have allergies. Americans also change clothes daily. It is considered “unclean” to wear the same shirt/dress for several days in a row.

Time Management

Time is very important for Americans. If you have any appointment (business or friends), you must arrive on time or best about 10 minutes early. If you are going to be late, you must call to tell how late you will be. Being late more than 10 minutes is considered very rude in America. If you are taking a class, you need to be on time or early. You do NOT call to let the teacher know you are late, but you enter very quietly and try not to disturb the class in any way.

Tipping

Tipping is a cultural norm widely acceptable in the United States and it maybe something new to you. If you eat at a sit-down restaurant with a server, you are expected to leave a tip of 15-20 %. For buffet and self-serving restaurants, the tip is usually \$1.00 per person. You will leave the tip at the table for the cleaning person to collect. You may leave a small tip for cashiers in some coffee shops or small diners if there is a tip jar. You also tip taxi drivers, hair stylist, barbers, and hotel cleaning services. If you have bags at the airport and a person helps you with the bags check-in, you tip a dollar per bag.

Holidays in the United States

Chattahoochee Technical College is closed on:

January 1, New Year's Day

Most private businesses, including stores close earlier on December 31st and stay closed on January 1st.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

It is observed the third Monday in January. Public schools, government buildings, post offices and banks are closed. Private businesses and stores are open.

Memorial Day

It is celebrated the last Monday of May. It is unofficially the beginning on summer. Public schools finish spring semester then. Government buildings, post offices, and banks are closed. Private businesses and stores are open. People usually get together with friends to do barbecue.

July 4th - Independence Day

It is celebrated with parades and fireworks at night. Government buildings, post offices, and banks are closed. Many private businesses will be closed on that day. Most stores will be open.

Juneteenth Day

The day celebrates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, usually observed on the Monday closest to June 19th.

Labor Day

It is celebrated on the first Monday of September. It is unofficially the end of summer. It is celebrated with cookouts. Government buildings, banks, and public schools are closed, but most stores will be open.

Thanksgiving Holiday

This is an official holiday and also one of the biggest traditional holidays in the country. It is celebrated the last Thursday of November. People in the United States cook a special meal of roasted turkey, green beans, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pies. Dinner is in the early afternoon with family and friends. The day after Thanksgiving is also known as Black Friday, when many people go shopping for Christmas presents and stores have special sales. Schools, government buildings, post offices and banks are closed Thursday and Friday of that week. Most stores will be closed on Thursday but will open early on Friday.

Christmas

It is an official government and a traditional family holiday. Most businesses close early on December 24. Schools, banks, post offices, and government buildings are closed December 24 and December 25. Offices and schools may have Christmas parties the weeks before that. On Christmas Day, December 25th Americans celebrate at home with gifts exchange and a big meal around lunchtime.

Review the college's academic calendar, located on the home page of the college's website, to learn more about campus closures and holidays observed by the college.

Chattahoochee Technical College is open on:

President's Day

It is observed the third Monday of February. Public schools, government buildings, and banks are closed. Private businesses are open.

Valentine's Day

It is celebrated on February 14. This is not an official government holiday. This holiday celebrates love and romance with cards, candy, presents, and special romantic dinners.

St. Patrick's Day

This is not an official holiday. This is a holiday that celebrated St. Patrick, a patron saint of Ireland on March 14. In America, it is celebrated by parades with Irish music and parties with a lot of drinking. People should wear something green on that day.

Easter

This is a traditional Christian holiday. The time for this holiday varies depending on the religious calendar. It is usually in late March or April. People decorate or buy Easter eggs and hide them for small children to find. Some stores are closed on that day.

Halloween

This is not an official holiday. Many people wear scary costumes and go to parties. Children go around the neighborhood in early evening dressed in costumes, knocking on doors and saying "Trick or Treat." If you open the door, you will have to give them some candy.

Other traditional holidays you may hear:

- Mother's Day,
- Father's Day,
- April's Fool Day,
- Cinco De Mayo

Free or Inexpensive Things to Do in and around Atlanta

1. **Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area and Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve.** Roam the mountain, farmland, lakes, hiking trails, and a nature preserve on more than 2,000 acres. Park fee is \$5.00
2. **Atlanta BeltLine.** Take a walking tour of the BeltLine, a set of walking trails and parks connecting Atlanta's midtown and downtown neighborhoods. Paid guided tours are also available.
3. **Atlanta Contemporary Art Center** Their doors are always open for free to the public. Enjoy a stroll through modern art and enjoy extras like lectures, special events, and events for children.
4. **Atlanta Monetary Museum/Federal Reserve Building.** Self-guided tours explain the history of money and the Federal Reserve's role. No fee to access the building.
5. **Autrey Mill Nature Preserve and Heritage Center.** Walk two miles of trails, see animal exhibits, and tour buildings reminiscent of rural Georgia in Heritage Village.
6. **Carter Center.** Take a free stroll through the grounds to see the Circle of Flags from all 50 states, a rose garden, Japanese garden and koi pond. The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum costs \$8 for adults; children under 16 are free.
7. **Centennial Olympic Park.** On warm days, kids cool off by cavorting in the Fountain of Rings. Relax in the well-groomed park that pays homage to the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Free events all year.
8. **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**- a fast natural habitat (starting in Georgia mountains, going through Atlanta, Alabama and reaching Florida) following the Chattahoochee River with several access points. You can hike, fish or canoe in various places. Parking is \$5:00
9. **David J. Sencer CDC Museum.** Learn about the history of the Centers for Disease Control and how scientists work to crack the cases of mystery diseases. Admission and parking are free on weekdays.
10. **Fernbank Science Center.** Visit the observatory and exhibits for free; planetarium shows are \$7 adults, \$5 students.
11. **First Friday Art Walk** Located in Marietta Square electric art scene; there are cool art exhibits to visit and neat little boutiques.
12. **Georgia Capitol Museum and Tour Program.** See government in action under the Gold Dome, constructed from 1884-1889. The museum includes historic flags and artifacts. Admission is free.
13. **Governor's Mansion.** Tours of the 18-acre estate and 24,000-square-foot mansion with antique furnishings offer lessons in history, from 1780-1820. Admission is free for everyone on the second Sunday of each month from 12 - 5 p.m.

14. **High Museum of Art.** Atlanta's premier art museum has more than 11,000 pieces, from African and folk art to photography and decorative art.
15. **Historic Oakland Cemetery** After wandering around trails and historic parks, walk down to the Oakland cemetery. Built in 1850, it is filled with interesting gravestones and many of Atlanta's founders.
16. **Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.** Seventeen miles of interpretive trails, monuments and a museum help visitor understand the Battle of Atlanta during the Civil War.
17. **Lake Allatoona** Take a break and enjoy a lazy afternoon on Lake Allatoona. Explore the area and see what you and the kids can find! (parking is \$5)
18. **Little Five Points** has lot of fun, quirky shops that you can browse around in. No need to spend any money just soak in the culture!
19. **Marietta Fire Museum.** Antique firefighting equipment and five trucks are on display, including an 1879 Silsby Steamer.
20. **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.** The site includes a museum, the house he grew up in, a serenity lake and the Ebenezer Baptist church where he preached. Admission is free.
21. **Movies in Central Park in Atlanta** has free movies that play throughout the summer! Make sure to check the schedule, bring a blanket, and enjoy the movie!
22. **National Archives of Atlanta** Love history and genealogy? This is the place for you! Try and track your family line and show your kids their heritage. You can also look at all the cool historical records the National Archives have.
23. **Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary.** See animals of all stripes in this wildlife rehabilitation center. Tuesday through Saturday 12 - 3 p.m. Call before visiting.
24. **Piedmont Park.** Children can play on a work of art or the restored Noguchi Playscape with slides, swings and seesaws. Take Fido for off-leash fun in the dog park area. Cool off in the free Legacy Fountain Splash Pad, and swim for free in the swimming pool 3-5 p.m. weekdays Memorial Day through Labor Day.
25. **Roswell Fire Museum.** See a 1945 Ford American LaFrance Pumper Truck and learn about the city's firefighting history.
26. **Silver Comet Trail.** Joggers, walkers, in-line skaters, horse riders and bicyclers flock to this 61-mile paved trail, which begins in Smyrna and extends through Polk County. It then connects with Alabama's 33-mile Chief Ladiga Trail. Free
27. **Yellow River Park.** Explore 566 acres of forests and wildflowers along the Yellow River; also, mountain biking, hiking and horse trails.
28. **Woodruff Park Reading Room** is an awesome outdoor place to learn. The reading room is in the North side of the park and is filled with carts of awesome books. Take the kids at lunch and hear a reading!

29. **Other Cool Places to Visit:** Virginia Highlands, Downtown Decatur, Decatur Farmer's Market, Suwanee Downtown, Vickery Creek Trail at Roswell Mill, or The Battery.

30. **Cool but not so inexpensive:** Atlanta Botanical Garden, Stone Mountain, Atlanta Aquarium, Fox Theater, or the Atlanta Symphony.

* Prices, availability, and hours of operation are subject to change.