



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

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# Welcome

International students are an essential part of our community and culture at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Your background, perspective, experiences, goals, and dreams strengthen our university and make everyone's learning experience richer.

We know you have a very distinct set of needs as an international student. From applying for admission to graduation requirements, our dedicated staff is here to provide you with the support, information, and guidance you need throughout your study at UTRGV. We are wishing you a successful semester!

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# HOUSING

The first concern for international students upon arrival is securing affordable housing. Living on campus is an excellent way for you to get connected, meet friends, and be involved. UTRGV Housing and Residence Life offers a wide array of housing options designed to meet your needs and provide an environment that supports your academic growth.

## ***ABOUT OUR HOUSING OPTIONS***

UTRGV Housing and Residence Life offers the following student housing options that allow you to meet people and get involved in a close-knit community that combines all the comforts of home with the excitement of the traditional college experience. Please make sure you choose wisely your housing option.

### ***Residence Halls***

At the UTRGV there are three resident halls:  
Unity, Heritage, and Troxel – for you to choose from.  
Casa Bella (Brownsville)

For more information on Residency or to submit an application, visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/housing>

### ***Renting/Leasing an Apartment Off-Campus***

If you decide to rent an apartment or condominium, make sure you do the following:

- Look for an apartment that meets your budget and your needs. Ask as many questions as necessary when looking for one.
- Fill out an application for the apartment of your choice. Fill out only one application.
- Ask if there is an application fee.
- Ask if you are committed to renting it if you make an application.
- Once you decide to rent the apartment and your application is approved, you will have to pay a security deposit. This deposit is usually returned after you move out of the apartment if you paid your rent on time and left the apartment in the same condition.
- Be careful and read the contract (including small print) before signing it.
- Inspect the apartment and ensure it is not damaged and that all the appliances are working.
- Report any damage or broken items to your landlord. In most cases, the landlord is responsible for paying for and making the repairs.

For more information, please check for available places on the web.





# FINANCES

## ***Financial Arrangements***

When you arrive in the United States, you may bring traveler's checks and some cash in U.S. dollars for convenience. Do not carry a large amount of cash and never display a large amount of paper money. You should have about \$100 in cash and the rest in traveler's checks. We suggest you bring at least \$2,000 because you will need money for initial expenses for hotel, food, apartment leasing, deposits for apartment utilities, and transportation, among others.

## ***Checking Account at a Local Bank***

International students are allowed to open a student checking account at local central banks. To open an account, you will need to present two forms of photo identification, such as a passport, school ID, or a driver's license from your home country. Some charge a small fee to your account every month; however, the fee is waived during the summer months in some banks. For more information on each bank's services, please contact your preferred financial institution.

## ***Available Banks in the area***

Chase  
Wells Fargo Bank  
Bank of America  
IBC Bank  
Capital One Bank  
BBVA Compass Bank  
Frost Bank  
Plains Capital Bank  
Lone Star National Bank.





# PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

## **1. READ ALL ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS**

In the welcome package, you will find important information regarding the issuance of Form I-20. Please read the forms carefully and complete and submit all necessary documentation electronically via email at: [international@utrgv.edu](mailto:international@utrgv.edu). It also contains information about the International Student Orientation.

## **2. REVIEW IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS**

Verify that all of your I-20 and SEVIS fee receipt information is correct. You can pay the SEVIS fee online at: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com).

## **3. APPLY FOR A VISA**

Apply for the F-1 visa at the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your home country. (See "Applying for a Visa" section on page 5 for more information.)

## **4. PREPARE FOR INITIAL EXPENSES**

Make financial arrangements to cover the cost of tuition, books, living expenses, and recreation. It is recommended to bring the cost of tuition, books, and the first three month's living expenses when you first arrive in the US.

## **5. ARRANGE HOUSING**

Arrange for your housing needs. Although our office cannot assist you in arranging to house, this guide provides an overview of the many housing options in Austin.

## **6. ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION**

Arrange for transportation from the airport to your hotel or apartment.





# APPLYING FOR A VISA

Once you have all the required documentation, it is best to apply for the visa as soon as possible to ensure sufficient processing time. You will need your SEVIS ID and UT School Code, listed on the I-20, to make an appointment for your visa interview. Consult the US Embassy or Consulate nearest to you to find out their current visa processing times: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

Usually, the US Embassy does not allow you to apply for the visa earlier than six months before the program start date listed on your I-20. If you have specific questions about obtaining your F-1 visa, contact the US Embassy or Consulate where you will apply: [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov).

## **KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN APPLYING FOR A STUDENT VISA**

As a person applying for an F-1 visa, you must prove that you do not intend to immigrate to the United States. Under US law, all student visa applicants are viewed by the US Consular Officer as "intending immigrants" until the officer is convinced otherwise. To secure a student visa, you will need to show strong ties to your home country or residence. Proof of strong ties to your country may include family, property ownership, financial statements, employment, or letters from family or friends.

You should be able to verify the financial information shown on your Form I-20. This may be done with your bank statement or a statement of financial guarantee and a letter of support from a sponsor confirming their willingness to support your education program. A sponsor may be your employer, a family member, or your home country's government.

Our students have varying reasons for studying English; some study English to prepare for undergraduate or graduate degrees in the US, and others study for business or pleasure. During the visa interview, you should be able to explain your purpose for learning English in the US confidently.

## **DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO APPLY**

- Form I-20
- SEVIS I-901 Fee Receipt
- A passport valid for at least 6 months
- The intention is to stay in the US temporarily only to pursue a full course of study
- Proof of a residence outside of the US that you will return to after completing your studies
- Proof of the ability to finance your education and living expenses while living in the US.
- He completed visa application form.





# ARRIVAL IN BROWNSVILLE

## ***Airports:***

### ***Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport***

If you fly into Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport, you can take a taxi to the UTRGV Brownsville campus. The airport telephone number is 956-542-4373, and the website is <http://flybrownsville.com>.

### ***Valley International Airport at Harlingen***

There are different transportation options available from Harlingen. The airport telephone number is 956-430-8600, and the website is <http://flythevalley.com>.

### ***Taxi Service Platinum Transportation***

(956) 317-5305 <http://myrioride.com>  
Call taxi service for rates







# ARRIVAL IN EDINBURG

## ***Airports:***

Two airports serve the Rio Grande Valley. Use McAllen-Miller International Airport (MFE), a regional air transportation center serving the fourth fastest-growing metropolitan area in the United States. MFE is the closest airport, located only 20 minutes from campus. MFE has frequent daily flights to major airports in Dallas and Houston.

Harlingen's Valley International Airport is located about 40 minutes from the campus and is the Rio Grande Valley's leading airport in terms of passenger activity. Valley International Airport also has many daily flights to Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio.

You will find that public transportation is minimal, and you will have to take a taxi to reach campus or arrange other transportation. Taxis are available at both airports, although a taxi from Valley International Airport will cost much more because of the distance involved.

## ***HOW DO I GET TO UTRGV? AND HOW DO I GET AROUND EDINBURG?***

If you arrive at McAllen International Airport, taxi services are available to take you to your first destination, whether to the university or a local hotel.

## ***Taxi services:***

Yellow Cab Co. (McAllen, TX) (956) 631-3235  
City Cab (Edinburg, TX) (956) 383-1111

Checker Cab (McAllen, TX) (956) 686-9393  
AAA Taxi (Edinburg, TX) (956) 383-6666

Check for further information on the airport's website at [www.mcallenairport.com](http://www.mcallenairport.com).

The university's physical location is at 1201 W. University Dr. Edinburg, Texas 78541

## ***Taxi Services from Harlingen International Airport:***

### **Taxi Service:**

Harlingen Taxi (956) 425-2781  
Guerra's Taxi (956) 421-2343  
All Star Taxi (956) 507-4900  
Southwest Taxi Cab (956) 507-4090

### **Call taxi services for rates**

*You can also call our office to arrange an airport pickup with our UTRGV students organizations (if available)*





# VAQUERO EXPRESS CAMPUS SHUTTLE

Parking & Transportation Services operates bus service on the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses through the Vaquero Express Campus Shuttle. The two campuses and Harlingen are connected through the Vaquero Express Connector Shuttle. The system operates Monday through Friday.

You can Download our Transportation Guide for more information, schedules, and maps at <https://www.utrgv.edu/parking>.





# PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

Parking & Transportation Services operates Parking & Transportation Services has partnered with local transit providers to provide additional connectivity throughout the Valley for faculty, staff, and students.

## **Valley Metro**

Valley Metro operates routes throughout the valley, including rural and urban areas. Students, faculty, and staff may ride on any Valley Metro route by showing their validated UTRGV ID Card upon boarding. For more information, visit their website at [www.lrgvdc.org/valleymetro](http://www.lrgvdc.org/valleymetro).

## **B Metro**

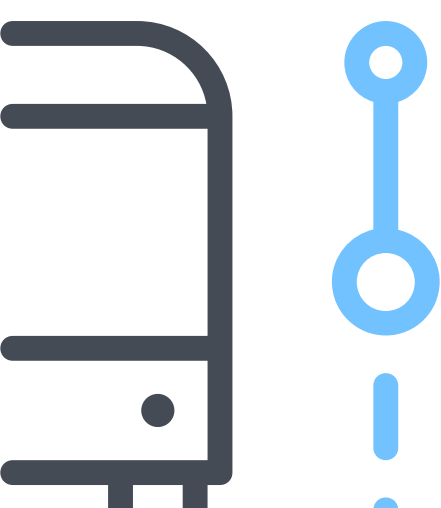
B Metro operates routes within the city of Brownsville. Students may ride on any B Metro route by showing their validated UTRGV ID Card upon boarding. For more information, visit their website at <https://www.cob.us>.

## **Other Providers**

For \$5 a day, a rider may purchase a pass good for rides anywhere in the Metro Connect route system, an express service linking the UTRGV Edinburg campus to the McAllen Central Station, Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets, Harlingen bus terminal, and Brownsville La Plaza Terminal (near to the UTRGV Brownsville campus). For \$25, a rider may purchase a 30-day pass. More information can be found on <http://rgmetroconnect.com>.

## **Metro McAllen**

Metro McAllen operates routes within the city of McAllen. The student fare is \$0.50 upon boarding. A regular adult fare is \$1. For more information, visit [www.mcallen.net/metro](http://www.mcallen.net/metro).





# RULES & REGULATIONS

## ***F-1 Student Regulations***

As an F-1 student, you were admitted to the United States for “D/S,” which stands for “duration of status.” D/S is found on the white I-94 form in your passport and possibly on your I-20 form. This means you are permitted to stay in the United States as long as you maintain your status by fulfilling the requirements of being an F-1 student. Keep in mind that there is an essential difference between an F-1 visa and an F-1 status. The visa is a stamp or sticker placed in your passport by a U.S. Embassy/Consulate and is only granted for entry. F-1 status is granted when you enter the United States and is regulated by

The Immigration Office (ICE). Even if your visa is valid, you can lose your legal F-1 student status if you do not continue to comply with immigration laws regulating your stay in the United States. Keeping the following regulations is extremely important. Penalties for violating student regulations include:

- Possible cancellation of your visa • Required reinstatement
- Voluntarily leaving the United States
- Involuntary removal from the United States
- Being barred from returning to the United States for three or 10 years.

The following is a brief overview of the steps currently needed to maintain your F-1 student status in the United States.

### ***1. Maintain a Valid Passport at All Times***

You must maintain a valid passport (6 months into the future). We can assist you in obtaining the address and phone number of your country's consulate or embassy.

### ***2. Attend the Correct School***

You must attend the university that the ICE has authorized you to attend. When entering the United States for the first time as an F-1 student, you must attend the school whose I-20 form you used for initial entry into the United States. The school listed on the I-20 form should also match the school noted on your visa. Suppose you fail to report to this school and decide to attend another school. In that case, you will probably have to apply for reinstatement with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS, previously known as INS). Once you have contacted the initial school, you may transfer to a different school. Specific immigration transfer procedures must be followed. Visas do not need to be changed to match the name of future schools as long as you complete proper transfer procedures or change schools by using the new school's I-20 form for a new entry into the United States.

### ***3. Follow Correct Procedures When Changing Schools***

You must complete an official immigration transfer whenever you change educational institutions. An immigration transfer must be completed within 45 days of the beginning of classes of your first semester at the new school. Please note: An immigration transfer is separate from transferring academic credit from another school. An immigration transfer is not complete until an international student advisor in our office has released your SEVIS file to the new school or vice versa.

### ***4. Maintain Full-time Hours Each Semester (summer excluded)***

You must complete an entire course of study during the fall and spring semesters (12 hours per semester for all undergraduate students, 12 hours for many students in a master's program, and nine hours for students in Ph.D. programs). The US immigration regulations do not require you to enroll in classes during the summer session unless summer is your first semester in the United States; however, check with your department to see if they have any requirements for the summer. If you think that you need to drop a course, make an appointment to see an international student advisor before you drop the class.

### ***5. Apply for a Program Extension if Necessary***

You must apply for an extension of your program if you cannot complete your degree by the ending date listed on item five on your I-20 form. You can only apply for a program extension within the 30-day window before expiration. Make an appointment with your international student advisor to process an extension, so your student status is not affected. A current bank statement and an Affidavit of support will be needed as a copy of your degree plan.

### ***6. Obtain a New I-20 Form if Your Degree Plan and/or Degree Level Changes***

You must obtain a new I-20 form whenever you make a change of degrees and when changing degree levels. This would include changing from language studies to a bachelor's degree, from bachelor's to master's degree to a doctorate, from an Optional Practical Training (OPT) program to a new degree, and from one level of degree to one of the same level (master's to a second master's degree). According to immigration regulations, your SEVIS record must be updated within 21 days of the change of major.

### ***7. Only Work When Authorized***

On-campus work does require authorization from the international student advisor every semester, and you must maintain your full-time student status, or your work on campus will become illegal. Please note that you must leave the country or face deportation if you work illegally. You cannot be reinstated. On-campus work is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the fall and spring semesters. It may be full-time (more than 20 hours per week) during the summer and official school breaks. Undergraduate students must wait one semester before looking for part-time employment on campus. Remember, all work authorization (on or off campus) is canceled if you violate your student status (e.g., drop below full-time).

### ***8. Be Sure Your I-20 Form is Endorsed for Re-entry Before Exiting the United States***

You must obtain a travel endorsement on the back of your I-20 from the international student advisor before leaving the United States if you desire to re-enter later. Once you have completed your degree program, you may not use your I-20 form for re-entry unless you have already been approved for Optional Practical Training and have already received your work authorization (EAD) card from USCIS and a letter from your employer. A special travel endorsement is needed for re-entry while participating in OPT. NOTE: Travel endorsement is valid for ONE YEAR.

### ***9. Do Not Engage in Any Illegal Activity or Receive Public Assistance***

You must follow the "Code of Conduct" and obey all State and Federal laws.



## **10. Do Not Commit a Visa Overstay**

One of the most serious violations that can be committed is called a “visa overstay.” A visa overstay does not refer to staying in the United States beyond the expiration date on your U.S. visa stamp or sticker on your passport. Expired visas do not result in visa overstays. F-1 students commit visa overstays by staying beyond the grace period at the end of their studies (e.g., 60 days for an F-1 student) without obtaining a new I-20, applying for a change in status, or applying for practical training. For example, when an F-1 student completes their degree requirements, they are given 60 days to leave the country, change or adjust their status, apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) or obtain a new I-20 form for a new degree program. If the F-1 student does not do one of these within 60 days of graduating, they are guilty of a visa overstay. F-1 students may also commit a visa overstay by dropping out of school for a semester without permission. The penalties for a visa overstay are as follows:

- Your visa is automatically canceled on the first day of your violation. This means it may not be used for re-entry to the United States even if there is still time remaining before the expiration date.
- For the rest of your life, you may only apply for a new visa (of any kind) in your home country.
- Reinstatement to student status is very unlikely, if not impossible. This means you may have to leave the United States to gain new legal status. If you do not receive a new visa in your home country, you will not be returning to the United States.
- Anyone who accrues over 180 days of unlawful presence faces being banned from entering the US for three years – but this can stretch up to a 10-year ban from re-entering the United States when you depart from the United States. This may happen to an individual even if they are married to a U.S. citizen. This means no visa or entry into the U.S. for three years after voluntary departure or forced removal from the United States. If you remain on a visa overstay for more than one year, a 10-year bar from re-entering the United States will affect when you depart from the United States. This may happen to an individual even if they are married to a U.S. citizen. This means no visa or entry into the United States for ten years after voluntary departure or forced removal from the United States.

If you remain on a visa overstay for more than one year, a 10-year bar from re-entering the United States will affect when you depart from the United States. This may happen to an individual even if they are married to a U.S. citizen. This means no visa or entry into the United States for ten years after voluntary departure or forced removal from the United States.



### ***11. Report All Changes in Address and Phone Numbers to the International Student Advisor***

You need to report all your address and phone number changes to the international student advisor within 10 days of the change.

### ***12. Stay in Touch with International Student Advisor to Learn About Changes in U.S. Law***

Federal regulations that govern your stay in the United States can change rapidly. To stay up-to-date regularly, visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/maintaining-status>.

### ***13. Online courses***

The Department of Homeland Security requires F-1 students to maintain an entire course of study. The course of study must lead to attaining a specific educational or professional objective. At UTRGV, a full course of study is defined as 12 credit hours for undergraduates and 9 credit hours for graduates, including Ph.D. students.

F-1 students who are taking online or distance learning classes that do not require them to be physically present on campus for an exam, class meeting, or other purposes relating to the class can count only one online/distance learning class or three credits of online/distance learning per semester toward the full course of study requirement. The only exception is if the student takes a hybrid course. Hybrid courses blend face-to-face interaction such as in-class discussions, active group work, and live lectures with web-based educational technologies such as online course cartridges, assignments, discussion boards, and other web-assisted learning tools.

For more information, make an appointment with your international student advisor.





# MAINTAINING STATUS AND REIMSTATEMENT

- Keep your passport valid at all times. (6 months into the future)
- Attend the school that issued the I-20 form.
- Follow the appropriate procedures when transferring to a school other than the originally-authorized one.
- Follow the appropriate procedures to continue from one educational level to another at the same school.
- If you are a full-time student, carry an entire course of study and never drop classes without our advisor's approval during the regular semesters.
- Remember to come to International Admissions and Student Services to have the I-20 form signed every year or before leaving the United States.
- Complete the program of study by the date given on the initial I-20 or obtain a program extension before the expiration date.
- Refrain from off-campus employment without authorization.
- Limit employment on campus to 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- Report any change of address to our office.
- Limit registration for (Web-based) classes to one three-credit-hour course per regular semester.
- Registration for classes during summer is optional.
- Request a new I-20 from International Admissions and Student Services when changing degree plans within 21 days of the change of major.







## FINANCIAL AID

International students are not eligible for Financial Aid. They can, however, apply for scholarships! To learn more about what scholarships are available through The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley,

visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/ucentral/paying-for-college/scholarships>.

Mexican nationals are encouraged to apply for the Mexican Tuition Waiver. The Mexican Tuition Waiver program allows you to pay the tuition corresponding to a Texas resident. For more information, please visit our office to pick up an application or access the form electronically:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/iass/newly-admitted-students/newly-admitted-forms/index.htm>



## MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

All international students holding non-immigrant visas will be automatically charged for comprehensive health insurance every semester at registration. This charge may not be paid in installments.

A waiver may be obtained by accessing the web page: <https://utrgv.myahpcare.com/waiver>.

The deadlines to submit the waiver each semester is published on the same web page.

Students wishing to purchase health insurance may contact AHP directly at <https://utrgv.myahpcare.com>.

Note: All international students from Mexico attending UTRGV will be excluded from the required health coverage, except for any Student from Mexico on a J-1 visa that must show proof of insurance under USIA regulations.





# F1 EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

## ***On-campus Employment***

A student may work on the premises of the school they are authorized to attend. This includes on-location firms providing services for students or employment at an educationally affiliated institution necessary to complete the degree. A student is allowed to work for no more than 19 hours per week while school is in session and may work full-time during vacation periods. When a student is admitted to another institution and will transfer there, they may work during the summer or annual vacation period at either school.

## ***General Rules to Participate in Practical Training***

- Students must have been in good academic standing and be a full-time student for one academic year (see exception for graduate students under Curricular Practical Training).
- Annual vacation may be counted toward the nine-month-in-status requirement.
- Students who travel and make a new entry to clear status or change to a different nonimmigrant status and then back to F-1 must be “in-status” for an additional academic year before becoming eligible.
- Consecutive full-time status in any legal non-immigrant status that allows study (not B-2) can be counted toward meeting a nine-month in-status requirement.

## ***I. Curricular Practical Training (CPT)***

Alternate work-study, internship, cooperative education, or required practicum offered by sponsored employers through a cooperative agreement with the school.

- Employment must be an “integral part of an established curriculum.”
- Sponsored employment is structured, monitored by the school, and obtained through the support of the educational institution.
- Graduate students may engage in CPT without nine months in student status.
- Can be approved part-time (19 hours) during regular semesters or full-time (over 20 hrs) during breaks.
- Students using more than 11 months of CPT are ineligible for OPT.
- Employer, location, and dates must be specified.
- The international student advisor can authorize CPT; no USCIS approval is required.

## ***II. Optional Practical Training (OPT)***

- It may be taken while school is in session, during vacation periods, after completing the required coursework, and after completing a course of study.
- It may be full-time or part-time and is limited to 12 months maximum.
- STEM majors are eligible for an extra 24-month extension.
- A student may enroll in school part-time during OPT after completion of studies.
- Part-time OPT may be counted against the 12-month limit at the rate of 50 percent.
- OPT must be recommended by the international student advisor; USCIS approval and EAD are required.
- Application may be submitted to USCIS up to 90 days before completion of studies.



# CAMPUS RESOURCES

## ***V OneCard:***

Students enrolled at UTRGV must have a V OneCard during their studies. To obtain your V OneCard, you must present a valid picture ID (Drivers License, Passport, or Military ID). There is no fee for the first student card during the first semester of enrollment. Replacement cards are available for \$12.00 each. The worn-out/faded ID card replacement fee is \$5.00; the card office manager will determine the condition. For additional information regarding the V OneCard, please visit the V OneCard Office located on the first floor of the Academic Services Building in Edinburg or the first floor of the Library in Brownsville.

## ***Parking Permit:***

All students who attend classes on campus and use the designated parking lots must obtain a parking permit from the UTRGV Police Department. Parking permits can be purchased online through ASSIST or in person.

## ***Counseling Center:***

The Counseling Center provides free and confidential counseling services to address mental health concerns and promote personal growth for currently enrolled UTRGV students. Counselors are available to listen and discuss issues without judgment. They also encourage problem-solving, educate about and connect students to other resources and assist students in developing healthier coping skills.

Counseling services are provided by either licensed mental health professionals or graduate-level interns under the supervision of a licensed counselor.

Feel free to contact the Edinburg office at (956)665-2574 or the Brownsville office at (956)882-3897. Contact them via email: [counseling@utrgv.edu](mailto:counseling@utrgv.edu).

## ***Student Rights and Responsibilities:***

Student Rights and Responsibility (SRR) guide and support students in addressing a broad spectrum of issues that may be barriers to their success. Using a student-centered lens, the members of the SRR team will:

- Act with Honesty, Integrity, and Respect toward all individuals who seek assistance or services.
- Promote and Support a community atmosphere that is conducive to academic success.
- Uphold the University expectations via the Student Code of Conduct by conducting impartial interventions, investigations, and adjudications to assist students in reaching their academic and personal goals.
- Respond promptly to all complaints and seek equitable resolutions
- Provide resources, education, and support that will proactively reduce risks to all members of the campus community
- Actively promote student rights. Please contact the Edinburg location at (956)665-5375 or the Brownsville location at (956)882-5141 or via email: [srr@utrgv.edu](mailto:srr@utrgv.edu).

***Health Services:***

The student health center provides health care needs to students or their well-being. The center offers low-cost medicines, supplies, and lab testing. Office visits are free, and immunizations are routinely provided as they are required for most educational programs offered by UTRGV.

Please call the Edinburg office at (956)665-2511 or in Brownsville at (956)882-3896. You can also contact them via email: [healthservices@utrgv.edu](mailto:healthservices@utrgv.edu)

***Student Pantry:***

The UTRGV Student Food Pantry supports currently enrolled students experiencing hunger or food insecurity; you can enroll online or stop by the food pantry during distribution hours.

Please feel free to visit them in Brownsville at the Cortez Hall 239 or call: 956-882-7126. Edinburg location at the University Center 114 or call them at 956-665-3663, or via email: [foodpantry@utrgv.edu](mailto:foodpantry@utrgv.edu).

***Writing Center:***

The Writing Center offers many services for international students, from grammatical to writing styles. Free services you can receive at the Writing Center include:

- One-on-one and small group consultations on writing in all disciplines and at all levels.
- Thirty-minute sessions on assignment clarification, invention, brainstorming, development, and organization.
- Thirty-minute sessions on purpose, audience, and genre.
- Tips for incorporating sources into your writing and for documenting sources effectively.
- Tips for using images, video clips, podcasts, and other media as a part of your writing project.
- Request individual or group coverage of particular topics such as Thesis Development, Academic Voice, Organizing Ideas, Paraphrasing, Documentation, APA, and Comma Usage.
- Skype and online writing consultations during the week, and the Online Weekend Writing Service on weekends.
- Use of computers and a printer. For more information about the Writing Center, please contact them at (956)665-2538 or (956)882-7065. You can also get them via email: [wc@utrgv.edu](mailto:wc@utrgv.edu). Their web page is <https://www.utrgv.edu/writingcenter/index.htm>.

***University Recreation:***

The Department of University Recreation (UREC) will meet the needs of a diverse university community by providing quality programs, services, and facilities that encourage the lifelong pursuit of active, healthy lifestyles. Gain the ultimate college experience while in a fitness program, playing intramurals, working out, or soaking up the sun by the pool! For more information, visit their web page at [www.utrgv.edu/urec](http://www.utrgv.edu/urec).

***Association of International Students:***

The Association of International Students provides the most value-added social support and educational experience in an all-inclusive environment. You can find more information about the Association at <https://www.facebook.com/aisutrgv>.

***International Student Organization (ISO):***

Our mission is to involve all the international and local students of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at the Brownsville campus by doing activities, participating in events, and making new friends worldwide. You can find more information about the Association at: <https://www.facebook.com/isobrownsville/>.

***Career Center:***

The UTRGV Career Center assists undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni who seek help formulating and implementing career plans. Various programs and workshops are offered each semester to assist students in selecting a major or relating educational experiences to employment opportunities. Our office provides students with essential services to help them in their career endeavors. Whether finding a major, critiquing résumés, or preparing for an interview, we are here every step of the way.

***Student Accessibility:***

Student Accessibility Services exists to facilitate students' equal access to university programs and services, promote student learning and development, foster independence and self-advocacy, and provide leadership to the campus on disability issues.

***Student Involvement:***

Student Involvement is at the heart of student life and campus involvement at UTRGV. We offer opportunities to build life skills, challenge yourself, engage with people with diverse perspectives, cultivate a competitive edge, and connect to university resources.

***University Library:***

As a component of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the University Library plays a critical role in the commitment of the University to academic excellence in a balanced program of teaching, research, and service. Its primary function is to provide educational support for The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The Library facilitates scholarship by securing and providing access to resources and facilities to students, faculty, and the community. The Library actively assists academic and research programs by providing students with Library use instruction individually and in groups. The University Library serves as the chief information center on campus and plays a vital role as a regional information center.

***Academic Advising:***

From new student orientation to the day you walk across the stage, your Academic Advising Center is here to serve and believe in you. As an admitted undergraduate student, you will partner with us to build your overall understanding of UTRGV and learn how to succeed at the University of the 21st Century. Along the way, you'll work with us to discover new academic adventures and craft an educational experience unique to you!



# IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

## Natural Disaster Emergency:

As we enter the 2018 Hurricane season that runs from June 1st through November 30th, we would like to provide you with more information on how to face natural disaster emergencies. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with UTRGV's Hurricane Response Annex. The plan outlines the responsibilities and courses of action the UTRGV community will need to follow should a hurricane threaten the lower Texas Gulf Coast. You will also find essential details that can help you prepare how to protect you and your family, home, and personal belongings. When an emergency arises, you will receive an official notification from UTRGV via email or text when UTRGV campuses or sites need to be closed. If you have not registered to receive these notifications, please make sure to do so as soon as possible. It would help stay tuned to local television, radio news stations, and newspaper websites for updates. Your safety is our number one concern.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If a campus is closed, no one will be allowed onto that campus until the campus is inspected and declared safe. You will be advised when to return to campus via email and local media. For those students unable to find protected shelter with friends/relatives or other safe locations, please search for the nearest Red Cross Disaster Shelters. To ensure you are prepared for the peak of hurricane season or other emergencies, follow these steps: Have the emergency contact information for UTRGV Police Department. Once you dial UTRGV PD at (956) 882-4911, you will be connected to the appropriate International Admissions & Student Services staff member. Store your documents (passport, visa, I-94, I-20) in a safe place where you can easily access them. Sign up for messaging alert systems for local emergency notifications. Use emergency preparedness resources. <http://www.utrgv.edu/iass/contact-us/emergency>

## Immigration-Related Emergency:

If you have an immigration-related emergency outside of IASS business hours, such as trouble at a port of entry, the immediate danger of being deported from the United States, arrest, or detention by a federal officer, please call the UTRGV Police Department at (956) 882-7777. Explain your situation, and you will be connected to the appropriate International Admissions & Student Services staff member.

**Do not call 911 for immigration-related emergencies!**

## Health and Safety Emergency:

If you have a personal injury or urgent and unexpected hospitalization, PLEASE call 911.

Examples of health & safety emergencies:

- Personal injury
- An urgent and unexpected hospitalization
- sexual assault
- Automobile accident
- Robbery
- Missing persons



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