

English as a Second Language (ESL) Institute

Student Handbook 2011-2012

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A copy of this handbook is also found on our website at www.apsu.edu/esl/overview.



The ESL Institute Austin Peay State University

Student Handbook

Welcome to the ESL Institute at Austin Peay State University. If your plans include pursuing your college education, our program will help you prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam and university classes. We can also help you improve workplace communication skills and reach your professional objectives. Our faculty and staff strive to assist all students in improving their English skills in order to accomplish individual goals.

The information provided in this handbook is designed to assist:

- All prospective, new and current international students.
- A sponsor or family member of an ESL Institute student.

We encourage you to become familiar with the contents in this handbook. It will be a valuable source of information for many of the questions you may have. Numerous references to our website and links to other useful sources of information about our program, APSU and the Clarksville area are included.

In addition, you may contact our office at any time and we will do our best to assist you.

Austin Peay State University
ESL Institute
Box 4678
Clarksville, TN 37044
Tel: (931) 221-6270
Fax: (931) 221-7748
e-mail: esl@apsu.edu
Website: <http://www.apsu.edu/esl>

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(931) 221-6270
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Application Process

APSU's ESL Institute enrolls two types of students:

- Full-time F-1 student visa academic students (new and transferring)
- Non F-1 students (non-English speakers who need to improve their English for school, work or personal reasons).

The application process for each is different - pay close attention to all details.

New F-1 Students

F-1 applications to the ESL Institute should be made as early as possible. Austin Peay requires the following items be submitted with the application – ***we cannot issue the I-20 until ALL of these items are received and verified for completion and accuracy.***

- Completed application form
- U.S.\$240 application fees and advance payment*
- Copy of the passport information page with photograph
- Financial Sufficiency Form
- High school and/or college transcript in English.

*Fees are subject to change.

The following items are ***required at registration, before class begins.*** However, we ***strongly*** encourage students to submit these items with their initial application whenever possible:

- Certificate from a licensed physician or other qualified medical authority certifying that the student is free from tuberculosis based on a chest X-ray or skin test (this is in addition to the BCG vaccine)
- Proof of two Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) immunizations
- Completed Health History form.
- Proof of immunity to chicken pox by one of three (3) ways (translated into English):
 - Documentation of two doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, or
 - Documented proof of having had the disease, or
 - Documented laboratory evidence of immunity to the disease

Please utilize the checklists found in the back of this handbook or on the ESL website (www.apsu.edu/esl) to ensure that you have all documents. Missing items will delay the processing of your application and delivery of your I-20. Submit payment and all application materials to the following address:

Austin Peay State University
ESL Institute
Box 4678
Clarksville, TN 37044
U.S.A.

The I-20 document will be sent via express mail unless otherwise requested. You are responsible for the cost of express mail. You will also receive a list of items required when you register for classes at the ESL Institute.

You have your I-20. What next?

The next big step is preparing for your visa interview. If you have not already made an appointment, you need to make one soon. Be prepared for a long wait during busy travel months. You can also check estimated wait times for a visa interview appointment in different cities here: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html.

Please see your country embassy's website for specific information and required materials needed to apply for your nonimmigrant student visa and to make your visa interview appointment. A list of embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions can be found at <http://www.usembassy.gov>.

The following is a list of common requirements as a guide, but this should not be considered an official list.

Please follow the requirements listed on your country's embassy's website for up-to-date and accurate information.

1. **Valid Passport:** If your passport will expire less than six months from your planned arrival in the United States, or is damaged, or you do not have a blank page for a visa, please get a new passport before your interview.
2. **One Photograph:** See your country's specific embassy's website for photo requirements.
3. **Original Receipt for Visa Application Fee:** See your country's specific embassy website for more information on amount and how/where to pay.
4. **Completed Visa Application Forms:** Most are now online in electronic format and many embassies/consulates, only accept the electronic version.
5. **Completed SEVIS Form:** I-20 properly completed and signed by both the Designated School Official (DSO) and the applicant. Name on form must exactly match the name in your passport and have been entered into the SEVIS system by the U.S. academic institution.
6. **SEVIS Fee Receipt:** This I-901 SEVIS Fee can be paid online at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>
7. **Proof of Finances:** Proof that you can support yourself during your entire stay in the U.S. without working.

The consular officer may request additional information if needed, such as proof of ties to country, résumé or official transcripts.

Please note that your visa cannot be issued more than 120 days before the program start date listed on your I-20. In addition, you may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days before this program start date, so make your travels plans accordingly.

Transferring F-1 Students

Transferring F-1 students must provide *all* of the same application documents, application fee and advance tuition payment as noted above for all F-1 international students.

In addition, you must request that your current U.S. institution submit photocopies of your Form I-20/IAP-66 or DS-2019, Form I-94, U.S. visa page, and Passport Information pages to the ESL Institute along with the Transfer Verification Form found on our website at www.apsu.edu/esl.

Non F-1 Students

"Non F-1" students may be citizens, or they may be non-citizens with permanent resident or other visa status.

The process for non F-1 students is very simple and can begin shortly before classes begin for the semester. You will submit a completed part-time application form along with proof of citizenship/immigration status and a photo I.D. You may take only one class or up to a full-time load.

A non F-1 student checklist is provided in the back of this handbook.

Before You Leave for the United States

Full-time F-1 students should plan to arrive in Clarksville seven to ten days before classes begin. This allows time to become acquainted with the Clarksville area, adjust to the time change and take care of any last-minute details.

Documents

Before you leave your country, be sure you have:

- Your passport and signed I-20
- Your F-1 Student Visa
- Housing arrangements finalized
- Immunization records
- Confirmed travel arrangements

Hand carry all of your important documents, including your passport, I-20, visa and financial documents. These must be readily available for immigration officials at your port of entry.

There are further recommendations at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm> , including a fact sheet titled “Arriving at a U.S. Port of Entry.”

Travel

Be sure you know your flight itinerary – you will most likely be flying into the Nashville International Airport (BNA) - and verify that you have transportation arranged from the airport. If you need assistance with transportation from Nashville to Clarksville, contact our office for information on shuttles.

Contact Information

You should also carry with you all contact information for your U.S. sponsor or guardian as well as the ESL Institute at APSU.

Housing Arrangements

Although many students live off-campus with friends or relatives, limited campus housing is available to ESL students. A separate online housing application, along with a room reservation deposit of U.S. \$200, is required after acceptance into the ESL Institute. Interested students should contact the ESL Institute for more information on applying for campus housing. More information and a housing application are found at <http://www.apsu.edu/housing/>.

When You Arrive in Clarksville

New and transferring F-1 students should plan to arrive in Clarksville seven to 10 days before orientation and classes are scheduled to start. Please call the ESL Institute (931-221-6270 or 931-221-7175) when you arrive in Clarksville – we want to know you have arrived safely. We also need to schedule a registration appointment for you as well as answer any other questions you may have.

All students must have an appointment to register and pay fees. Please be on time and expect this process to take 30 to 45 minutes. If you arrive at our offices without an appointment, we may be busy with other students and unable to help you until later.

What to Expect at Registration

New and Transferring F-1 Students

Bring *all* of the following items to the registration appointment:

- Proof of adequate health insurance (more details on pages 10-11)
- Proof of two MMR shots immunizations (if not already submitted)
- Proof of a negative tuberculosis test (if not already submitted)
- Documentation of immunization for chickenpox (if not already submitted)
- Completed Health History form (if not already submitted)
- Your passport, visa and stamped I-20

Students will complete and sign several forms:

- Compliance form with requirements necessary to maintain good immigration status
- Local contact information form
- Travel forms for ESL Institute cultural activity trips
- Model release form

Payment of all fees in full:

- Tuition
- All other fees *
- Express mail charges
- Health services deposit (if needed)

All fee information and deadlines will be e-mailed to students prior to registration. If you do not receive this information prior to your appointment, please contact our office.

*As a full-time student you have the option of paying the Program Services Fee (PSF), which provides you with full access to the University library, athletic events, the campus recreation center, parking, APSU health services, etc. **Please consider this option before you arrive to pay your fees.**

We will review the class schedule and semester calendar, provide directions to class locations and answer any other questions you may have.

Returning F-1 Students

Bring the following items to the registration appointment:

- Proof of adequate health insurance (if your previous policy has expired)
- Your passport, visa and stamped I-20 (if you left the U.S. and returned)

Complete and sign several forms:

- Local contact information form (update if changed)
- Travel forms for Institute cultural activity trips
- Model release form

Pay all fees in full:

- Tuition
- All other fees (including the PSF, see * note above)
- Health services deposit (if needed)

Registration for Non F-1 students

Non F-1 students should also make an appointment to register and should plan to spend 20 to 30 minutes. Bring the following items:

- Proof of citizenship or immigration status
- Registration form
- Photo I.D.
- Tuition payment

Non F-1 students will also sign most of the same forms as F-1 students.

The ESL Institute Program

Placement Test

A placement test is given to all students a few days before classes begin. This test measures general English language skills. It is just one tool which the coordinator and instructors will use to place you in the appropriate skill level for each of the courses.

Orientation

Orientation sessions are held at just prior to the semester start and are required for all students – new and returning. Class schedules, policies, visa compliance requirements and other important matters are covered; in addition, new students will be given a campus tour to include the library and bookstore, among other things. Sponsors of new ESL students are welcome to attend the orientation sessions to familiarize themselves with the various points of the ESL program.

Class Size and Levels

The coordinator and instructors will determine skill levels for each student and depending on enrollment, classes will be divided accordingly. If classes are too small to be divided, instructors will use various methods in class to address the different levels. Class size will be small in order to provide students with more personalized attention and opportunities to improve their learning skills.

Class Schedule

Current class schedules are posted on the ESL website. Schedules are typically very similar from one semester to another, but will vary somewhat as determined by student enrollment.

Inclement Weather

ESL Institute classes will be canceled if APSU is closed due to inclement weather or emergency. University closing information is available at the APSU website, www.apsu.edu, and at (931) 221-7011. It is also recommended that students register for AP alerts to receive notices via text or e-mail messages of class cancelations or delayed class start times (<http://www.apsu.edu/telephone/getrave>).

Courses

Our course program is designed to ensure students are prepared for the rigors of a college classroom experience, such as strong writing skills and the comprehension of lectures and reading materials. These same skills are also essential for developing greater career opportunities in the professional world.

Although many students strive only to meet TOEFL exam requirements for admission to a university program, research shows that a strong background in ESL courses is even more effective for success because it allows the

student to reinforce their skills in an English-language classroom setting. Our courses include Grammar, Speaking & Listening, Writing, Reading, and Vocabulary.. In addition, other courses such as TOEFL Preparation, Pronunciation, American Culture and concept/practice classes may be offered. Some classes will be divided according to skill level, depending on enrollment.

Detailed course descriptions can be found on the Academic Program page of our website.

Course Guidelines

1. Use English while class is in session.
2. Be respectful of classmates and instructors (come on time, participate, and listen when others are speaking).
3. No cell phones, pagers or computers should be on during class, except with permission of the instructor.
4. Students should not leave the classroom during class for any reason, except for emergency situations with permission of the instructor.
5. If a student is absent from class, they are responsible for any assignments missed or due.
6. Beverages with lids are allowed in the classrooms (no open cups/mugs)
7. Food is only allowed with permission of the instructor. No chewing gum while class is in session.
8. Classrooms will open 15 minutes before class and will be locked after class.

Emergency Contact Number

Students should have their phones turned completely off during class times. In the case of an emergency, family and friends should contact the ESL Institute at (931) 221-6270, (931) 221-7175 or (931) 221-7816 and a message will be given to the student in class. Weekend emergency contact information will be provided to students as needed.

Transcripts and Certificates

ESL classes are non-credit classes. Students receive a letter grade in each course to rate their work and will be given a transcript mailed to each student after the end of the semester. In addition, students receive a certificate each semester noting their participation in the program. Students who have demonstrated outstanding effort and achievement will receive a certificate of excellence.

Michigan Test

The final exam is the “Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency.” This is a general proficiency test for adult non-native speakers of English who will need to use English for academic purposes. The “Michigan Test” looks at skills in academic English, which may help determine a student’s readiness for full-time university study. A score of 96-100 is expected of native English speakers, while an ESL student scoring 70-80 may show the ability to function well at an American university and move straight to college level classes. It can also be used as a predictor of performance on the TOEFL. Michigan Test scores of 50-70 are somewhat similar to a 60 on the iBT TOEFL, and might indicate the student would require developmental and/or enhanced level classes. These scores are not exact comparisons and are only general guidelines to assess ability and progress.

Textbooks

All students are expected to have their own copy of all required textbooks for each class. You will be provided with a list of required textbooks at the beginning of the semester. Generally, full-time ESL students should plan to spend around \$200-\$250 per semester for textbooks.

Due to copyright laws it is illegal to photocopy any or all portions of a textbook. Students are not allowed to use copies of books. Sharing textbooks is not allowed; neither student benefits.

In some cases you will have the opportunity to buy your books online at your choice of Internet booksellers. The ESL coordinator will provide the specific title and ISBN number that is required so you are sure to purchase the correct textbook – it is the student’s responsibility to use this information to order the correct titles and ensure the books arrive on time (this may require paying for faster shipping/delivery).

All books will be checked to ensure correct edition, no previous answers, etc by the required due date. If not acceptable, students will be required to purchase an acceptable text.

The TOEFL Test

Most ESL students study to improve their English skills for admission to Austin Peay or another university and therefore must meet a minimum requirement on the TOEFL test. You can take the internet-based test (iBT) or the paper-based test (PBT), but there is a fee.

The iBT version is the preferred version and is given 30-40 times a year at testing centers around the world. The paper-based test is given about six times a year at designated testing centers. Register early for the testing location and date you prefer. To register online, go to: www.ets.org/toefl/bulletinreg; you may also register by phone at (443) 751-4862 or (800) 488-6335.

The testing center in Clarksville is located near the APSU campus and usually only offers the TOEFL exam during certain months of the year – please plan ahead.

Prometric Testing Center (testing center #1011)
220 Forbes Ave.
647-2003

To have your scores sent directly to APSU, use the DI Code #1028 when registering. The APSU admission requirement is a minimum score of 61 on the internet-based exam (iBT) and 500 on the paper-based exam. Scores are generally available three weeks after the testing dates. Schedule your test so your scores are available in time for the Admissions Office to process your application.

See the ESL coordinator for further information or go to www.ets.org/toefl.

APSU Admissions

ESL students who wish to transfer to Austin Peay as a degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate student must meet APSU admissions requirements, including the minimum TOEFL score.

As a transfer student you will need your ESL transcripts and a transfer verification form in addition to the regular international student requirements. As an ESL transfer student, you will need to submit all required application documents and forms to the ESL coordinator. The ESL coordinator will complete the transfer form and add the ESL transcript before sending everything as a complete application packet to the admissions office. This ensures that all required forms are correct and submitted on time so the application process goes smoothly and quickly.

For additional information about APSU admissions call (931) 221-7661 or (800)-844-2778 or go to their website at <http://www.apsu.edu/admissions/undergrad/information/international>.

Academic Policies

ESL students will be expected to follow regular APSU policies. A complete policy list is found at <http://www.apsu.edu/policy/aindex>. The following policies address specific ESL issues.

Attendance and Tardiness Policy

The F-1 visa issued to full-time international students has a specific set of requirements from U.S. immigration laws and regulations for maintaining visa status; this includes a full-time course schedule, participation and making normal progress in course of study. For this reason, the ESL Institute carefully monitors attendance and academic progress throughout the semester; failure to meet these requirements can result in probation and possible termination of visa.

Students are expected to attend all classes on time, participate in class and have all assignments completed and submitted on the dates they are due. Attendance will be taken each class time and will be combined for all classes. **An F-1 student may not miss more than 15% classes in order to maintain visa status – this includes coming to class on time.** Students will be expected to make up and turn in any assignments missed while absent.

Absence Calculations:

- One tardy = less than 10 minutes late to class
- Three tardies in a class = one class absence
- More than 10 minutes late = one class absence

Excused absences: Student must contact the ESL coordinator by phone or e-mail with a valid reason before the start of class. Driving exams and regular doctor appointments do not qualify as excused absences. Students who are sick and miss more than three classes must have a doctor's note to be excused – this note must be submitted to the ESL coordinator the day the student returns to class. Regular sick days are not considered excused absences.

Unexcused absences: Student does not contact the ESL coordinator before class or does not have a valid reason for missing class. Students should schedule all appointments when ESL classes are not in session. Some instructors may not allow students to make-up work missed due to unexcused absences. See course syllabus for individual instructor policies.

Excused absences are still recorded as an absence, but special circumstances may be considered when calculating totals. We understand that students become ill or have an emergency, but reporting their status to the ESL coordinator ensures that we have accurate records and also allows us to know when a student might require assistance.

Excessive Absences:

- After 4 absences in any one class – student receives a warning letter from class instructor
- After 8 total class absences – student receives a warning letter from ESL coordinator
- After 12 total class absences – student meets with the ESL coordinator (*a signed Agreement to Attend Classes contract may be required*)
- After 14 total class absences – student is placed on probation (for the rest of the term and possibly following term)
- After 18 total class absences – student receives a letter from the Dean of Extended and Distance Education
- After 21 total class absences – student is in danger of dismissal (visa status issues)

Disability Policy

Any student who has a disability that affects his or her academic performance is encouraged to make an appointment with the ESL coordinator to discuss the matter and explore options.

Academic/Classroom Misconduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Academic and classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Students should read the APSU Code of Conduct (http://www.apsu.edu/student_affairs/judicial1.htm) for an understanding of what will be expected of them within the academic setting.

Plagiarism/Cheating Policy

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and can result in a failing grade for the assignment/course. Plagiarism is taking another person's idea or written work and using it as (or part of) your own work without

appropriate credit. At no time is it acceptable to hand in class work which has been taken from someone else's work – this includes the Internet.

Grievances Policy

If a student has any complaints or troubles in regards to a certain class or teacher, the student should first talk with the teacher and work together to address the situation and come to a mutual agreement. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student should then make an appointment with the ESL coordinator, who will try to work with both the student and the teacher to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Academic Probation

Full-time F-1 students must show normal progress in classes to maintain student status. Students should maintain at least a 1.50 GPA (grade point average) to meet the minimum grade standard. In addition to excessive absences (see attendance policy above) if a student does not meet the minimum grade standard, does not participate in class or habitually does not turn in assignments or homework, the student's visa status or future enrollment will be in jeopardy.

If a student does not regularly participate in class or turn in assignments or homework, the instructor for that class will first talk with the student individually. If there is no change, the instructor will inform the ESL coordinator and a warning letter will be sent to the student regarding possible probation.

Warning Letter: A warning letter regarding possible probation will be sent for any of the following reasons:

- the student has 8 class absences,
- the student does not meet the minimum grade standard when midterm or final grades are issued or
- an instructor does not see improvement in class participation and/or assignments after talking with the student personally (either in person or by letter).

Probation: The student will have one month to show improvement after receiving the warning letter. If no improvement is seen in grades, class participation, class assignments and/or the student reaches 14 class absences, the ESL Institute will place the student on probation for the rest of the semester. Anytime during the semester, a student may be placed on probation if the criteria are exceeded. The ESL Institute may also elect to place the student on probation for the following semester.

Probation conditions will include:

- 1) Class attendance, participation, assignments/homework and grades will be closely monitored in all classes.
- 2) Monthly meetings with the ESL coordinator as needed.

A student on probation must also meet the following requirements to continue studying at the ESL Institute:

- 1) The student must not receive less than GPA of 2.00 during the semester.
- 2) The student must not miss more than 15% of classes.

A decision will be made at the end of the semester regarding the student's continued enrollment in the ESL program.

Removal of Probation:

Students who have met all the terms of their probation at the end of the semester may be taken off probation and moved back to "warning status" for the following semester. An evaluation will take place after midterms and students may be taken off warning status with recommendations from instructors if improvement is seen and minimum grade requirements are met. Students who have exceeded the terms of their probation at the end of the semester may be completely taken off probation and "warning status" after consideration of final grades and recommendations from instructors.

Conditional Admittance:

In certain situations, students may be conditionally admitted into the ESL Institute. These students will be placed on academic probation and may have additional requirements specific to the individual situation and may be different from standard probationary conditions.

Immigration and F-1 Visa Compliance

All F-1 academic students are responsible for maintaining their visa status in good standing. Each new F-1 student will receive the compliance document below and should review and understand each item. Students will sign this form at their registration appointment to certify that they understand the requirements and will fully comply with all regulations to remain in legal status.

We strive to keep students within the requirements of the law and compliance with immigration regulations is an important part of that goal. The following is a list of the major points in the document. The complete statement is available in the ESL office or online at the ESL website for review, and a copy is sent to the student with their I-20 after their acceptance in the program.

Notice concerning the role and responsibility of the international student in the ESL Institute at Austin Peay State University to comply with U.S. Immigration laws and regulations

It is critical that international students in F-1 visa classification maintain their legal status in the United States. Students must be aware of and comply fully with the following:

- Maintain a valid passport at all times
 - Attend the college/university USCIS has authorized you to attend
 - Complete an official immigration transfer whenever you change educational institutions
 - F-1 students must complete a full course of study
 - Excessive absences, lack of participation and missing assignments will result in termination of the Form I-20. At the ESL Institute at APSU, the student may not miss more than 15% of classes and maintain a minimum GPA of 1.50 in order to maintain student status
 - If the student cannot complete the program by the end date, he/she must submit a request for an extension 30 to 60 days prior to the expiration date of the Form I-20
 - F-1 students are NOT allowed to work in the United States without authorization
 - Report any change of address or residence and/or any change of name
 - Notify APSU's Director of Extended Education prior to traveling outside the U.S.
 - Notify APSU's Director of Extended Education of any accompanying dependents in F-2 status
 - Submit a certificate from a licensed physician or other qualified medical authority verifying freedom from tuberculosis, proof of two MMR shots, proof of two varicella shots and proof of adequate medical and hospitalization insurance. These documents are due prior to enrolling at APSU's ESL Institute. *Failure to submit these shall result in denial of admission or termination of student status.*
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Employment

International students are permitted to work up to twenty hours per week on campus only. **Off-campus employment for F-1 students is a violation of student visa regulations and will result in the student becoming out of status.** There are limited employment opportunities on campus and most jobs require a proficiency in English. To check availability and requirements of any jobs go to <http://www.apsu.edu/hrhomepage>.

Health and Health Insurance

The state of Tennessee requires students to provide proof of immunizations and health insurance. These requirements may not be common in your home country, but they are necessary in the United States and we must comply with all requirements. As stated in the *Notice concerning the role and responsibility of the international student in the ESL Institute at Austin Peay State University to comply with U.S. Immigration laws and regulations* on page 12; failure to submit these shall result in denial of admission or termination of student status.

Please be sure you understand these **important requirements** and contact the ESL office if you have any questions. Some documents may be submitted with the initial application; everything must be presented at the ESL registration appointment.

Immunization Requirements

International students **must submit a certificate**, in English, from a licensed physician within 30 days of the beginning of classes certifying they are free from tuberculosis.

The state of Tennessee requires all first time and readmission students to provide **proof of two immunizations** with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccines. You will not be allowed to register for classes until this requirement is met.

The state of Tennessee mandates that all students entering the institution for the **first time** and those students who will be living in on-campus housing for the **first time** must also be informed about the risk of hepatitis B and meningococcal meningitis infections. **Tennessee law requires that such students complete and sign a waiver form provided by the institution. The Immunization Health History Form is available at <http://www.apsu.edu/healthservices/MMR.htm>. You must complete this form, sign it in both sections (a parent should sign if student is under 18 years of age), and return to the ESL Institute with your application.**

All students are also required to submit proof of immunity to chickenpox, in one of three (3) ways:

- Documentation of two doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, or
- Documented proof of having had the disease, or
- Documented laboratory evidence of immunity to the disease

Additional information is found on the Health and Insurance page of the ESL website.

Insurance Requirement

In the United States, health care costs are extremely expensive. International students are often surprised by how very high a doctor's bill is for what seems to be a very simple treatment. You might also come from a country where healthcare costs are paid by the government, or where there are special rates for students. This is **not** the case in the U.S. – here, F-1 visa students must pay for their own health care costs.

To assist with **part** of those costs, F-1 visa students attending Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) schools are **required** to have "adequate" medical & hospitalization insurance on themselves (and any dependents who are also here in the United States) as a condition of admission before each semester of registration. This insurance must be maintained throughout enrollment.

Insurance may be purchased through the University; you may also purchase it separately but it should provide the same coverage, including "medical evacuation and repatriation" coverage should you need to return to your country. The insurance is in place to provide partial coverage for most injuries or illnesses suffered while students are enrolled. It is not meant to be a full-coverage healthcare plan; it is not a complete system of care. However, it is very useful for reducing the cost of most treatments that the average student may incur during their time in school.

ESL Institute students who pay the optional Programs Services Fee (PSF) may utilize the campus Health Services facilities. A \$75 deposit will be collected at registration and held to offset charges at the Health Services office; any unused portion of the deposit will be returned to the student when they complete the ESL program. Students who have not paid the PSF will not have access to university health services; however, there are numerous clinics and health facilities in the Clarksville area from which to obtain any needed services (see page 19).

At your scheduled registration appointment with the ESL Institute you will be asked to present a copy of your health insurance policy including term of enrollment, in English, and verification of payment for the semester(s) that you will be attending. ***If you do not have appropriate coverage at registration you will have the opportunity to enroll in the TBR student insurance program at the student orientation session. If you have not enrolled in an insurance program by the end of the first week of class, you will be required to enroll in the TBR student program and cannot attend classes until this is completed. These missed classes will be counted as unexcused absences, which will affect your attendance record.***

Additional information about the insurance requirement is found on the Health and Insurance page of the ESL website.

Austin Peay State University

Austin Peay State University is located in Clarksville, Tenn., the state's fifth largest and youngest (in age of the population) city. The school is named after former Tennessee Gov. Austin Peay, a Clarksville native. Austin Peay is a four-year public, master's level university offering more than 57 majors and 91 different concentrations.

A great deal of information about APSU is found at www.apsu.edu. The following few items have been selected that international ESL students might find useful.

Student I.D. Card

All full-time ESL Institute students receive an Austin Peay State University student I.D. card once they have been issued an "A number" (identification number) assigned by the school. These cards are used to gain access to various campus facilities and services based on the specific fees paid by each student.

The ESL Coordinator will inform new students at the start of each semester when they will be able to get their I.D. cards made in the Morgan University Center lobby.

Student E-mail Accounts

Each student will receive an APSU e-mail account. This APSU e-mail is the official means of communication between the University, the ESL Institute and the student. Students should regularly check their accounts to avoid

missing important information. The e-mail address and password will also be required to access the computers in the Woodward Library.

Parking

Every Austin Peay State University student, faculty and staff member who chooses to park a vehicle on campus at any time must obtain and display a current, valid parking decal and park in their designated areas (color coded).

The fee for the parking decal is included in the optional Program Services Fee. If a student chooses not to pay the PSF a parking decal is available for purchase (\$61 for the academic year). Details are provided at orientation.

Felix G. Woodward Library

Full-time students at the ESL Institute will receive the same library privileges given to all APSU students. Part-time students will receive a courtesy card which provides limited access to library services. To set up your library account or receive a courtesy card, go to the circulation desk which is on the left when you enter the library. They will need your APSU I.D. (for full-time students), home address and phone number. Go to <http://library.apsu.edu/> for further information hours of operation.

University Recreation

There are two different facilities on campus, the Foy Fitness and Recreation Center and the Drew Simmons Fitness Center. Full-time students who have paid the PSF will have access to campus facilities. Other full-time and part-time students may enroll by paying \$103 per semester and filling out an application. Go to <http://www.apsu.edu/Recreation/> for hours and event schedules.

Campus Dining

Students living in campus residential housing, except Two Rivers and Emerald Hill Apartments, are required to purchase a meal plan. Commuting students living off campus have the option of purchasing a meal plan. More information about APSU meal plans and dining locations can be found on the APSU website at www.dineoncampus.com/apsu/.

Public and Campus Safety

Overall, the United States is a safe place. Rarely do students have any trouble, but be sure to follow these “common sense” rules of safety. Always make sure you lock all doors and windows of your home and/or car while you are away. Avoid carrying large sums of cash or valuables with you. Avoid visiting public places such as parks alone after dark, and avoid using Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) alone after dark. Do not carry weapons. It is a good idea to ask friends or colleagues what areas of Clarksville are less safe than others. If something should happen, do not try to resist a robber or mugger, and contact the police as soon as possible.

Clarksville Police Department

Serious (life threatening) Emergency:
pick up any phone (including cell phones) and dial **911**.

APSU Campus Police: (931) 221-7786
On-Campus Emergency: (931) 221-4848

International Education Office and the International Student Organization (ISO)

The International Education Office supports international education both at home and abroad by providing services to international students and scholars and offers study-abroad and exchange programs in host countries around the world.

<http://www.apsu.edu/internationaled>

The International Student Organization (ISO) is made up of both international students and students with international interests. The ISO’s purpose is to broaden the intercultural vision of the university community and to promote international student participation and inclusion in university organizations and activities. The ISO holds

many opportunities throughout the year where the ESL Institute students can get involved more in campus activities and events with other university students.

<http://www.apsu.edu/iso>

The Bridge Program is an organization of both international students and American students enrolled at APSU. It is designed to help international students explore American culture and history while teaching First Friends (APSU American students) about the culture and history of international students. This is accomplished through monthly discussions, educational activities and group excursions. First Friends help international students navigate campus life and culture. International students interested in participating in the Bridge Program and participating in discussions, activities or excursions with First Friends must complete the application. Previous international students wishing to re-apply must also complete this application by the appropriate deadline. An online application is available at <http://www.apsu.edu/internationaled/bridge>.

APSU Policies

Students enrolled in the ESL Institute are considered APSU students and therefore should also follow APSU student policies. <http://www.apsu.edu/student-affairs/judicial1>

Smoking

All smoking is prohibited on the APSU campus, except in designated areas. Regardless of whether classes are in session, this policy prohibits smoking in all buildings, grounds and state-owned vehicles 24 hours a day, year round. A map showing official designated smoking areas can be found at <http://www.apsu.edu/smoking>.

Drinking and Drugs

Austin Peay State University strictly prohibits the use, possession or distribution of alcohol and other illicit drugs on the APSU campus, on property owned or controlled by APSU, or as part of any activity of APSU.

Policy on Minors

Minors (any non-student under the age of 18) accompanying staff, faculty, students or visitors on campus are not permitted in the classroom.

Campus Phone Numbers and Internet Links

- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| • ESL Institute | (931) 221-6270 | www.apsu.edu/esl/ |
| • Center for Extended & Distance Education
(main telephone line) | (931) 221-7816 | www.apsu.edu/ext-ed |
| • University Police | (931) 221-7786 | www.apsu.edu/police/ |
| • Emergency (campus police) | (931) 221-4848 | |
| • Housing | (931) 221-7444 | www.apsu.edu/housing/ |
| • Health Services | (931) 221-7107 | www.apsu.edu/healthservices/ |
| • Student Affairs | (931) 221-7341 | www.apsu.edu/student-affairs |
| • Office of International
Education | (931) 221-6851 | www.apsu.edu/internationaled |
| • International Student Organization | | www.apsu.edu/iso/ |
| • Admissions | (931) 221-7661 | www.apsu.edu/admissions/ |
| • Office of the Registrar | (931) 221-7121 | www.apsu.edu/registrar |

Culture and Customs in the United States

Moving to the United States and attending a new school is a big adjustment in many ways. We cannot include information on everything, but we offer the following points to assist in your transition.

Adjusting to Life in the United States

It is normal and expected for a person who has just entered a new culture or community to feel overwhelmed, excited, nervous, sad, frustrated or happy – sometimes all at once. Moving away from friends, family and the familiar surroundings of home is challenging in both positive and negative ways. Do not be alarmed or surprised if you find yourself feeling confused or frustrated as you make the big move and adjust to life in the U.S.

Remember that you are not alone! There are several places on campus where you can seek help and support if you are feeling overwhelmed. You are encouraged to contact the ESL Institute and/or International Education with any questions or concerns. We are here to help students with this transition.

International Education	(931) 221-6851	http://www.apsu.edu/internationalead
ESL Institute	(931) 221-6270	http://www.apsu.edu/esl/
Student Counseling Services	(931) 221-6162	http://www.apsu.edu/counseling/

Cultural Adjustment Stages

Adapting to a new culture is a continual process that lasts throughout your stay. It is important to hold on to one's basic values, while assimilating new cultural values as well. Understanding the adjustment process helps both international students and U.S. citizens accept cultural differences and the occasional feelings of alienation and frustration associated with the change.

Honeymoon: Exhilaration and anticipation characterize the “honeymoon stage” when individuals are generally fascinated with all that is new and are open to meeting new people. However, with enthusiasm to please they may nod or smile to indicate understanding when, in fact, they do not truly understand what is being said or done. When misunderstandings build, the individual is likely to experience the second stage of cultural adjustment.

Hostility: Frustration, anger, anxiety and sometimes depression take over during the “hostility stage.” The initial excitement is replaced by impatience with bureaucracy and the weariness of speaking and listening in English. At this point, people may display hostility toward people of the new culture and minor frustrations may grow into fear, mistrust and lack of interest in the new culture.

Humor: The “humor stage” follows when the individual begins to relax in the new culture and starts to laugh at minor mistakes and misunderstandings that previously caused headaches. This often occurs after the individual has gained friends and is better able to manage their new environment.

Home: The “home stage” occurs when the individual “feels at home” in the new culture yet retains allegiance to his/her home culture – gaining the ability to live successfully in both.

Greeting People

“Informal” often describes social and even professional life in the United States. First names are often used. However with initial introductions, formal or business situations it is better to address someone as Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms., than by first name. Students in the U.S. generally use first names with peers and last (or family) names with professors. “Hello” and “How are you?” are common greetings. “How are you?” is more of a social convention than a genuine desire to hear about another person's well-being. In addition to a verbal “hello” or “nice to meet you”, a handshake is a standard form of greeting for both men and women.

Personal Space and Etiquette

In the U.S. people give considerable space between themselves and others. If a person backs away during a close conversation, that person is likely trying to re-establish a comfortable personal distance.

People in the U.S. are concerned with personal cleanliness, bathing frequently and using a lot of soap and deodorant, but rarely cologne. Although this might seem exaggerated by other cultural viewpoints, attention to personal hygiene is important for business and social success in the U.S.

Time Orientation

Despite an emphasis on informality, *punctuality is valued*. Meetings, social functions, classes and other organized activities start within minutes of the established time. This applies to professional appointments as well as dinner with friends. If you are unable to meet someone at a pre-established time it is expected that you will contact them and let them know you will be late or unable to meet them.

Social Interaction and Visits

Casual acquaintances are easily made and easily lost. Closer *friendships* result from repeated interaction between people and the sharing of mutual interests and activities. The key is to participate in informal conversations without letting insecurities of language ability prevent an attempt at friendship.

Informal social invitations can be easily misunderstood. People will occasionally say “stop by sometime” or “let’s get together” as a polite way of saying “goodbye.” This is more a form of speech than a literal invitation. However, either individual may initiate a closer friendship by calling to arrange a get-together. Host gifts, such as flowers or a memento from one’s home country are appreciated but not necessary. Your host should be informed in advance of any dietary restrictions. It is acceptable to ask if anything contains ingredients that one cannot eat.

Holidays and Celebrations

Americans celebrate a variety of holidays throughout the year which mark secular, religious, international or uniquely American events. Both public (government offices, schools) and private facilities (banks, shops) close on some or all of these dates. For a list and brief description of major holidays in the U.S. go to <http://www.usa.gov/citizens/holidays.shtml>.

In addition, various ethnic and religious groups celebrate special days although they are not U.S. national holidays. These include Rosh Hashanah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, St. Patrick’s Day and Mardi Gras. Much of the varied culture of the U.S. is celebrated throughout the year on these special days.

Taking Care of Business in Clarksville

There are several practical items that most international students take care of soon after arrival in the U.S. You will most likely need a local bank account, a cellular phone and perhaps a driver’s license.

The ESL Institute has prepared a brochure with useful information for working with banks and getting a driver’s license or Social Security number. All students will receive a copy at registration and it is also available on the *About ESL at APSU* page of the ESL website. The brochure provides phone numbers, addresses and internet links with a great deal of information. If you have further questions, please contact the ESL Institute office.

Banking

A bank checking account is required to conduct most business transactions in the U.S., including bill payment, rent, deposits, etc. We suggest that international students work with a main office location of their selected bank; branch offices may not have personnel who are familiar with the requirements for international students. Banks will initially request a Social Security number (SSN) to open an account because it is the most widely used form of identification; however, international students are *not* required to have an SSN.

The following list shows main office locations for some Clarksville area banks. Most are in or near downtown Clarksville, which is not far from the APSU campus.

Bank of America	215 Legion St.	931-553-2230
F&M Bank	50 Franklin St.	931-245-4274
First Federal Savings Bank	1430 Madison St.	931-552-6176
Green Bank	1805 Madison St.	931-920-7040
Heritage Bank	130 Hillcrest Dr.	931-552-4325
Legends Bank	310 N First St.	931-503-1234
Planters Bank	325 Commerce St.	931-552-0654
Regions Bank	2155 Lowe's Drive	931-648-2202
US Bank	1 Public Square	931-221-4320

Getting a Cell Phone

Most cell phone companies require a contract for at least one year (some require a two year contract) that is divided into monthly fees. There are many different plans with different costs depending on the amount of included minutes and other features. Read the descriptions carefully. Not all cell phones use SIM cards so check with the carrier before purchase if you plan on using a SIM card phone.

Primary area companies offering cell phone service are:

AT&T	http://www.wireless.att.com
Verizon Wireless	http://www.verizonwireless.com
T-Mobile	http://www.t-mobile.com

If you are going to be in the United States for less than the length of a contract, it may be best to purchase a "Go Phone" or a prepaid phone. These types of phones can be found at merchandise stores such as Wal-Mart or Target.

Clarksville

Clarksville, Tenn. has a population of more than 120,000. Although smaller than many large international population centers, it still offers a wide variety of services and activities within easy travel distance. Located just 45 minutes northwest of the state Capitol of Nashville, Clarksville is in the central part of the state (from east to west), a region commonly referred to as Middle Tennessee.

Clarksville is also home to the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), based at nearby Fort Campbell, Ky., and both communities work, play and go to school together.

Some primary points of interest are mentioned here. To learn more about Clarksville try these links:

- <http://www.clarksville.tn.us/>
- <http://www.clarksvilleonline.com/>
- <http://www.theleafchronicle.com/>
- <http://www.mcgtm.org/mayor>

Health Care and Hospitals

For students who do not use APSU's health service facilities, there are a number of options for health care. Gateway Medical Center is the primary hospital and medical facility serving the City of Clarksville and surrounding communities. It is located near Interstate 24 in the northeast part of the city.

<http://www.todaysgateway.com>

Many other clinics, physicians' offices and dental clinics are available throughout the city. A few which may be convenient to students include:

8 th Street Clinic 215 Eighth St., Clarksville (931) 503-0182	Doctor's Care 2320 Wilma Rudolph Blvd. (931) 645-1564	or	Doctor's Care 2302 Madison St. (931) 245-2400
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In addition, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital located at nearby Fort Campbell, Ky. serves members of the military, their families and local retirees.

Transportation

Public transportation is limited in Clarksville, particularly when compared with many large metropolitan areas around the world. Significant public transportation systems are only found in the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. and residents of most other cities and urban centers rely primarily on their own vehicles for traveling and commuting. Clarksville does, however, offer bus service and some taxi services.

Clarksville Transit System (buses)

Go to <http://www.cityofclarksville.com/transit/index.php> for details on fares on routes around Clarksville. APSU recently partnered with CTS and now provides *full-time* students (who have paid the PSF), faculty and staff with free transportation around campus via The Peay Pickup and free transportation around town on the CTS buses. More details are available at <http://www.apsu.edu/sga/peay-pick>

Taxis

If you need a taxi in Clarksville, you must call for one. Driving after drinking alcohol (DUI or Driving Under the Influence) is a serious offense and strictly prohibited in the United States! Call for a taxi if you need one, designate a sober driver or arrange alternate transportation.

Things to Do in Clarksville

Theatre	Roxy Regional Theatre www.roxyregionaltheatre.org
Cinema	Carmike Governor's Square 10 www.carmike.com/ Great Escape 16 www.greatescapetheaters.com/
Library	Clarksville Montgomery County Public Library www.clarksville.org
Museums	Clarksville Montgomery County Museum www.customhousemuseum.org Don F. Pratt Museum www.fortcampbell.com/pratt.php
Newspapers	<i>The All State</i> APSU's campus newspaper www.theallstate.org/

The Leaf-Chronicle
Clarksville's primary newspaper
www.theleafchronicle.com

The Tennessean
Nashville's major newspaper
www.tennessean.com

Events Riverfest
A music and fine arts celebration held in September each year
www.clarksvilleriverfest.com
Rivers and Spires
A community festival held in downtown Clarksville in April each year
www.riversandspires.com

Jazz on the Lawn
Free outdoor jazz concerts from early summer through fall
www.beachavenwinery.com

Destinations Dunbar Cave State Park
<http://www.tennessee.gov/environment/parks/DunbarCave/>

Historic Collinsville
www.historiccollinsville.com

Land Between The Lakes
A designated national recreation area (camping, hiking)
www.lbl.org

Fort Donelson
A U.S. National Park Service museum and national cemetery
www.nps.gov/fodo/

Regional Professional Sports Teams

Football	Tennessee Titans	http://www.titansonline.com/
	Atlanta Falcons	http://www.atlantafalcons.com/
	St. Louis Rams	http://www.stlouisrams.com/
Baseball	Nashville Sounds	http://nashvillesounds.com/
	Atlanta Braves	http://atlanta.braves.mlb.com/
	St. Louis Cardinals	http://stlouis.cardinals.mlb.com/
Basketball	Memphis Grizzlies	http://www.nba.com/grizzlies/
	Atlanta Hawks	http://www.nba.com/hawks/
Ice Hockey	Nashville Predators	http://predators.nhl.com/
	Atlanta Thrashers	http://thrashers.nhl.com/
	St. Louis Blues	http://blues.nhl.com/

Middle Tennessee and Other Regional Destinations

Clarksville is centrally located and within easy travel distance of a number of shopping, entertainment, outdoor activity and historic venues, all providing a different taste of life and culture in the United States.

Nashville, the State Capitol:

Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC)	www.tpac.org
Tennessee State Museum	www.tnmuseum.org
Frist Center for the Visual Arts	www.fristcenter.org
Country Music Hall of Fame	www.countrymusichalloffame.com
Adventure Science Center	www.adventuresci.com
Grand Ole Opry	www.opry.com
The Hermitage	www.thehermitage.com

For more about Nashville see:
<http://www.visitmusiccity.com/>

The Great Smoky Mountains
<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/>

Mammoth Cave National Park
<http://www.nps.gov/macac/>

Checklists

We encourage you to use these checklists to ensure you have all documents ready when required. You have a number of important items to keep track of and it is important to be organized and have everything ready at the appropriate time. Missing documents can cause serious delays and stressful situations that can be avoided with proper advance preparation.

Application Checklists

The ESL Institute also provides detailed checklists for all students which are available at the *Application Process* page of the ESL website.

NEW Full-time F-1 Academic Students:

- Completed application form
- US \$240 application fees and advance payment
- Copy of passport information page with photograph
- Financial Sufficiency Form
- High school and/or college transcript in English.
- Certificate you are free from tuberculosis
- Proof of two Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) immunizations
- Proof of immunity to the chickenpox
- Completed Health History form

NEW Transferring Full-time F-1 Academic Students:

- Completed application form
- US \$240 application fees and advance payment
- Financial Sufficiency Form
- High school and/or college transcript in English.
- Transfer Verification form
- Photocopies of your I-20, I-94, U.S. visa page and passport information pages
- Certificate you are free from tuberculosis
- Proof of two Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) immunizations
- Proof of immunity to the chickenpox
- Completed Health History form

Travel Checklists

“Arriving at a U.S. Port of Entry” fact sheet at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm>

- Your passport and I-20
- Your F-1 student visa
- Immunization records
- Health insurance finalized
- Financial sufficiency documents
- Finalized housing arrangements
- Confirmed travel arrangements
- Contact information for your sponsor/guardian/US family members
- Contact information for APSU and the ESL Institute office

Registration Checklists

NEW and Transferring Full-time F-1 Academic Students:

- Call the ESL office at (931) 221-6270 and make an appointment
- Proof of adequate health insurance (more details on pages 10-11)
- Your passport
- Your visa
- Your stamped I-20
- Full payment for tuition and all appropriate fees (see page 5)

Returning Full-time F-1 Academic Students:

- Call the ESL office at (931) 221-6270 and make an appointment
- Proof of adequate health insurance (if prior coverage has expired)
- If you left the U.S. and are returning for class we need your I-20, I-94, passport and visa
- Full payment for tuition and all appropriate fees (see page 5)

All Non F-1 Students:

- Call the ESL office at (931) 221-6270 and make an appointment
- Non F-1 student registration form
- Photo ID
- Proof of citizenship and/or immigration status
- Full payment for tuition and all appropriate fees (see page 5)