

We trust that you are enjoying the beginning of summer and that you are finding some rest. I know that many are continuing their studies during the summer and therefore we hope that you can still find time to relax and stay out of the heat.

Immigration Policy versus Immigration Practice

It can be a little confusing at times. Our office advises you one thing but an immigration official tells you something different. Who do you believe? In most cases such a discrepancy is a result of the difference between what is “immigration policy” and what is “immigration practice”.

“Immigration policy” refers to the actual legal regulations with which all students must comply. “Immigration practice” refers to those things (practices) which the immigration officers may actually do or permit which do not strictly follow the regulations. Policy only changes when the regulations are changed by the federal government. Practices may vary from day to day, at different Ports of Entry, or depending on the individual officer.



The role of the OIAS is to be trained and advise you on student immigration policy. We do not advise on practice. It is your responsibility to comply with “immigration policy” and not “immigration practices”. For this reason, at times what you see in practice may be different than what we tell you policy says.

Important Things you should know!!!!

Officially Hurricane Season begins June 1 through November 1, 2009

Are you prepared?



The most important thing that you can do is to be informed and prepared. Disaster prevention includes both being prepared as well as reducing damages

As always, the goal of UTPA and its Crisis Management Team is to ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency and we are ready to take action should a hurricane or natural disaster occur. It is also important for everyone to use their best judgment to insure the safety of themselves and their families when conditions are unsafe. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Richard Costello, director of Environmental Health and Safety, at 956/381-3690.

Disaster prevention includes modifying your home to strengthen it against storms so that you can be as safe as possible. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

- **[DEVELOP A FAMILY PLAN](#)**
Your family's plan should be based on your vulnerability to the Hurricane Hazards. You should keep a written plan and share your plan with other friends or family.
http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/prepare/family_plan.shtml
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- **[CREATE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT](#)**
There are certain items you need to have regardless of where you ride out a hurricane. The disaster supply kit is a useful tool when you evacuate as well as making you as safe as possible in your home. http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/prepare/supply_kit.shtml
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- **[SECURE YOUR HOME](#)** - There are things that you can do to make your home more secure and able to withstand stronger storms.
http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/retrofit/secure_home.shtml
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- **[ONLINE VULNERABILITY INFO](#)** - There are web sites that can give you information about your communities vulnerability to specific hazards. These include hurricanes as well as other weather related hazards. <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/prepare/online.shtml>

Please log on to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety's Web site at <http://www.utpa.edu/hurricane/plan>, which outlines the responsibilities and procedures to secure your work area at the University. This site also provides valuable information on how to protect you and your family, home and personal belongings.

* <http://www.utpa.info/docs/ValleyStudyAreaHurricaneInfo.pdf>

*http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/dba_home/safety_home/safety_progs/progs_emergency/progs_hurricane/hurricane_campusadvisory

Emergency Contact Info

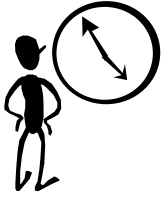
Call: 1-866-967-2626

The following number will provide you "updated" information regarding campus closures, and other pertinent information in the event a hurricane threatens the Rio Grande Valley.

HOTLINE:(956) 292-SAFE (7233)

If UTPA classes need to be cancelled or the campus needs to be shut down, you will receive an **official notification from the President's Office or the Office of University Relations** via e-mail, Bronc Notes and through the following Web sites – UTPA Police (www.utpa.edu/police), the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (<http://ehs.utpa.edu>) and UTPA's main Web site (www.utpa.edu). For those who do not have access to the Internet, the Safe Hurricane Preparedness Hotline (956/292-7233) will be available to provide you with the latest information.

Optional Practical Training



Applications must be submitted to the OIAS during the following dates:

- * Summer I Graduation – April 10 / July 10
- * Summer II Graduation – May 15 / August 18

Once submitted to the OIAS it will take 5/7 working days for the paper work to be completed for submission.

On the Horizon: Electronic Document System

Immigration hopes that by the end of this year (early 2010) to begin the implementation of a “paperless immigration document” system. That means that the I-20, DS-2019 and I-94 will be electronic. That should facilitate port of entry processing as well as applications for immigration benefits.

Summer Reminders

Study requirements during the summer

- If you are a *continuing student* remember that there are no study requirements for the summer. Relax and enjoy your summer.
- If you are a *new student* beginning this summer, you are required to be enrolled full-time 6 hours Undergraduates; 4 hours graduate.
- If you are a continuing student needing to waive medical insurance for summer I please come by the OIAS office to fill out a insurance waiver request form.
- Do not drop any classes without speaking with your International Student Advisor, if you have questions come to our office first.



Reminder: On-Campus Employment (Full-time)

- Continuing international students are permitted to work over 20 hours per week during the summer vacation
- This is permitted between the dates of May 11 and August 28.
- New students are limited to 20 hours per week

General Reminder

We are here to advise you. Most students get in immigration trouble when they assume they can do something and do not talk to us. Those students who stay in contact with us and are careful with their immigration status are rarely in trouble. Please take the time to talk with us. It can save you a lot of problems and headache.

If you have ideas, suggestions, or comments for past events or activities to be planned in the future for international students, please contact us at intladvise@utpa.edu we are located on the Learning Assistance Center 156, (956) 381-2922 Office, (956) 381-2281 Fax.

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Disclaimer

Any information about immigration regulations is subject to change at any time without prior notification. Furthermore, the immigration advisers of the OIAS are neither immigration lawyers, nor are they employees of the Department of Homeland Security or Department of State. Your situation is likely to be different from others and will require more accurate information, which may be obtained from your local immigration office, the U.S. consulate or, your International Student Advisor.