

## **Pre-Arrival Information**

The faculty and staff of Pellissippi State Technical Community College would like to welcome you and congratulate you on your admission to our college. We are delighted that you have chosen Pellissippi State and we look forward to your joining our community. We anticipate that your studies here will enable you to achieve your future goals. This information packet is designed to assist you in preparing to move to Knoxville and study at Pellissippi State. It also provides helpful guidelines for after you arrive.

### **International Student Services**

International Student Services exists to assist international students attending Pellissippi State Technical Community College to reach their highest level of educational potential. In its efforts international student services seeks to help in the following essential areas:

1. International Student Admissions
2. Orientation
3. Immigration Advising
4. Student Involvement

#### **Office Location:**

Goins Building, Room 159  
Pellissippi State Technical Community College  
Office of Admission  
Attn: International Coordinator  
10915 Hardin Valley Road  
Knoxville, TN 37933-0990  
Fax: (865) 539-7217  
Telephone: (865) 539-7007

#### **Hours:**

Mon-Thurs. 8:00 - 4:30

Division Street Campus, Room 115  
Telephone: (865) 971-5200

Friday 8:00 - 4:30

### **Before you arrive:**

You should complete the following steps before you travel to the United States.

**I.** Take your I-20 to the nearest United States consulate office and apply for an F-1 visa. Procedures are different in each country so be sure to inquire about the necessary visa application procedures. Some consulates require an appointment for a visa interview. Some interview applicants on a first come, first serve basis. Some consulates complete visa processing through the mail. Please contact the local consulate office in advance in order to understand the required procedures.

**Please review the visa checklist on the next page and Ten Things to Remember**

## VISA CHECKLIST

- ( ) A current, valid passport
- ( ) An I-20 form from Pellissippi State
- ( ) Evidence of financial support for the time and amount indicated on the I-20
- ( ) Proof that you have a permanent residence outside the United States
- ( ) One or more passport-type photographs
- ( ) Admission letter
- ( ) TOEFL scores if applicable

### Visa Application Information: Ten Things to Remember

#### 1. Prove that you want to return home after you complete your education.

Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas must convince the consular officer that there are reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. Accepted reasons include connections to your hometown or current place of residence such as family and employment. During your interview, you may be asked about your specific intentions in the United States: family or other relationships, educational goals, grades, long-range plans, and how your education may improve career opportunities when you return to your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, that may guarantee a visa.

#### 2. Practice English

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. We recommend that you practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview. Good spoken English will make a positive impression.

#### 3. Speak for yourself

Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular office wants to interview you, not your family. You create a negative impression if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

#### 4. Know Pellissippi State and the academic program you have chosen

You may have to convince the consular officer of your sincerity to study, so you should know information on the program of study you plan to pursue at Pellissippi State. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future career when you return to your country.

#### 5. Be concise

Because of the large number of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct an efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what

you say first and the initial impression you create are both critical to your success. While this method may not seem fair, it is the method currently in use. Please be prepared. Practice answering the sample questions included with this information packet. Keep your answers to the questions brief and relevant. Always show respect and do your best to show confidence in your answers.

## **6. Supplemental Documentation**

The consulate officer should understand the significance of the documents that you submit. Lengthy written explanations and ambiguous financial information cannot be read or evaluated quickly. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.

## **7. Differences exist between countries**

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States permanently will have more difficulty obtaining visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to immigrate. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States. In addition some consulates generally refuse F-1 visas to students admitted to community colleges who already have a degree, because they may not consider community college the next logical step for the student.

## **8. Employment**

Your main purpose for coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While some students do work off-campus during their studies, it usually takes place after their time at Pellissippi and such employment is incidental to their main purpose of studying. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program.

## **9. Financial support for studies**

You must prove that you have financial support guaranteed for one year. Your financial support for that one-year must not be dependent on future income that you or your sponsor may receive. You may have already demonstrated this support to Pellissippi State in the application process, but you may be asked to do so again.

## **10. Maintain a positive attitude**

Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. Arguing will only antagonize the officer. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

**II.** After you receive a student visa, make travel arrangements by contacting a travel agent. You may travel to the United States as many as 30 days prior to the start date listed on your I-20 form. Pellissippi recommends that you arrive at least 10 days prior to the start date on your I-20.

**III.** Obtain all necessary vaccinations and medical records before traveling to the U.S. Upon arrival on campus, you will be asked to show proof that you have received two doses of mumps, measles, and rubella vaccinations and proof that you do not have tuberculosis.

## **Immunization Requirements & Exemptions**

As a prerequisite to matriculation or registration, the Tennessee Board of Regents requires all students who were born after 1956 present documented proof of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella. All students under 40 years of age shall also present documented proof of immunity to rubella, also known as German measles. MMR immunizations are available at the Knox County Health Department. Please call 215-5150 for more information.

Acceptable proof of immunity is as follows:

**Measles:**

Students can be considered immune to measles (rubella) only if they have documentation of at least one of the following:

1. Medical documentation of immunization with TWO (2) DOSES of live measles virus vaccine on or after the first birthday. Persons vaccinated with dead, or an unknown vaccine, prior to 1968 must be revaccinated. Persons born before 1957 may be considered to have had a natural infection, and therefore do not need measles vaccination; or
2. Copy of laboratory evidence of measles immunity; or
3. A physician's statement specifying the date seen, and stating that the patient had an illness characterized by a generalized rash lasting three or more days, a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, a cough, and conjunctivitis, and in the physician's opinion, was diagnosed to be measles

**Mumps:**

1. Medical documentation of immunization with the mumps vaccine; or
2. Copy of laboratory evidence of immunity from mumps; or
3. A physician's statement specifying the date seen, and stating that the patient had an illness that in his/her opinion was the mumps.

**Rubella:**

Students can be considered immune to rubella (German measles) only if they have documentation as follows:

1. Medical documentation of immunization with live rubella virus vaccine on, or after, the first birthday; or
2. Copy of laboratory evidence of rubella immunity.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL FEMALES SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED IF THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF PREGNANCY!**

If a student has no documentation of any doses of measles vaccine, then the first dose should be administered as soon as possible. The second dose should be administered no less than thirty (30) days, and no more than three (3) months later. It is recommended that both doses of measles vaccine be given as a combined measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine.

**Tuberculosis Skin Test (TB Test)**

All international students must prove that they are free from tuberculosis upon enrolling at Pellissippi State. TB tests are available at the Knox County Health Department on Dameron Avenue. Please call 215-5150 for more information.

### **Health Insurance Information**

Health care in the United States is very expensive. For example, without health insurance, a routine visit to the doctor can cost between \$45-\$100. Hospital rooms alone may cost \$1,400 - \$1,700 per day, not including medical procedures or surgeon's fees. The U.S. health care system may be very different from health care systems in your country. Therefore, students must purchase health insurance in order to ensure a need for medical care will not jeopardize their continued enrollment here in the United States.

The Tennessee Board of Regents requires that international students have medical insurance in order to register for classes. The International Student Health Insurance Requirement is as follows:

***"No foreign student in non-immigrant status shall be permitted to register, or to continue enrollment without demonstrating that he or she has adequate medical insurance coverage for illness or accidental injury."***

#### **An appropriate health insurance policy must include the following:**

1. 52 weeks continuous coverage.
2. Basic benefits: room, board, hospital services, physician fees, surgical treatment, ambulance, outpatient services and outpatient fees paid at 80% of usual and customary charge after deductible is met.
3. Inpatient mental health care: 80% with a 45-day cap.
4. Outpatient mental health care: 75% of charges for first 40 visits / policy year; 60% of future charges
5. Maternity benefits: treated as any other medical condition if conception occurs while coverage is in force.
6. Prescription medication covered at 100% after deductible.
7. Reparation: \$7500 coverage to return remains to the home country in the event of death.
8. Medical evacuation: \$10,000 coverage to permit patient to be returned to home country for medical treatment.
9. Exclusion period for pre-existing conditions: first six (6) months.
10. Deductible: \$50 per injury or sickness
11. Aggregate cap: \$250,000 per occurrence.

Pellissippi State recommends that all students purchase the State University and College System of Tennessee insurance plan. You will be automatically charged for and enrolled in this plan

when you enroll for classes at Pellissippi State. It is unwise to purchase anything other than a temporary insurance policy prior to arrival in the United States due to insurance laws that are unique to the state of Tennessee. Insurance laws are different in all fifty U.S. states and insurance companies outside the United States may or may not provide adequate coverage.

If you choose to purchase a policy other than the Pellissippi policy please make sure that it meets the above requirements. You must show proof in order to be granted an insurance waiver. An insurance waiver is necessary in order to avoid being automatically charged for the Pellissippi policy. The deadline for insurance waiver request forms is August 15. Students who do not apply for an insurance waiver by this date will be required to purchase the college insurance policy.

### **Requirements for proof of coverage:**

1. Proof of coverage (usually a photocopy of your insurance card)
2. The "Benefits Schedule" for the insurance policy that lists the coverage of the policy.
3. Request for waiver form (may be obtained from the international coordinator)

The premium payments made to Pellissippi State go directly to Student Assurance Services. No insurance money comes back to Pellissippi State. Also, medical insurance may not pay for illnesses or conditions you have before applying for the insurance. These medical conditions are called "pre-existing conditions" and are typically not covered by health insurance policies during an initial exclusion period. In addition, it is advisable for you to purchase "transit insurance" of some sum that offers you health insurance protection during your transit to the U.S. and until the longer-term plan at Pellissippi State begins. Pellissippi State does not have a student health center; however, we will be happy to refer you to an appropriate medical clinic or doctor's office. Simply call the International Coordinator at 865-539-7007

### **After you arrive:**

When you arrive in Knoxville, please contact the international coordinator as soon as possible. A "hold" will be placed on your student record until you meet with him. A hold prevents you from enrolling in classes or completing any other procedures at the college. You will need to schedule an appointment with him to show him various documents (the I-94, U.S. visa, etc.). He will also need to explain the class registration procedures at that time. For your convenience the steps in the registration process are listed below.

### **Class Registration Procedures**

1. Make an appointment to meet with the International Coordinator by calling 539-7007. Please **bring your passport (including your visa and I-94), TB test results, and MMR immunization records** with you. He will explain the registration procedures and finalize any matters related to your admissions or immigration status. He will also submit a testing appointment form to the testing center at this time. If you fail to meet with the International Coordinator, you will not be allowed to take the placement test or schedule your classes.
2. Make an appointment to take the placement test. You may schedule an appointment by calling the testing center at 694-6454. Please inform the testing center that English is your second language. Also, be sure to know your student I.D. number. Your test cannot be scored without a student number. The test scores will determine the classes that you need during your first semester.
3. If you take your placement test prior to August 9, follow registration procedures listed here:

- a. Make an appointment with Ms. Carol Brenner. E-mail her at [cbrenner@pstcc.edu](mailto:cbrenner@pstcc.edu) or call her at 865-971-5207. If there is no answer, you will need to leave a voice mail or e-mail message for her. She will contact you within a few days.
- b. Understand that you **must** register for developmental courses if your placement test scores require them. This requirement is **non-negotiable**.
- c. Come to the advising session at the time scheduled. Being late causes problems for other students scheduled after you.
- d. If you arrive within the last two weeks before classes begin then you may be required to meet with an advisor during the official registration period.

4. If you take your placement test on August 9 or after plan to meet with an adviser during official registration August 13-19.

5. Register for your classes. There are three ways to register: via the internet, through the phone system, or by submitting a registration form to the records office.

6. Pay your tuition and fees. If you fail to pay the full amount by the deadline, then your class schedule will be cancelled.

7. Attend new international student orientation. This year's orientation will be held on August 20, 2003 from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. **Orientation is mandatory for all international students.** Once you arrive in Knoxville, you will be given a handout concerning orientation.

Congratulations on your admission to Pellissippi State. We are excited that you are planning to continue your education at our college. If your questions have not been answered in the information presented here, please contact us at 865-694-6568 or by e-mail at [admissions@pstcc.edu](mailto:admissions@pstcc.edu) We look forward to seeing you on campus soon!