



## Information for New Students Arriving from India *“Where am I going and what do I take with me?”*

In an effort to aid students coming to the Texas Panhandle from India and surrounding nations, we have composed a short list of useful information about what is advisable for you to bring with you to Amarillo. We have attempted to be as thorough as possible. If you have additional questions, you may contact one of the Indian students currently enrolled and they will be happy to assist you in preparing for your journey here. You will find their information located at: [TTUHSC Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Students](#).

When considering what to bring with you to Texas, please keep in mind your luggage space and the weight limitations imposed by the airlines. You may wish to postpone purchasing many items until you reach the United States, however, many things are more affordable in India and you should consider purchasing costly items before leaving home.

**CONTACT YOUR AIRLINE CARRIER** prior to packing to know the dimensions for luggage and how much weight you are allowed to check and carry on the plane. You do not want to get to the airport and have to take items out of your luggage to leave behind, so make sure you weigh it before you leave home.

### **Money**

The first thing you will need to know is to have \$2500 - \$3000 upon arrival to cover initial expenses. This amount should cover housing, food, utilities, tuition & fees until you begin receiving your salary.

You may want to carry your money primarily in traveler's checks for protection. A good sample to bring would be:

- \$1500 - \$2500 in travelers checks (smaller denominations such as \$20, \$50 & \$100. These are easier to exchange than say a \$1000 traveler's check)
- \$300 - \$500 in cash (also smaller bills such as \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20. Many places refuse to take larger than \$20 bills. Be sure to get some quarters (25 cents) as these are used in telephones and most vending machines. Most American vending machines will usually take \$1 bills (some \$5) and give change – but no larger.
- Keep your travelers check receipts in your pocket in case your checks are stolen. If they are in a bag and the bag is lost or stolen, you will not be compensated for theft or loss.

Watch the exchange rate for several days before you leave to get the most out of your money when exchanging it for U.S. dollars. Upon arrival, the Graduate Program Advisor will assist you in obtaining a bank account.

### **Terms you will need to know:**

- Carrier – Airline you travel on (Jet Airways, Delta, Air France, etc.)
- Handbags or Carry-on – Luggage you will carry into the airplane with you
- Check in – Going to the airline counter and presenting your tickets (you should receive a boarding pass for the airplane at this time)
- Boarding Pass – Ticket with your assigned seat number for the airplane
- Baggage claim – Area inside the destination airport where you will pick up your luggage after completing your flight
- Terminal – Most large airports are divided into terminals or concourses which separate domestic and international flights. These terminals or concourses are normally designated alphabetically (ex: terminal A)
- Gate – Area within the terminal or concourse where you will board your flight to depart (ex: A9 would be terminal A, gate 9)

- I-94 Forms – Official document given to you by your flight attendant on the last flight of your trip. These must be completed and surrendered to the U.S. CBP officer upon arrival in the United States. For more information you may go to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection web-site at: [I-94 Instructions-U.S. Customs & Border Protection](#)
- Customs forms – Given to you along with the I-94. This must be completed and surrendered along with the I-94 upon arrival in the United States. This contains declarations of what you are carrying with you.

### Documents

- Passport, I-20, Visa
- Offer letter from Asst. Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (Dr. Barbara Pence)
- International Driving Permit (if you have one)
- Financial guarantees & letters from sponsors
- Medical certificates and proof of vaccinations
- Transcripts
- Degree certificate or provisional certificate
- I-94 form ( see above)

Note: Your proof of vaccination must indicate that you have received two (2) MMR shots. This is a requirement of the university and you must have received the shots at least 30 days apart. Students may obtain the immunization after they arrive in Amarillo, however they are somewhat costly (~\$60). Failure to comply with this requirement will result in a hold being placed on the student's records.

You are advised to keep original copies of all of your documents with you in your carry on bag at all times while traveling. ***DO NOT LET YOUR CARRY ON BAG OUT OF YOUR SIGHT – EVER – NOT EVEN FOR A MOMENT.*** You do not want to have someone put something in your bag that could get you in trouble, nor do you want your things stolen. You should also put photo copies of your passport, I-20, Visa and offer letter in each bag that you check at the air terminal.

### Textbooks

- "Pharmacology" by Rang and Dale
- Goodman and Gilman's "The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics"

These textbooks are standard for all graduate students in the Pharmaceutical Sciences department. Textbooks here are very expensive, so you should seriously consider bringing these with you. You should also contact a current student to find out about any additional texts that are being used so that you may purchase them also before you leave.

### Apparel

- Light clothing (t-shirts, jeans, shorts) for summer.
- Warm clothing (sweaters, long sleeve shirts, jeans) for winter
- Warm jacket or coat
- One native/traditional outfit
- Enough undergarments to keep you from having to go to the laundry too much. (14 days worth)
- Belts (expensive here)
- 1-2 towels (ordinary towels are better than turkey towels)
- 1 set of double bed sheets (cheap ones costs ~\$20 here)
- 1 warm blanket (costs ~\$15 here)

Most clothing can be purchased reasonably once you arrive in Amarillo, however you will want to bring at least one native (traditional) outfit for Indian holidays and special occasions. Since business attire in the United States is somewhat different than in India, you will want to purchase a business suit once you arrive for interviews or presentations. It is expected for you to dress appropriately when presenting a lecture or interviewing for positions.

If arriving in the summer or fall, it is not advisable to bring a lot of heavy winter clothing. These may be purchased here and will only weigh your luggage down unnecessarily.

If arriving in December or January for the Spring term you will likely need a warm jacket or possibly a wool coat that could be carried on the plane with you. You will also need wool caps, gloves and coats which can be purchased here very reasonably. Sweaters that can be removed in the lab are also good to have. Cold weather usually doesn't begin until late October, so there is plenty of time for students arriving in the summer and fall to acquire appropriate clothing.

Weather in Amarillo is varied and unpredictable. Winter is usually mild, with average temperatures of 55°F (13°C), however weather changes quickly and dramatically in the Panhandle and we do have ice and snow storms most winters. Temperatures can be as low as 0°F (-18°C), and with the wind factored in (which blows most of the time), it could be as low as -10°F(-23°C). Warm clothing is essential to protect from wind chill and frost bite. The summer is very hot and dry with an average temperature of 92°F (33°C) most days from June thru mid September so light clothing is a must.

### **Footwear**

- One formal pair of leather shoes
- One pair casual sports/athletic shoes
- One pair of sandals/chappal and or/Hawaii slippers
- At least 10 pairs of socks.

Formal leather shoes are somewhat expensive, so you might want to bring one pair with you. Athletic or casual sports shoes are very reasonable here. Open toe shoes such as slides or sandals are not approved for wear in the laboratories for safety reasons; however they are worn extensively away from the labs.

### **Housing**

There is no campus housing in Amarillo, therefore be prepared to live in a motel for the first few days after you arrive. Motel rooms cost approximately \$30-\$60 per day and you should include an additional \$10-\$15 per day for food. To rent an apartment you will need to have a minimum of one month's rent as a down payment in addition to your first month's rent. Apartments close to the school generally cost around \$350-\$475 per month, so you will need \$700 - \$950 when you arrive to rent an apartment.

You may wish to contact some of the students here to see if you can make arrangements to live with someone until you can decide where you will locate. Many of our students find sharing expenses to be beneficial in keeping the cost of living down.

### **Food Items**

There is a small Indian Store in Amarillo that carries most of the food and spice items you would wish to purchase. In order to keep expenses down when you first arrive you may wish to bring some non-perishable items such as spices, rice, noodle packets, Dal, salt, sugar, Tea/Coffee. Don't overload as these items can cause your baggage weight to go up. Bring just enough to get you started. **BE SURE ALL FOOD ITEMS ARE PACKED IN LUGGAGE THAT WILL BE CHECKED AT THE AIRPORT.** Do not put food items in your carry-on bag. They no longer allow food of any type inside the cabin of the airplane. Make sure your food items are tightly sealed to insure they do not break open with rough handling of your luggage during transit.

Food at the Indian store here is slightly more expensive due to import charges; however once you begin receiving a salary it is affordable. Most students shop at the local Walmart where food, clothing, house wares, and electrical appliances are very reasonable. Until you are able to drive there is usually someone who is willing to take you to these stores.

### **Utensils**

You may want to bring the following items to get you started:

- A large pressure cooker with spare gaskets and safety valves. These are much more expensive here than in India – so you may want to make room for this.
- A frying pan, a saucepan and a kadai
- Plate, spoon, glass, etc. for yourself

If you have already confirmed that you will be living with someone, you may wish to contact them before bringing any cooking utensils. They may have the above items, but need you to bring something else. If you are going to have a room-mate that arrives at the same time, you will want to contact them to divide the items you will need to set your apartment kitchen up. This avoids repetition and also keeps the weight of you luggage down.

### **Medicines**

- Vicks, Iodex, vitamin tablets, Crocin, Disprin, Nebasulf powder, Crepe bandage (1" & 2" size), asst. band-aids, pain killers, antiseptic cream, relaxyl, etc.
- Personal medication
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses etc.
- Get a complete medical checkup prior to leaving India

- Prescriptions for all medicines you carry with you

Many of the over-the-counter items listed first are available here, however they are more expensive and you will want to have the items you think most necessary with you when you arrive. Eyeglasses/contact lenses are much more expensive here, so make sure you bring more than one pair with you. **YOU MUST HAVE PRESCRIPTIONS** for any prescribed drug you are arriving with; U.S. Customs is very strict about drugs. Be careful you know the difference between drugs you can purchase easily and without a doctor's prescription in India but would require a prescription in the United States. Ask someone before you leave, do not leave it to chance. It is advisable to get a complete medical checkup before leaving as health care facilities here are rather expensive.

#### **Additional Optional Items**

- Indian music – hard to find in the Panhandle of Texas, but we have great country music if you're interested
- Small sewing kit
- Indian Cook Book

#### **Items NOT to Bring**

- Electrical appliances from India. Most Indian appliances are not 110 volts and will blow up if plugged into an electrical outlet in the U.S.
- Clothes hangers – they are a different size here and really cheap, so don't bring more than a couple
- Blank notebooks, file folders, pens, etc. – really cheap here and sometimes free so don't waste your space or money
- Laundry soap – very cheap here
- Fruits, vegetables, meat – Perishable items can cause problems and delays with Customs
- Too much food – Don't bring large quantities of food. You can purchase more after arriving.
- Heavy winter clothing – Most of what you need you can get as soon as you arrive relatively cheap

Some other really good sites that have ideas about what you should bring are:

[Texas Tech Univ - India Students Assoc. Info Packet](#)

[Eastern Kentucky Univ - Indian Students Home Page](#)

[Univ at Albany - Indian Students Organization](#)

[Univ of Maryland - Student Council of India -](#)

We are looking forward to your arrival and hope you have a pleasant and safe journey to Amarillo.