

MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY®

International Student Handbook

A new country and a new way of living!

A different way of thinking

Time... Do not be late!

In the US, being on time is very important. If you have an appointment with a friend, a teacher, a professional meeting or class you have to arrive at the stated time (5mn before would be even better!).

The American Dream

As an international student, you probably want to realize your American dream, but for that you will have to work hard. In the United States, hard work is very appreciated.

Outspoken

If an American has an issue with you he/she will tell you. Do not take it personally; they are very direct.

Friendship and dating in the US

Friendship

It is really usual to say "Hi", "Good morning" or "Hello" and smiling even to unknown people. You are more than welcome to respond to those courtesies.

Americans can also be shy and it might take them some time to form deep relationships, so you may need to be the one who has to take the first step.

Contrasting viewpoints

For an American a friend is someone who shares with him a moment of his lifetime. But for the others, a friend is "someone with whom you are very close".

"Friends are often limited to an area of common interest, such as work, school or recreation." In general contrast, friends enjoy all of your personality.

Friends appreciate doing specific activities together. Usually a friend enjoys just being around you.

If you have a problem, it is common to go to a professional while talking with a friend or a family member.

In the United States, most of the time, friendship crosses genders and generations, so don't be surprised if you are used to friendship made with only the same gender and with people of the same age.

Here, you may need to schedule time if you want to see friends.

Americans have friendly behavior with almost everyone. While, in your home country, people who don't know each other have a formal behavior and relationship.

Dating

You have to know that there are not set rules for dating in the US. Most of the time, the person who asks for the date will pay, but you may need to be prepared to share the expenses.

Dress Code

For classes - It is acceptable for you to wear jeans, shorts, shirts, tee-shirts... Americans love to wear casual clothes.

For work - It is recommended to ask.

However men should have dress slacks, shirt and tie or a suit in case of professional meeting. Women should have a suit, dress or skirt and blouse

Law and Legal Issues

Alcohol

In the United States, you are not allowed to drink before the age of 21. You will also be in trouble if you provide or offer alcohol to anyone under this age; it is considered a serious crime.

Tobacco Products

You are not allowed to consume cigarettes and other tobacco products before 18.

Drugs and Medications

Sexual Harassment and Stalking

Sexual harassment is when someone misuse his/her power to obtain sexual favors in the following circumstances: "as a condition of an individual's employment or academics advancement, or in a situation that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance." It can be verbal or physical.

"It is also illegal to stalk an individual by following the person, continually making unwanted phone calls or other unwelcome attempts to contact another person." These laws apply to **ALL** within the US.

Domestic Assault - In Illinois

Sexual Conducts in the US

"Adults (people over the age 18) cannot have sexual contact/relation with a minor, or someone who is under the age of 18. This is considered statutory rape and is punishable by imprisonment and/or fines."

Shoplifting

Most of the time, products are in "self-service". Do not never ever put merchandise in your purse or in your pocket. It will be considered a crime and you can be taken to court even if it is a misunderstanding.

Rights and responsibilities of non-immigrants

Even if non-immigrants have almost the same legal rights as citizens, you may

encounter some legal problems because of them... Here you can find some help:

- "Never sign any document until it has been fully read and understood. Contracts cannot be easily broken."
- "Keep written records of all transactions. Get a receipt for cash payments."
- "Don't rely on verbal assurances or promises from landlords or sellers of consumer goods; document them in writing."
- "Be aware of how any transactions conflict with immigrations and visa requirements."

Be safe!

If you are in danger, you can call 911 anywhere in the US: This number is a national emergency number.

Please remember:

- After sunset, walk with someone else and stay on well-lit streets.
- Do not give your name, telephone number, e-mail address or home address to someone whom you don't know well.
- It is okay to say "no". It is better to be honest, and something else can be understood as a "maybe" or "yes".
- Walk facing oncoming traffic if no sidewalk is available.
- Do not leave your backpack, purse or books.
- Always carry enough change with you to make a phone call.
- If you have to use an ATM machine, try to use one in a busy area and well-lit if it is at night.
- Lock your room if you are not in, and also at night.
- If a stranger knocks at your door for a phone call or something else, do not let him/her in.
- Do not give out your credit card number or Social Security number.

Culture Shock

Definition

According to Macionis, John, and Linda Gerber "Culture shock is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, or to a move between social environments, also a simple travel to another type of life."

Symptoms

How people are affected vary from one person to another. Most of the time they become nervous and unusually tired. They may sleep a lot, or not being able to sleep or to eat. They can feel frustrated toward the local people and may get excessively angry about minor annoyance.

How to deal with culture shock.

J. Daniel Hess makes some suggestions to help you.

- 1) Find people to interact with.
- 2) Surround yourself with familiar things like a photo or a CD.
- 3) Stay in contact with your family and friends.

- 4) Slow down and simplify your daily tasks.
- 5) Develop patterns.
- 6) Give expression to your feeling. Laugh, cry, pray...
- 7) Keep working on language skills. Practice English again and again.
- 8) Confide to your friends.
- 9) Make a few small decisions.

Finally, be patient with yourself and with others. Take care of yourself, your well-being is important. Realize that you may be treated as a stereotype and that you may have some stereotype! Talk with experienced international students from your country and other countries; they will listen and help. If you have any issue, come to the Center for International Education (CIE); they are professional and here to help anytime.

Learn the local criteria for success; Americans will always help you to be successful.