

FACULTY AND STAFF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

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Introduction

Faculty and staff exchange is an integral component of Towson University's internationalization effort. Faculty exchanges provide professors a unique opportunity to further their own professional development and scholarly research. Staff members can take advantage of exchange opportunities to work in related departments at TU partner institutions. There are possibilities for exchange in a dozen countries and more than 25 international partner universities. Full-time, tenure-track faculty may spend a semester, year or short-term period abroad while staff exchanges are normally 4 weeks in length. Ideally, these exchanges will result in collaborative projects and ongoing exchanges of information.

This website guide provides information to assist you in planning and preparing for an international exchange visit. It pertains only to overseas opportunities authorized by Towson University. To make your trip run smoothly, read the guide in its entirety before you travel. Bookmark the website as a ready resource for questions that might arise during your stay.

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Benefits of an International Exchange

An international exchange is an enriching experience on many levels. It affects both personal and professional development, stimulates creative ideas, enhances relationships, and strengthens multicultural understanding.

Faculty and staff alike will experience firsthand different approaches to higher education, teaching styles, research, student services and support functions.

Working, teaching or conducting research in a different environment presents new and rewarding challenges. Interacting with new professional contacts offers a perspective on your standing as a scholar, teacher or administrator in a *global* community. At the same time, you are serving as an ambassador for Towson University, laying important foundations for future exchanges and collaborations.

Towson students will share in the benefit of your exchange as you integrate new views and material into your curriculum, promote study abroad, practice cross-cultural sensitivity in your daily interactions and lead the way in appreciating the diversity of people and cultures on TU's campus.

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Expenses Covered by TU

Compensation

- For full-time faculty and staff: Regular salary and benefits continue throughout the period of teaching, research or work abroad.
- For part-time faculty: The host institution abroad must agree to provide compensation for teaching. The pay scale may differ from TU's.

Roundtrip Airfare

TU's Office of International Programs will cover the cost of roundtrip economy airfare for faculty and staff members participating in an exchange or overseas opportunity approved by the university. Follow TU travel policies when purchasing tickets. Check price of airfare with the Office of International Programs prior to finalizing purchase.

As with any university-sponsored travel, the following forms should be completed:

- Travel Authorization Form must be completed prior to departure
- Travel Expense Voucher with receipts must be submitted upon return.

Teaching/Research Materials

TU's Office of International Programs will pay up to \$200 for the shipping of teaching materials and supplies. Consult with the TU post office in the University Union for cost-effective shipping – e.g., weight and size restrictions; preferred carrier.

Replacement Personnel Expense

The TU department chair or supervisor is responsible for arranging coverage of the TU faculty or staff member's teaching or workload if there is no matching exchange partner from the overseas institution. The Provost's Office normally provides funds to cover the cost of replacement faculty coverage. Department chairs should contact the associate vice president of International Programs for further information. Typically, replacement personnel are not utilized for staff exchanges.

Expenses NOT Covered by TU

- Housing
- Spouse/family/companion expenses
- Supplemental insurance

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Applying for an Exchange

❑ **Begin planning at least a year in advance**

❑ **Identify the institutions of interest to you**

Become familiar with TU's international exchange partners. Identify the institutions where you are interested in teaching or doing research. [CLICK HERE](#) for a list of partner institutions and links to their websites. You may also contact the International Programs staff for additional information.

❑ **Coordinate plans with department chair or supervisor and colleagues**

Discuss the timing of your exchange with your department chair or supervisor and how your teaching and/or administrative responsibilities can be covered while you are abroad. Also, talk with colleagues who have been on an exchange.

❑ **Complete and submit application**

▪ Complete the Faculty/Staff Exchange Application. [CLICK HERE](#) for the application.

▪ Submit the application with your resume to:

Dean Esslinger
Associate Vice President, International Programs
Administration Building, #213
Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001

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Entering a Foreign Country

- You need to prove your citizenship and identity when you enter a foreign country. Generally, you satisfy this requirement by presenting your passport. Certain countries, such as Canada and Mexico, allow Americans to present other documents that prove citizenship and identity. Your passport must remain valid for the time you are staying abroad.

NOTE: Some countries require the passport to be valid at least six months beyond the return date.

Passport Application

- Complete instructions and applications for obtaining or renewing a passport are provided by the U.S. Department of State at:
<http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>.
- Generally, first time application is done by mail.

Passport Application Locations

- There are many public locations where you may apply for a passport. To search for one in your area, visit:
<http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>

Timeline

- The time for processing a passport application averages six weeks but can range from four to eight weeks, depending on the season.
- If you need a passport in less than two weeks, you should contact a passport agency. Appointments are usually required, and there is an additional fee for expedited processing.
- [CLICK HERE](#) for a list of passport agencies.
http://travel.state.gov/passport/about/agencies/agencies_913.html.

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Preparing to Go - Visas

What is a Visa

- A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government that permits you to visit that country for a specified purpose and a limited time, for example, an exchange visitor visa or a three-month tourist visa. You must have a valid passport before applying for a visa.

Visa Requirements per Country

Complete information on Foreign Entry Requirements is available from:

- The U.S. Department of State at:
http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1251.html
- Passport and visa services companies such as Zierer Visa Service, Inc. in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.zierervisa.com>). You may find other companies by visiting the website of the National Association of Passport and Visa Services <http://www.napvs.org>.

Timeline

It is advisable to obtain visas before leaving the United States because you may not be able to obtain visas for some countries once you have departed.

Where to Apply

- You should apply directly to the embassy or nearest consulate of each country that you plan to visit or consult a travel agent or visa service.

- Allow a minimum of one week to obtain a visa.

Other

- Passport agencies cannot help you obtain visas.

- The Office of International Programs can assist you with visa requirements such as letter of support and invitations, as needed.

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Preparing to Go – Travel Information

Travel Information

- International Travel Information:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html

- Consular Affairs Publications:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1231.html

Cultural Acclimation

It is important to read and conduct as much research as possible about the country where you plan to live. Learning about the nation's culture, customs and people ahead of time can aid you in feeling comfortable in your new place of residence and minimize culture shock.

Libraries, bookstores, tourist bureaus, the Internet, and the U.S. Department of State (www.travel.state.gov/travel) are good sources of information.

Visit TU's Study Abroad Office to view their wide variety of travel guidebooks on particular countries. For first-hand insights, contact TU faculty and staff who have previously gone on an exchange visit. They can provide information about daily living practicalities in the host country.

It is also beneficial to know at least the basics of your host country's language. The effort you make in speaking the native language will be greatly appreciated by the people you meet and with whom you work.

Packing

- Ship any belongings and instructional/research material six to eight weeks in advance.
- Utilize the main TU Post Office for advice on cost-effective packing and shipping options.

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Preparing to Go – Medical

- Review travel plans with doctors, dentists, etc

Medical and dental checkups prior to your departure are highly recommended, since you may be exposed to unfamiliar climates, food, medicine, and health care systems while on overseas exchange.
- Check with your doctor for information on immunization requirements, recommended vaccines, medications and supplies you will need.
- Carry duplicate prescriptions and corrective lenses

If you take prescription medications, research whether or not your particular medication is available in your host country. Determine if you will need to take only an initial supply of the medication or a quantity sufficient for your entire stay. In either case, you should take along a copy of the prescription for the generic name of the medicine.

Note: *Prescriptions cannot be filled in foreign pharmacies; you will need to see a local doctor.*
- If you wear corrective lenses, take along an extra pair and the prescription in case you lose or damage your primary pair.
- Visit websites with medical/health information for other countries:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): www.cdc.gov/travel/

Passport Health: <http://www.passporthealth.com/>

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Preparing to Go – Health Insurance

Primary Health Insurance

- Contact your medical and dental insurance carriers to understand how your primary coverage will apply while you are outside the U.S.
- Ask about the claims procedures for health care administered outside of the U.S.

Supplemental Health Insurance

- Your current U.S. health insurance policy may not cover you overseas or may provide only limited coverage. In this case, consider purchasing supplemental overseas travel insurance for the duration of your stay abroad. Supplemental insurance costs vary depending on age and duration of stay.
- Key components your supplemental policy should include are:
 - Medical evacuation
 - Repatriation
 - Family reunion (flying a family member overseas to be with you)
- A number of companies offer supplemental insurance. You may compare coverage and cost by visiting websites such as the ones listed below:

<http://www.tripinsurancestore.com/>

<http://insuremytrip.com>

<http://www.totaltravelinsurance.com>

<http://www.quotetravelinsurance.com/>

Further information is available through the Office of International Programs.

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Preparing to Go – Financial Matters

Meet with your Banker

Review your options for bill payment, cash requirements and other issues requiring attention while overseas with your banker.

- Bill payment: Arrange for timely receipt and payment of bills. Internet banking be useful for this.
- Access to cash: ATMs are generally the easiest and least expensive way to access cash overseas in the local currency. Arrange for direct deposit of your pay to your U.S. bank account. Generally, you only have access to the primary account assigned to your ATM card.

Assess your tax situation

- The Internal Revenue Service website, <http://www.irs.gov>, is an important resource. Download or order Publication 54, *Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad*. For information on Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, review Tax Topics 853, 854, and 855.
- Meet with a financial or tax adviser to determine how your income tax situation will be affected. U.S. citizens, Permanent Residents and Resident Aliens for U.S. tax purposes are subject to U.S. tax on their worldwide income. You may also be subject to tax by the government of your host country.

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Preparing to Go - Emergencies

Be Prepared

- Make a copy of the identification page of your passport, visas and airline tickets, and keep them in a separate place.

- Leave a copy of your itinerary, a photocopy of your passport and important numbers for emergency contact with your family, friends, the TU department you work in and the Office of International Programs.

- Follow the ten *Tips for Traveling Abroad*.
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html

In an Emergency

- Contact the U.S. consulate or embassy in your host country in case of serious legal, medical or financial emergencies. See:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

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When You Return

Customs Regulations

Customs regulations place limits on the dollar amount of goods you may bring back duty-free to the U.S. The personal exemption limit can vary depending on the country visited and amount of time spent outside the U.S. For more information, visit <http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>.

Re-entry Culture Shock

Re-entry culture shock is the reverse of culture shock. Some people go through this when returning home after an extended stay abroad. Just as you might have experienced culture shock when you first arrived in your host country, many people go through a similar re-adjustment period upon their return home.

Visit International Programs Office

Soon after you return, make an appointment with the Office of International Programs Office to discuss your experience and submit your travel expense voucher. Submit a written report about your exchange and the outcomes (e.g., impact on teaching, curricula, research) within six weeks of your return.

Share Your Experience

Share your experience with members of your department and encourage others to participate in an exchange.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Am I limited to an exchange with TU's partner institutions?

It is preferable to plan an exchange with an established partner institution. However, if you have an opportunity for an exchange elsewhere, contact the Office of International Programs to discuss what arrangements are possible.

Q: What would I be expected to do during an exchange?

TU faculty members are expected to teach one to three courses per semester at the host university overseas and/or engage in a specified research project during the period of their exchange. In a staff exchange, TU staff members are paired with their counterparts at the partner institution and work on collaborative projects that will benefit both schools and enhance the relationship for future exchanges.

Q: May I teach in English?

Yes, you may teach in English at all of the partner schools, with the exception of Sangmyung University and Sogang University in Korea.

Q: What is the typical length of an exchange visit?

The length of a faculty exchange is generally one academic semester or year. Shorter faculty exchanges are possible in January and during the summer. Staff exchanges are typically four weeks. The minimum exchange period for both faculty and staff is four weeks, if you expect to apply for travel funds.

Example of a short-term exchange arrangement:

A TU faculty or staff member goes abroad from mid-May to early July when foreign universities are still in session. The exchange partner then visits TU from September to early October, prior to the start of the foreign school's academic year.

Q: Must there be a simultaneous exchange of personnel?

No, a simultaneous exchange is not required. However, over a period of three years, the exchanges at any particular institution should be in balance. In the case of faculty exchange, if a professor from the foreign institution does not cover the TU faculty member's teaching load, the department will need to hire a temporary replacement for you.

Q: Do I need to take a sabbatical or leave of absence?

No. The faculty or staff member continues to receive his/her salary and full benefits from TU during the exchange period.

Q: What about housing?

Ideally, exchange participants trade houses. However, when this is not possible, arrangements can be made through the host university abroad to secure accommodations on or off campus. Universities in China often provide housing for "foreign experts." Discuss housing options with the Office of International Programs staff and former faculty or staff exchange participants. You are also free to make your own arrangements. Any housing expense is the responsibility of the exchange participant.

Q: What travel resources are available on the internet?

[CLICK HERE](#) for a list of travel-related websites.