

# International Student Handbook

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## **Welcome**

Message from the Dean of Student Services:

Welcome to Guilford Technical Community College. We are delighted you selected GTCC as your college of choice and hope you will become active member of our learning community.

Student success is our primary goal and we take pride in the quality of our educational programs and student support services. Our dedicated faculty is committed to student learning, continuous improvement, and celebrating the rich diversity of our student population. Your presence, as an International Student, enhances the diversity on our campus and we are glad that you are here. I encourage each of you to share the richness of your culture with us, as we share ours with you.

To assist you, the College maintains an Office for International Students coordinated by Mrs. Malinda Carmon. Mrs. Carmon provides variety of services to all foreign students enrolled at GTCC to ensure access to academic programs, extracurricular activities, and support services. Her office is located in Room 280 on the second floor of the Medlin Center. The telephone number is (336) 454-1126 ext. 2356 (from High Point) and (336) 334-4822 ext. 2356 (from Greensboro). Please contact Mrs. Carmon for any needed assistance.

Your success is important to us and we hope that you will take advantage of the outstanding educational resources available to you at Guilford Technical Community College.

Diane M. Gibson, Ed.D.

## Introduction

Welcome to Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) one of the 59 community colleges in North Carolina. We are very happy and pleased that you have chosen GTCC to continue your education. You will be joining a college community of approximately **16,000** students **400** of whom are internationals. More than 80 countries are represented here among the students, faculty, and staff populations. The International Office stands ready to help you meet your educational goals while you attend this college. We trust that your stay here will be productive and enjoyable.

All new students face similar situations upon arrival. You will face the challenge of finding a place to live, registering for classes, learning the college system, making new friends, and adjusting to your new surroundings. We want you to know that many people here are ready to assist you.

This booklet has been prepared especially to help international students in the adjustment process. The material addresses student concerns and is designed to supplement the Student Handbook and other publications that you will receive during your orientation and program of study. Particular emphasis should be placed on immigration sections regarding passports and visas, extension of stay, transfer, travel abroad, taxes, etc.

Please call the International Student Office whenever you have a question that may affect your non-immigrant status. We also would be happy to speak to you about other concerns you may have, or we may refer you to someone else who can be more of assistance.

Some details contained in this handbook may change over time, so please consult the International Student Office in the future years to obtain the latest information that could affect your stay. Best wishes for your stay here at GTCC.

## Where To Go With Questions

Questions	Talk To	Locati
Academic Matters	Faculty Advisor	Academic De
Academic Status	Admissions/Record's Office	Medlin Center
Admission	Admission's Office	Medlin Center
Add/Drop or Change	International Student Advisor	Medlin Center,
Books and Supplies	Bookstore	Medlin Center
Health Insurance	International Student Advisor	Medlin Center,
Library Information	Librarian	Learning Resource
Cooperative Education	Advising Center	Medlin Center
Identification Card	Student Life Office	Medlin Center
Immigration	International Student Advisor	Medlin Center,
Joining a Club	Student Life Office/International Office	Medlin Center
Passport Information	International Student Advisor	Medlin Center,
Paying School Bills	Finance Office	Medlin Center, Lo
Counseling	Counseling Center/International Office	Medlin Center
Placement and Career Planning	Counseling Center	Medlin Center
Testing	Testing Center	Medlin Center
Records, Transcript	Admissions/Record's Office	Medlin Center
Registration	Advising Center/Counseling Center	Medlin Center, 2 <sup>nd</sup> L Academic Depart
Student Employment	Financial Aid Office/Job Placement and International Student Office	Medlin Center
Traffic Violations	Public Safety Office	Medlin Center
Tutoring	Tutoring Center	Guided Studies- Com Careers B
Vehicle Registration	Public Safety Office	Medlin Center

**If you are unable to find an answer to any of your questions, call the Office of International Student Office, Ext. 2356.**

## **College Community**

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) is a multi-campus organization with locations in Jamestown, Greensboro, High Point and at the T.H. Davis Aviation Center at the Piedmont Triad International Airport. There are approximately 70 programs of study offered at these locations and community sites. GTCC enrolls students from more than 80 different countries. The college recognizes the richness in cultural diversity in its service area and strives to reflect that diversity in student enrollment and staffing.

GTCC has no dormitories or residence halls. All students must arrange for housing away from the college. The Student Life Office provides the most current listings of houses and apartments available for students in the Greensboro area. The college strives to

be an integral part of the surrounding community. Several international festivals are held annually and area schools often ask our international students to speak.

## **International Student Association**

The International Student Association (ISA) was organized in 1983 to provide opportunities for the students to increase their knowledge and appreciation. The ISA exposes students to different cultures, customs and traditions through special events, activities and field trips. Some of the events include international coffee hour, international student week and Diversity Day.

## **Speaker's Bureau**

The speaker's bureau serves the local community by providing international speakers to schools, civic and other organizations. The students provide a valuable educational resource for information and international understanding. Students are invited to speak about their home country and culture, show slides, demonstrate native dress, music, foods and crafts.

## **International Student Office**

Location: Medlin Campus Center, administration building, room 280

Address: 601 High Point Road, P.O. Box 309 Jamestown, N.C. 27282

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Telephone: (336) 334-4822, ext. 2356 TDY: (910) 841-2158

FAX Number: (336) 819-2022

The International Student office is a part of the Department of Academic Support Services in the Student Services Division. All foreign-born students, immigrant or non-immigrant, may receive assistance and services from this office.

Our office is responsible for all immigration-related matters, as well as programming for the international community. In addition, the foreign student advisor is available to advise, counsel and direct

students in a wide variety of personal and academic areas. We promote multi-cultural awareness through a wide variety of orientation and activities all year long.

Monthly ISA meetings, international student orientation and an International bulletin board help keep students informed about immigration regulations and changes as well as social, educational and practical training opportunities.

Students are encouraged to visit the International Students Office on a regular basis to get to know the staff. We would like international students to feel comfortable about discussing their problems with the international student advisor in a confidential and positive atmosphere.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to let your feelings be known. You will find the International Students Office ready to help serve your personal needs.

## **Basic Immigration Information**

This section provides only general information on a wide variety of immigration issues. Students are strongly urged to consult the International Students Office whenever they have any questions about an immigration regulation or requirement.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to know the expiration date of their student visa, their personal passport and the completion date for their program of study as listed on their I-20.

International students are required to maintain their student status by completing classes on a full-time basis (12 credit hours each semester). Students requesting part-time status **must have written approval from the international student advisor prior to carrying a part-time load of classes**. Failure to comply with this regulation will place the student in an "out of status" situation that will result in mandatory reinstatement paperwork or travel. Specific and acceptable reasons for approved part-time status will be discussed on an individual and personal basis with the international student advisor.

Students who require additional time to complete their studies will need an extension of stay. They are required to present a typewritten memo from their academic advisor or department head stating the reason for the extension and a new expected program completion date. This memo must be on department letterhead. Phone calls and/or handwritten memos are not acceptable. Failure to provide the required documentation prior to the current I-20 completion date will place the student in an "out-of-status" situation. Although the processing regulations for students on F-1 visa vary, the department memo is required from all students. The International Students Office will provide additional forms and information to students after a request for an extension is provided by the student.

If a student requires a change in his or her immigration status, the International Students Office must be consulted and notified immediately.

Students entering the country on a B-2 tourist visa are not allowed to enroll in a complete academic program of study. They may take some credit classes not to exceed 15 credit hours. Students who enter the United States on a waived tourist visa cannot convert their visa under any circumstances and will be required to exit the country, return to their home country and get the proper visa before they will be allowed to study.

Full-time academic students who have studied for two consecutive semesters are entitled to an optional summer semester. Study is not required during this optional summer semester and neither is full-time course work if the student chooses to attend classes during summer vacation.

Students who start their program of study during the summer semester are not entitled to take part-time classes. This also applies to students who have not maintained full-time status for two consecutive semesters.

Students who seek employment, whether on campus, off campus, or practical training, are required to come to the International Students Office with their specific requests.

Optional practical training is available to students who meet the

criteria as curricular pre- or post-completion options. Students are requested to consult the International Students Office to determine what is best for their personal situation.

Students are reminded that the Designated School Official (DSO) must sign their I-20 prior to any travel outside the United States.

**Please do not wait until the last minute** to have these documents signed. Reminder: This office will not rush process any requests for paperwork. You will need to

allow the minimum amount of time (two-three days) for processing, depending on the type of paperwork you need from this office. **It is your responsibility to allow for the appropriate amount**

**of time to process your paperwork.**

**A Word of Warning:** Please do not rely on your friends, instructors or staff for advice regarding your immigration status. Each individual case, depending on your history and future plans, will need special treatment. Therefore, asking how someone else accomplished a particular immigration task often will not help in your situation and can provide misleading directions.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is an U. S. government agency in charge of protecting the United States borders and the facilitation and monitoring of the stay of international visitors pursuing legitimate objectives in the United States.

**Note:** The International Student Office does not work for INS nor for any other part of the United States government, but is an office of the Student Services Division at GTCC.

## **Essential Documents**

**Passport:** All non-immigrants are required to possess and keep current a valid passport issued by their country of citizenship. Failure to keep it valid renders a non-immigrant out of status (and consequently, not eligible for extension of stay or change of status as

well as subject to deportation). Questions regarding passport renewals, extensions or replacements should be addressed to the non-immigrant's embassy or consulate here in the U. S. While it is not necessary to carry a passport at all times while in the states, it must be taken with you when leaving and re-entering the U. S. The passport expiration date should not be confused with a visa expiration date (always indicated on the visa stamp inside the passport) or expiration of a particular period of stay as indicated on one's I-20, I-94, etc.

**Certificate of Eligibility (I-20):** In order to obtain an F-1 non-immigrant visa you will need to apply at a U. S. Embassy or consulate overseas. You will first complete a visa application and pay a fee. Then you will need to present a letter of admission along with all necessary documents; a valid passport, health report, proof of financial support, proof of English proficiency and a certificate of eligibility issued by the International Student Office at GTCC. The officer issuing the visa at the consulate will put a visa stamp in your passport if he or she believes you meet the necessary requirements.

Before the International Student Office can issue a certificate of eligibility we must have on file a copy of your admission application, some personal information, information about any family members that will be accompanying you, your current mailing address and proof of adequate funding (affidavit of support). Proof of funding consists of funds equal or greater than the estimated amount of tuition, cost of living, health insurance and other miscellaneous fees. This funding may be from personal or family funds, U. S. or home country government, your employer, a sponsoring agency organization, or other guarantors. Documentation must be in the form of a dollar amount

and specific letter of sponsorship (if not your own funds) and current, original statements from a bank officer certifying the current and average balance in U.S. dollars of at least a year's expenses. Students are not allowed to sponsor other students. The International Student Office issues the I-20 form for F-1 student visa to all incoming foreign students. If the student's financial sponsor (for example, the student's home government, the United States government, or international scholarship organization) requires that the student be issued the J-1 Exchange visitor visa.

F-1 students should have in their possession the carbon copy or student copy of their I-20 document. This is the document that states the period of time that they may legally remain within the United States. An I-20 form is required for travel and re-entry to the U.S. An endorsement by the International student advisor on the back of the I-20 within the previous 12 months or six months if engaging in OPT is necessary to re-enter and to be re-admitted in your current non-immigrant visa status. You must consult with the International Student Advisor if your document has not been endorsed within the year and you are traveling outside the U.S. or if you need to apply for a new visa while you are traveling.

**Visa:** A visa is a stamp in one's passport issued by a consulate abroad which will facilitate entry into the U.S. if presented at the port of entry along with any necessary visa documents (such as an I-20). One cannot obtain a visa stamp within the U.S. It is generally good for one, two or multiple entries and usually has an expiration date (which may or may not correspond to your authorized period of stay). One's non-immigrant visa stamp may expire while in the U.S. with no consequences as long as the date of the person's I-94 card and/or visa certificate (I-20, IAP-

66, I-797, etc.) is still valid. If you leave the U.S. and want to re-enter care should be taken to find out whether the visa stamp in the passport is still valid. An application to a U.S. Consulate abroad for a new visa will be necessary (especially in the cases of those wishing to re-enter in a status different from previous stay in the U.S.). Non-immigrants already in the U.S. may apply for a change to another non-immigrant status if they desire and are eligible (consult with International Student Office for details). A spouse and/or unmarried children under 21 years may enter in (or change to) dependent status with appropriate visa and affidavit with additional support.

Listed on the next page are several of the more common types of non-immigrant visas held by students at GTCC. Other internationals in Guilford County may have different types of non-immigrant visas (i.e., A, L, E, O, P, etc.), as well as the immigrant "visa," also known as Permanent Residence or the "green card." The chart of non-immigrant visas is for illustrative purposes only. Please contact the International Student Office for more complete details.

### **Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students (CIPRIS)**

This is not a new type of visa nor is it something contagious. CIPRIS, is Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students. The CIPRIS program consists of 22 colleges and universities nationwide and GTCC is one of the institutions.

The focus of these institutions is to test the notification process for reporting events that may affect a student's or visitor's status, while simultaneously:

- 0. Continuing to admit students for duration of study
- 0. Expanding the authority and discretion delegated to Schools
- 0. Facilitating travel and inspection process at U.S. port of entry
- 0. Supporting a non-immigrant's ability to legally maintain their status

The goals and objectives are:

- 0. To comply with the statutory and regulatory requirements specified in both immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and regulations governing foreign students and exchange visitors.
- 0. To improve customer service
- 0. To professionalize the workforce, up-date equipment and technology in order to provide access to complete, accurate, current and reliable data.
- 0. To support the enforcement mission of INS

### Common Non-Immigrant Visa Types

**Visa Type Name Documents Purpose Advantages Disadvantages**

B-1	Visitor for Business	Proof of Funding and legitimate business	Temporary Stay for Business	Can Extend; Can Receive reimbursement for Expenses
B-2	Visitor for Pleasure " Tourist Visa"	Proof of Funding; Return Ticket is helpful	Temporary Stay for sightseeing	Can Extend; Might be Able to Change
W-T/W-B	Visa Waiver Program	Proof of Citizenship; and funding (Designated Countries Only)	To Visit the U.S. for up to 3 Months Only	No Visa Stamp Necessary; Approved at Port of Entry
F-1	Non-Immigrant Student	I-20; Proof of Funding	To Study Full Time	Can Extend; Can Work with Authorization
F-2	Dependent of Non-Immigrant Student	I-20 Proof of Funding	To Accompany Student Spouse or Parent	May Study

J-1 Student	Exchange Visitor	IAP-66; Proof of Funding	To Study Full Time	Can Extend; Can Work With Authorization
J-1 Professor or Scholar	Exchange Visitor	IAP-66; Proof of Funding	To Engage in Research and/or Teaching	Easy To Obtain
J-2	Dependent of Exchange Visitor	IAP-66; Proof of Funding	To Accompany J-1 Spouse or Parent	Employment with Approval
H-1B	Temporary Worker	LCA*, I-29	To Work Temporarily at a Job	May be Dual Status
H-4	Dependent of Temporary Worker	I-29; H Supplement (or Copies of H-1B's Documents)	To Accompany H1 Spouse or Parent	May Study
TN	Trade NAFTA (Canadians & Mexicans Only)	Offer Letter, Proof of Qualifications; (Mexicans also need I-129 and Consular approval)	To Work in One Year Increments	May Extend Indefinitely

\*HRR is the Home Residency Rule by which a foreign government may require its nationals to return home upon completion of their programs, studies or research in fields.

\*LCA is the Labor Condition Application

**Admission-Departure Card:** All non-immigrants complete a white card (which looks like a long index card) when they arrive at the U.S. port of entry. This I-94 (Admission-Departure) card contains a unique 11-digit number which INS uses in its data base to record your stay in the U.S. You will complete your name, date of birth and country of citizenship. An INS inspector will then stamp or write on your I-94 card your visa type, date of entry to the U.S. and port of entry. Also stamped or written will be the symbol "D/S" which stands for "Duration of Stay." This means that you may stay until the expiration date on your visa certificate and as long as you comply with the requirements of your status (full-time study or designated employment depending on what you were admitted to do, no unauthorized employment, etc.). You will surrender this card to an INS officer or airline official when you leave the country and will receive a new card if you re-enter. This card should be kept together with your passport and visa certificate. If you lose your I-94 card (at any time other than an imminent departure from the U. S.) you may need to apply to INS for a replacement.

Exchange visitors in J-1 status who have neither left the U.S. nor applied for an extension since August 1993, as well as those in B-1/B-2, H1-B, or TN status will not have "D/S" on their I-94 cards.

Instead they have a specific date and have to follow different transfer and extension procedures.

## **Employment**

### **Employment for Spouse and Other Dependents**

**F-2 visa holders (spouses of F-1) are not allowed to be employed in any capacity.**

### **Employment Options for Students**

**On-Campus Employment: Students in F-1 status may work up to 20 hours per week on-campus during the academic year (or during summer sessions if registered for a course). Students may work full-time on campus during the summer or vacation periods if they were in status the previous semester, intend to register as a full-time student the following semester and are not enrolled in courses. The 20-hour limit includes the total of all types of employment (assistantship, practical training, working on or off campus, etc.). Full-time on campus employment authorization for students may be obtained only by engaging in Practical Training (F-1). Please refer to the International Student Office for full details and procedures.**

**Off-campus Employment (need-based) Authorization: Students in F-1 status who experience serious, urgent and unforeseen economic circumstances may be eligible for off-campus (not study-related) employment authorization. Students who have been in F-1 status for a full academic year and are unable to locate on-campus employment may apply to INS for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). To apply, you should submit to the advisor in the International Student Office completed forms I-765 and a processing fee (currently a \$100.00 money order payable to INS). Your original I-20 form, a cover letter**

**explaining your financial circumstances (how it is urgent and unforeseen, how on-campus employment is not available or appropriate for you, etc.) and any possible supporting documentation. The advisor will then recommend the employment and forward the documents to INS. You should get a response from INS in 4-12 weeks, and if your request is approved you will have to travel to Charlotte, N.C., to get an EAD.**

**Off-Campus (Study Related) Employment: Students in F-1 Status may obtain authorization to engage in work off-campus which relates to their studies. This is known as practical or academic training and may be either full- or part-time and either before or after completing a degree. A brief description of the various types of practical/academic training follows, but you should read the appropriate handout or application, which is available in the International Student Office for full details and procedures. Remember: engaging in unauthorized employment either by more hours than are permitted or without necessary written authorization renders you "out of status" and subject to deportation.**

**F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT): F-1 students who are in status and have maintained status for at least nine months are entitled to engage in Optional Practical Training (OPT). The total period of time in OPT may not exceed 12 months (full-time). Students may also engage in part-time OPT which is prorated and subtracted from the 12-month total. Students occasionally engage in OPT during the summer months, but may prefer to "save" their 12 months for after graduation. A job is not necessary to apply, but you must obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from INS before beginning any employment. Complete form I-765 (with \$100 fee), arrange to have**

**your academic advisor complete the advisor's recommendation form, submit the above along with original I-20 form to the International Student Advisor for processing. The completed application and necessary forms and fee must be submitted to INS upon completion of studies (currently within 60 days). The International Student Advisor will then recommend the employment and forward the documents to INS. You should get a written appointment from INS within 12 weeks and you will then have to travel to Charlotte to get an EAD. Do not plan to leave the country before obtaining your EAD because INS will have your original I-20 form during the application period and INS will consider your application abandoned.**

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT): Students who have been in F-1 status for nine months or more may apply to the International Student Office for CPT in their field of study if they meet the eligibility criteria. The proposed training was originally designed for internship, practicum, or co-operative work-study experience and falls into two categories: credit or non-credit. It may also be undertaken part-time or full-time and while there is no limit to the number of months one may engage in CPT, more than 12 months of full-time CPT renders you ineligible for any Optional Practical Training.**

**CPT taken for credit may be either required or optional. Students should submit to the International Student Office: 1) a completed Application for CPT (available in the International Student Office); 2) a photocopy of pertinent course catalog descriptions (required or elective, number of credits, course number, course instructor and description). If all criteria are met, CPT will be authorized on an I-20 form by a staff member of the International Student**

**Office. Please consult with the International Student Advisor for more information.**

## **Extensions**

### **Extension of Stay for F-1 Students**

**The F-1 regulations state that if you have not completed your program of study by the completion date indicated by item #5 on your I-20, you must request an extension of stay within the 30 day period before that completion date. An extension of stay may be granted by an advisor in the International Student Office by notifying INS that you have continually maintained status and that the extension is required due to compelling academic or medical reasons. Failure to apply for the I-20 will result in your falling out of legal F-1 status, suspension pension of payroll and an application to INS for reinstatement will be required. If you have any questions concerning your completion date or regulations regarding extension of stay please consult the advisor in the International Student Office.**

## **Transfers**

If you are currently studying or working in the United States in F-1 status and will not be leaving the country before coming to GTCC, you must "transfer" to GTCC by using the procedures outlined below. This applies even if you are finishing one degree at your current school and are moving on to a new program here at GTCC.

**F-1 Transfer:** F-1 transfer applicants are processed by the International Student Advisor. After the International Student Office receives your admission requirements, your acceptable financial certificate and your visa clearance form from your previous Foreign Student Advisor at your old school, you will be issued a photocopy of your new GTCC I-20 form. This photocopy is only for your reference and is not valid for anything (do not use it to leave and re-enter the country). To remain in F-1 status, you must pick up your valid I-20 at

the International Student Office after you complete the following steps: 1) attend the New International Student Orientation; 2) check-in at the International Student Office (bring your passport, old I-20 forms, I-94, etc. and 3) enroll and register for a full load of courses and provide proof of such enrollment to the International Student Office. After completing the above steps, you will sign your new I-20, then the International Student Advisor will endorse the new I-20 and give you your copy. The International Student Advisor will then notify both Immigration and your previous school that you have transferred your visa documentation to GTCC. **Important! You must complete this process within 15 days of enrollment or else you will be out of status, ineligible to work (including research or teaching assistantships) or to change to another status and you will be subject to deportation.**

If you are planning to leave the United States before enrolling at GTCC you must let us know, so that we can issue you both pages of an original I-20 form for you to use to re-enter the U.S. It is extremely important that you re-enter the U. S. using the visa document issued by GTCC. If you enter the United States with the intention to attend GTCC, but use the visa document issued by your old school, you will immediately be out of status with INS. Note: immigration regulations allow transferring F-1 students to work full-time on-campus during the summer at either the old or new school.

### **Temporary Travel Outside the U. S.**

**F-1: If you are planning to leave the United States for a holiday or for professional reasons, please stop by the International Student Office so that an advisor can check your passport and visa documentation before you leave. Often a simple endorsement of your I-20 and a valid U.S. entry visa will allow you to reenter the U. S. from abroad. If your visa in your passport has expired, the International Student Office will issue a new visa document for you to apply for a visa at U.S. embassy or consulate post abroad. Please allow three (3) weeks for the International Student Office to prepare the proper documents.**

**H-1B: Those who hold H-1 visa status should travel with the H-1 approval notice issued by INS, copies of the I-129, LCA and a current letter of good standing from their academic department.**

**Detailed information concerning these and other F-1 regulations are available in the International Student Office.**

## **Confidentiality of Student Files**

In order to maintain certain records required by law and to provide informed advice, the International Student Office keeps personal files on all F-1 students at GTCC. Among the contents of these files are admissions, immigration and employment information.

Please note that according to both federal law, the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974", (FERPA) and N.C. State law (Human Resources Manual, General Provisions, Section III), your file is confidential. An international student may, of course, have access to his or her own file upon advance written request. Access to file data by others is allowed by law in certain circumstances. For example, departments may have access to file data if the information is directly linked to the fulfillment of their administrative or program responsibilities. For the protection of the students, the International Student Office monitors access to the files.

FERPA does allow the release of "directory" information, which includes student name, address, telephone number, major field of study, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and most recent educational institutions attended.

The College Admissions and Records Office requests that you fill out an information release form indicating your wishes regarding the release of any file data. This form is available at the Records office. Also, please notify the staff of the International Student Office regarding your wishes pertaining to the release of directory information.

## **Academic Regulations**

The information in this section will help you become aware of the responsibilities for proper completion of your academic program. To assist in the familiarity of all program requirements needed as specified in the GTCC catalog under which you plan to graduate. This also explains how to maintain an acceptable grade point average and academic standings needed to meet all certificate, diploma or degree requirements.

### **Credit Hours**

The college operates on a semester system. The normal number of credit hours for a full-time student is 12 to 15. The minimum number of credits that constitutes a full-time enrollment is 12. International students (F-1 status) are required to register for a minimum of 12 credit hours each quarter excluding summer. This is unless the student begins a course of study during summer quarter, in which case the student is required to take a minimum of 12 credit hours. Otherwise, the student should consider taking an academic course load that will be compatible with his or her work schedule, family commitments, health and/or other obligations. A student who has had academic problems is strongly advised to take less than a minimum course load for the next quarter and to seek academic counseling.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students at GTCC must maintain individual honor in their academic pursuit. They must promote a spirit of academic honesty by neither participating in nor condoning plagiarism or cheating.

In order to avoid plagiarism you must attribute every idea or statement that is not your own. The method used to do this is called **documentation**. To avoid cheating you must refrain from obtaining answers to an exam or test from other students and unauthorized sources. You must rely on your acquired knowledge and authorized sources deemed proper to use by instructor.

Acts of dishonesty are unacceptable and are subject to disciplinary

action which may include suspension or dismissal from the college.

## **Semester System**

The college is on a semester system. Semester run for approximately 16 weeks. The Fall semester begins mid August and ends mid December. Final exams are given before the Christmas Holidays. Spring semester begins in early January and ends the beginning of May. Summer semester begins mid May and ends the last of July. Refer to the College Catalog for exact dates for each term. International students on F-1 visa are required to register for and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester to maintain visa status. Courses are usually three credit hours each.

## **Library**

There are three library branches, the M. W. Bell Library (LRC) located on the Jamestown Campus, a branch on the Greensboro Campus at 501 West Washington Street. The libraries have collections of books, audiovisual materials, magazines and newspapers. There are quiet study areas for individual places to work. The library serves as a center for assisting students, faculty and staff in finding information needed for learning and instruction. To obtain a library services students must present your student ID card. To secure your student ID card you must present your pink copy of the registration form to student at Student Government Office on the ground level of the Medlin Building.

The libraries on our campus, like most other American libraries, allow you to enter the stacks where the books are kept, but there are certain courtesies that should be observed in respect of this privilege. Food and drinks are not allowed in the libraries. Care should be taken with any books that are checked out so as not to damage them.

## **Textbooks**

Students are expected to buy their own textbooks. Books may be purchased before classes start by using your pink slip received after paying your bill for the quarter. All textbooks that are required for a

given quarter can be found in the Bookstore located on the first level of the Medlin Center on the Jamestown Campus. Some books can be purchased from the Bookstore located on the first floor of the Washington Street Campus, Greensboro. Books are arranged by subject matter and course number. Cash, some credit cards and personal checks are accepted for payment. Used books are sometimes available and less expensive.

As a service to the students, the International Student Association sometimes sponsors a book sale at the end of the quarter. This is an opportunity for students to sell their used books and also to buy used books at discount price. The Bookstore will buy back books at the end of the quarter if the books will be used again. The price given will be substantially less than the original purchase price.

## **Health Care Issues**

### **Insurance**

One of the greatest shocks to many international visitors is the price of medical treatment and health care in the United States. Health care in the United States is very expensive. Therefore health insurance is an absolute necessity. This may be very different from health care in your home country where it is available to you free of charge.

Simply stated, the health insurance purchased by millions of people in the U.S. generates capital that pays the medical bills of people who are ill. This concept presumes that the great majority of policy holders will be healthy at any one point in time and that the cost of one's insurance is far less than an individual's actual medical bills.

Health insurance for International students is available. The college provides special health insurance for the international students in addition to the college overall student insurance coverage. It is not mandatory that the students purchase the insurance but it is highly recommended given the high cost of medical care in the U.S.

Students with a comparable health insurance policy may not need the coverage, provided their policy has world-wide coverage,

maternity and both in-patient and out-patient mental health, alcohol and other substance abuse service.

## **Health Insurance Definitions**

**1. Premium:** an annual payment made for an insurance policy. Insurance premiums are subject to yearly change since the insurance industry is affected by economic tides in much the same way that other U.S. businesses are affected. For example, since the population of elderly people in the U.S. is increasing, the pool of healthy policy holders is shrinking. This drives premiums up since there are more claims made from the elderly group and fewer people in the group making no claims. Similarly, high-tech health care in the U.S. is enormously expensive to develop and maintain. This expense is eventually passed along to policy holders.

**2. Deductible:** a payment that is made by the policy holder for an initial part of an insurance claim. Deductibles might be paid only once a year (for example, the first \$100 accrued in the coverage period), or paid on a per-sickness basis.

**3. Co-payment:** the part (percentage) of an insurance claim that must be paid by the policy holder.

**4. Major medical:** an insurance policy extensive enough to cover even catastrophic sickness or injury.

**5. Pre-existing condition:** an illness or medical condition that existed before the policy holder purchased the insurance policy. In most cases, insurance policies will not cover such medical conditions (for example, a pregnancy that began before the start of insurance coverage).

**Brochures describing group health insurance policies**

**for visitors who are engaged in international educational activities and who are not covered under other insurance plans are available at the International Student Office.**

## **Important Health Emergency Numbers**

High Point Regional Hospital Wesley Long Hospital

601 N. Elm St. 501 N. Elam Ave.

884-8400 854-6100

The Women's Hospital of Greensboro The Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital

801 Green Valley Rd. 1200 N. Elm St.

574-6500 574-7000

Center for Abused women: 274-7316

Rape Crisis: (24 Hour svc.): 273-7273 (RAPE)

Campus Police: Ext. 2398

County Crisis Emergency Telephone Service (Guilford County)

Poison Control: 1(800)-848-6946

TRIAD Poison Control: 574-8105 (24 Hour svc.)

Moses Cone Hospital Mental Health Center: 373-3630 (24 Hour svc.)

**Medical Emergencies - 911:** 11 is the general emergency number. This will get an operator who will connect you with the police, fire department, or ambulance service. If on campus, contact the Public Safety Office for immediate response.

## **Public and Private Transportation**

## **Driver's License**

A valid home country driver's license is accepted in the state of North Carolina. If your home country license is not written in English, you must also have an International Driver's License. However, persons who do not have a driver's license from another country, or whose home country license has expired, will need to take a written exam, vision and driving test. Remember that for the purpose of obtaining a North Carolina driver's license, foreign students and scholars who are affiliated with the college for longer than six months for other than temporary or transitory purposes are presumed to be residents of North Carolina. They are not considered residents for other purposes relative to their immigration status, tax status, or tuition status at GTCC. The Driver's Handbook for the driving exam is available at the International Student Office.

In order to apply for a North Carolina driver's license, it will be necessary to present required proof of age and identity. Accepted forms of identification include a certified birth certificate, valid or expired photo driver's license, or two forms of the documents listed below:

Passport/I-94, school transcript, diploma, or student Identification card (must be in English)

Photo Identification from company or agency

Military discharge

Insurance policy at least one year old

International Driver's License

Also required is proof of automobile liability insurance coverage.

The North Carolina Driver's License Examiner will, for a fee of \$10, issue a Special Identification Card to those who require additional Identification, but have no interest in obtaining a license to drive a motor vehicle.

**North Carolina Driver's License Examiners**

Greensboro Locations High Point Location

2527 E. Market St. 334-5745 650 Francis St. 884-1003

2100 Patterson St. 334-5438

### **Seat Belt Laws (Click it or Ticket)**

It is the law in North Carolina for all passengers in the front seat of a motor vehicle to wear their safety belts. The state has launched a new campaign called "Click it or Ticket" during which there are periodic road checks to see if passengers are buckled, and those who are not buckled are ticketed. There is a \$25 ticket per unbuckled person in the front seat, \$85 per child regardless of where they are seated and a \$60 court fee on top of that. Children under the age of 6 years are required to be buckled even if seated in a back seat. Children ages 5 years and under are required to be in a safety or infant seat that is properly secured. For more specific information you may call the Department of Motor Vehicles.

### **Bus and Taxi Service**

**Taxis - There are several taxi companies in the Guilford County area. Check the listings in the Yellow Pages of your local phone book for more information.**

**Bus Service - GTCC is accessible by bus transportation. The High Point Transit system (Hi-tran) and the Greensboro Transit authority (GTA) provide transportation to all campuses, except for the Aviation center, from designated areas in High Point and Greensboro. The GTA system offers a connecting route to the City of High Point. To obtain a detailed schedule and a list of fares you must contact GTA at (910) 669-7999 and**

**Hi-tran at (910) 889-7433.**

**For information regarding bus service to other cities, contact the local Greyhound Bus Lines Office at 501**

Lee St., Tel. 272-8950.

## **Recreation and Entertainment**

### **Sports**

**Aerobics:** Classes available at GTCC Wellness Center and at membership clubs listed in the Yellow Pages under exercise and Physical Fitness programs.

**Basketball:** Available at Greensboro Recreation Centers, YMCAs and other private locations.

**Billiards (Pool):** Available on 1st level Medlin Center, YMCAs and other private operations.

**Boating:** Available at Belews Lake, Greensboro/High Point Lake, Oak Hollow Lake and some of the State and National Parks.

**Bowling:** All Star Lanes 910 Holden Rd., Buffalo Lanes 55 Hornaday Rd. and Brunswick Triad Lanes 21 Oak Branch Dr.

**Golf:** There are many golf courses available to the public, listed in the Yellow Pages.

**Health Spas:** Many commercial health spas are available in the Greensboro and High Point areas. Listings can be found in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory. Most spas will offer at least one free visit. Services and facilities will vary considerably and it is advisable to visit several before purchasing a membership.

**Horseback Riding:** Available at an hourly rental fee at YMCA Outdoor Centers and at some private stables in the Greensboro area.

**Soccer:** Available through Parks and Recreation

**Department and the Greensboro Soccer Association.**

**Swimming: Available at some of the Parks and Recreation centers and YMCAs.**

**Tennis: Greensboro Recreation Department maintains a number of public courts throughout town. No reservations or fees required. Also courts are available at the local high schools.**

**Volleyball: Available through the Greensboro parks and Recreation Departments and YMCAs.**

**Weights: Available at GTCC Wellness Center and some private operated centers.**

**There are a number of sporting event classes available at GTCC for further information about the different classes please contact the Admissions Office or the Wellness Center.**

## **Entertainment**

Check the "Spectator" and the "News and Record" Weekend section for current information about local area upcoming events. Also check the International Student Office and bulletin board for multi-cultural , travel and recreational events.

### **Other Points of Interest:**

**Durham:** Tobacco Companies, Bennett Place, Duke Homestead, West Point on the Eno, Duke University

**Raleigh:** Capital Area Visitor Center (Tours of the State Capital)

**Piedmont:** Southern Pines and Pinehurst-golf courses, Golf Hall of Fame Asheville: North Carolina Zoo

**Winston-Salem:** Old Salem, a restored Moravian village, Wake Forest University

**Charlotte:** largest city in North Carolina, Carowinds-Amusement Park on I-77 South

**Coast:** The North Carolina coast has numerous good beaches from its southernmost point to its northern boundary. The towns and cities along the coast have many cottages, condominiums and motels for rent by the day, week, month and season. There are also camping facilities in some areas.

The Outer Banks: this group of islands includes:

Kitty Hawk-site of the first powered flight by the Wright brothers;

Cape Hatteras-a national seashore park;

The Elizabethan Gardens-botanical gardens on Roanoke Island;

The Lost Colony-theater and museum about North Carolina's lost colony;

New Bern: the second oldest town in North Carolina, with several restored buildings including Tryon Palace and Gardens.

Wilmington: an historic port city famous for its annual Azalea Festival each spring

Historic Bath: once the home of Blackbeard the Pirate. Many homes have been restored to the colonial period and the city annually hosts the outdoor drama "Blackbeard the Pirate."

**Mountains:** The mountains are a popular recreational area in summer for hiking, golf, swimming and general vacationing. They are equally popular in the winter for a variety of winter sports such as skiing.

**Asheville:**

Biltmore House and Gardens - built by world famous Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt

Thomas Wolfe Memorial - boyhood home of the famous writer

Blue Ridge Parkway - scenic highway with picnic areas extending through Virginia and North Carolina along the crest of the Blue Ridge

## **Boone**

Grandfather Mountain-hiking trails, nature museum and mile high swinging bridge.

Linville Falls and Gorge

Appalachian Summer Festival

The Blowing Rock

Tweetsie Railroad

## **Miscellaneous Information & Addresses**

### **Social Security, IRS and INS**

**Social Security Office Internal Revenue Service INS-CLT**

**401 N. Edgeworth St. 320 Federal Place 6 Woolawn**

**Greensboro, N.C. 1-800-829-1040 Suite 138**

**378-1751 Charlotte, N.C. 28217**

**Tel: (704)-523-1704**

**211 N. Lindsay St.**

**High Point, N.C.**

### **Post Offices**

**Main Post Office Four Season**

**201 N. Murrow Blvd 301 Four Season Town Center**

370-1162 299-8084

(U.S. passport applications are available here)

GTCC Post Office

1st Level Medlin Center Main Post Office

Jamestown, Campus 315 E. Green Dr.

ext. 2309 High Point, N.C.

There are many more post office branches located across the two cities.

## **Yellow Pages**

For information on places that may be useful during your stay in Greensboro and High Point area such as: cleaners and laundries, furniture, television and video rental, consult the Yellow Pages of the Greensboro telephone directory. You will soon discover that the Yellow Pages of the phone book is very useful and easy way to locate area places and stores including restaurants, doctors, airline companies and insurance companies to name a few.

Places and businesses mentioned in this handbook are comprehensive, but only represent those familiar to the International Student advisor. Please consult the Yellow Pages as well as your friends to locate more possibilities.

## **Banks**

Most banks in the area require a minimum amount in savings and/or checking in order to provide you with free checking. Wachovia Bank sometimes provides free checking for GTCC students. Many offer 24-hour automated teller services and some are beginning to offer automatic electronic payroll deposits and automatic health insurance drafts. For a listing of convenient banks, consult the Yellow Pages of the local phone book.

## **Tax Forms and Assistance**

**All Internationals are required to file Income tax regardless of whether or not they have earned income from U. S. sources.**

**U. S. Income Tax Forms must be mailed by midnight April 15, each year. 1040NR forms are available at the International Student tax seminar which is held in early Spring.**

**Personal Property Tax: In January of each year Guilford County requires tax listing of personal property (automobiles are the most commonly taxed items). For more information call the Guilford County Tax Office at 373-3363.**

### **Utilities**

Duke Power Company (electric) Bell South (Telephone)

1020 Summit Ave Charlotte, NC

Greensboro, NC 27405 Toll Free 780-2800 (Home Service)

Tel. 378-9451

Toll Free # 1 800 653-5307 North State (Telephone)

11 Hayden Pl.

High Point office High Point, NC

Tel. 885-8071 Tel. 886-3720

Greensboro, NC

Tel. 373-2344

Water & Sewer Piedmont Natural Gas Company

High Point City Tel. 378-1845

Tel. 883-3465 High Point, NC

Tel. 885-4151

Greensboro City

Tel. 373-2344

## **Places of Worship**

Information is available in the Yellow Pages of your local telephone book listed under Churches/Organizations.

## **Child Care**

GTCC has a child care facility which is available to all students, faculty, staff and the community. The acceptance of applicants is based on the first to apply and availability of space for the child's age range. For more information please contact the Children's Center at ext. 2366. Also check the Yellow Pages for more day care and nursery schools listings.

## **Public Schools**

The Guilford County Schools system consists of 93 schools -- 59 elementary (grades K-5), 17 middle (grades 6-8), 14 comprehensive high schools (grades 9-12) and three special schools.

## **Key Administrative Office Contacts**

Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools - 370-8336

Linda McDougale, Executive Director for School-Community Relations  
- 370-8303

712 N. Eugene St. 120 Franklin Blvd. 900 English Rd.

Greensboro, NC 27401 Greensboro, NC 27401 High Point, NC  
27262

370-8100(GSO) 370-2300(GSO) 373-9300(GSO)

885-3703(HP) 889-5303(HP) 819-2700(HP)

The telephone numbers for each local school are listed in the White Pages, Business section under Schools in your local telephone book.

## **Departure Information**

The following checklist contains useful information to anticipate some of the questions you may have when leaving Greensboro.

### **Housing**

**Notice of Vacating:** Upon vacating the premises, the resident is responsible for leaving the place in the same condition it was at the beginning of occupancy, while allowing for normal wear. The apartment should be ready for the next resident. Most apartments require at least 30 days written notice prior to vacating the premises. If you paid a security deposit, don't forget to ask if all or part should be refunded to you. Be aware of the policies governing breakage of a lease.

**Utilities:** All utility companies should be called several days ahead of the scheduled departure--not the day before leaving. If water or gas is not included in the rent, it is necessary to contact each company individually. These companies will need a forwarding address.

**Telephone:** Disconnect and pay all bills. Southern Bell needs at least 2 days notice prior to departure.

**Post Office:** Notify the Post Office of change of address by completing the form they provide for this purpose. Additional information concerning the overseas mailing process for books and printed matter is available at the International Student Office. Specific questions should be directed to the Main Post Office located on 201

**N.Murrow Blvd (370-1162).**

**Banks:** Make arrangements with your bank to close out bank accounts, allowing sufficient time for all checks to be processed. If you are planning to travel in the U.S., it may be advisable to maintain the accounts for a period of time and arrange to close them by mail.

**Automobiles:** If you plan to sell your automobile before you depart, allow sufficient time for inspection and transfer of the title. You must notify your insurance company of your plans.

**Immigration:** Notify the International Student Office of your departure at least two weeks prior to leaving the Greensboro/ High Point area.

**Selling Unwanted Goods:** You may have accumulated possessions that you will not be able to take with you. Yard sales and garage sales are very popular and are a very good way to rid yourself of unwanted items. You can advertise your sales on community bulletin boards and the local newspaper. Left over items can be donated to the Salvation Army, Urban Ministries or Goodwill Industries.

## **Last Minute Thoughts**

Have you...

Given a forwarding address to the International Student Office and your friends?

Taken souvenir photographs and purchased mementos of the College and surrounding area?

We hope you have found this handbook helpful in getting oriented to GTCC and to Greensboro/High Point area. Chambers of Commerce in all cities and towns have publications that you can pick up or have them mailed to you for more newcomer information.

