About this Handbook

This is an informal compilation of information that the SMU Physics Department Graduate Committee hopes will be useful for our graduate students, especially those in their first year. See the SMU Graduate Programs Catalog, available online at [www.smu.edu/catalogs](http://www.smu.edu/catalogs) for official general information about graduate programs at SMU. Please let a member of the Graduate Committee know if any of the information here is out of date or simply wrong or misguided, or if there is additional information you think it should include. It was last updated in August 2016.
Part I
Information for New Students

1 Before Arrival

- You should receive a letter with your 8-digit SMU ID number in the mail, along with your SMU email address. If you do not, you may pick up a copy from the Department Administrator on arrival. This letter contains information for setting a university password to use your email and to log into my.smu.edu (formerly access.smu.edu) for a variety of tasks, including searching the course catalog, registering for courses and maintaining your personal records.

- Submit a photograph for your SMU Identification (ID) card to idcard.smu.edu. Use your ID number and password to log in.

- You might want to sign up for the a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) pass before arriving; see section 2. It can take a couple weeks to be approved, so by signing up in advance it could be ready for use on arrival. You'll need to wait until after the first week of August, and register for classes first, which you can also do in advance; see section 2.

- We have recently begun asking incoming graduate students to take our PhD qualifying exams on arrival. We don't count this exam against your two official attempts, but if you pass, it allows you to get this over with early. It also provides us with useful information about your level of preparation. We encourage you to prepare for it. For information on the exam dates, content, and previous tests, see [www.physics.smu.edu/web/grad/quals](http://www.physics.smu.edu/web/grad/quals).

- Let our Department Administrator or someone on the graduate committee know when you are planning to arrive at SMU.

2 On Arrival

The Physics Department is located in Fondren Science Building (FOSC) at 3215 Daniel Avenue, Dallas TX 75275. See the map in Section 17. On arrival to the department:

- Introduce yourself to our Graduate Director, and to our Physics Department Administrator and Grant Administrator (Physics Office, FOSC 102). (See Personnel in Section 4.) Confirm with the Dept Admin that your signed Payroll Authorization Form (PAF) was completed and submitted electronically to Human Resources. Also, pick up your ID and password if you did not receive these in the mail. Finally, International Students should pick up a signed Campus Work Eligibility Form, which you will bring to the ISSS document check-in for their signature (see below), and return to our Admin to be attached to your PAF.

- Check with the Department Admin that you are signed up for the Annual Teaching Assistant Seminar, which takes place during the week or two before classes start (usually, but not always, the Friday just before; in 2016, it’s a week earlier). If not, register at [www.smu.edu/Provost/CTE/Programs/TA_Training](http://www.smu.edu/Provost/CTE/Programs/TA_Training) where you can also find a program schedule.

- International students have an additional mandatory session at the end of the TA Seminar. While there, if your first language is not English, you should sign up for ESL 6001, a noncredit English
seminar for TAs. See smu.edu/esl/6001_6002.asp for information on the course, including an online application form. Our students’ experience with this course has been positive; it seems to be very well run.

- All new grad students must attend an all-day Dedman College Graduate Student Orientation in the week before classes begin. Please see http://www.smu.edu/graduate/CurrentStudents/Orientation for details and a schedule. It starts early and runs all day, but at least you’ll be fed breakfast and lunch.

- International students must attend a document check-in and orientation session run by the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office. Please see www.smu.edu/international/isss/GraduateStudentOrientation for specific times, a list of documents to bring, and to register. Bring your Campus Work Authorization Form. The orientation is run on two separate dates shortly before classes begin, with the document check-in in the morning beforehand. Also, ISSS has posted an international student handbook at www.smu.edu/ /media/Site/international/isss/prearrival/ISSSHandbookFall%202012.ashx which may have useful information.

- All students should check in with Human Resources at Expressway Tower, which is a highrise office building at the intersection of US-75 and SMU Boulevard. Their usual hours are 8:30am - 5pm, Mon to Fri. There you can complete your I-9 form and set up your payroll information. See www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/HR/Resources/NewEmployeeResources/I9Documentation for documents you can use for your I-9. International students will need to complete their document check-in at ISSS first. Check with our Admin that your signed PAF, and, for International Students, your signed Campus Work Eligibility Form, were submitted by our Dept Admin before heading over (see above).

- While at Expressway Tower visit Parking and ID Card Services to pick up your ID card and parking sticker if you have a car that you wish to park on campus. Their hours are the same as Human Resources, and may be extended on some days just prior to the start of the semester. See www.smu.edu/parkingid for hours and more information.

- The university requires that you set up Direct Deposit to a bank account in order to be paid. You can now do this yourself from your my.smu.edu account. See www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/OfficeOfBudgetAndFinance /Payroll/InformationAndFAQs/DirectDepositofPaycheck for more information.

- You will receive a desktop or laptop computer, Physics Department account and password shortly after arrival. Until then, you may use your SMU ID number and university password to log into the department’s public computers in FOSC 13 (the undergrad lounge) and elsewhere. This will allow you to access the web immediately on arrival.

- Sign up for your courses at my.smu.edu. See [1] for more information and confirm your schedule with the Graduate Director. You will typically sign up for three three-unit courses. International students should also sign up for ESL 6001; see comments in this section.

- After enrolling in classes, you can sign up for a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) pass at the DART Transit Pass Site at Parking Services. After a one-time $5.00 fee, it is free every year for SMU students and allows you to use all DART buses and trains in the Dallas area. It comes in smartphone app or plastic card versions. (Note that Bus 768, which provides service between main campus, Expressway
Tower (east campus) and Mockingbird train station is free for everyone, even without a pass.) You will be notified by email when your pass is ready; apparently this can take a couple of weeks. You can pick up the plastic card at Parking and ID Card Services in Expressway Tower.

- PerunaNet is SMU’s secured wireless network, available throughout most of campus, including (most of) FOSC. You may connect your laptop, smartphone or other wireless device using your SMU ID and university password; see [www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/OIT/Services/Wireless](http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/OIT/Services/Wireless). If you have trouble connecting, you can also use the unsecured guest network SMU1911.

### 3 Department Routines

**Weekly Department Seminar/Colloquium** The Department has a single, regular seminar/colloquium per week on Monday, 4pm-5pm. Coffee and snacks are served in FOSC 101 (next to FOSC 103) before the talk at 3:45pm. All graduate students are required to attend the weekly seminar. Additional seminars are sometimes scheduled during the semester to accommodate special guests or circumstances. These special seminars will be announced as they are scheduled, and also must be attended.

**Weekly Department Lunch** During the semester, Fridays are reserved for a Department Lunch at the Umphrey-Lee Student Center (the main cafeteria on campus). Students eat at faculty and staff prices, typically about $6 each Friday. (Normal student meals cost more like $9-10 per visit.) This is a chance to unwind at the end of the week, catch up with faculty and staff, and discuss issues, problems, and topics of common interest to all in the department.

### Part II

Department and Graduate Program Information

#### 4 Current Department Personnel (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Ryszard Stroynowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Administrator</td>
<td>Lacey Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Administrator</td>
<td>Michele Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad Program Director</td>
<td>Kent Hornbostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSA Representative</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the full directory see [www.physics.smu.edu](http://www.physics.smu.edu)
5 Grad-Related Department Committees (2016)

| Graduate Committee          | Thomas Coan  |
|                            | Kent Hornbostel |
|                            | Robert Kehoe |
|                            | Stephen Sekula |
|                            | TBD          |
| Computing Committee        | Stephen Sekula |
| Library Committee          | Kent Hornbostel |

The Graduate Committee is charged with supervising the graduate program, including course content and sequencing, student life issues, qualification exam procedures and administration, graduate recruitment and application review, and other related activities. The Computing Committee addresses networking, programming, hardware, software, and operating system issues, including maintenance of current resources. The Library Committee recommends physics purchases for SMU’s science library, and manages the graduate student library (FOSC 38A), including purchase of new texts and references.

6 SMU Physics Graduate Student Help Phone Number

The SMU Physics Department offers a central phone number for graduate students to get help from on-call faculty. This number is provided for emergencies such as:

- If you get stranded in a foreign country while traveling and need help
- If you are in an unfamiliar area of Dallas and need a ride home
- If you are having a difficult time coping with stress and need help
- If you are in trouble with the law and need help or advice

(972)-51-GRAD-0
(972)-514-7230

7 Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) offers funds to help with research related expenses. These include, but are not limited to, travel, lodging, registration fees, and printing materials. To apply for GSA funds contact your Physics Department GSA Representative, and fill out the appropriate forms located at [www.smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/Departments/Math/Graduate/Grad%20Student%20Association](http://www.smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/Departments/Math/Graduate/Grad%20Student%20Association)

8 Email and Department Computing Accounts

**University and Department Email** SMU email accounts will be set up by the university once you are assigned your 8-digit SMU ID. This email account will be provided by the university, and will look like USERID@smu.edu, where USERID is assigned by the Office of Information Technology.
Physics Department Computers  Everyone will have their own desktop computer in their office or laptop. In addition to these, general use department computers include `compute.physics.smu.edu` and `max2.physics.smu.edu`. The password for department computing accounts should be the same as on your own office desktop computer. Your desktop will in most cases share a file system with department computers, including your home directory. Your account will be set up either before your arrival or shortly after. Except in rare cases, the userid for your department account will be the same USERID used for your university email.

You will be assigned a temporary password for your account, which you can pick up from the department computing director. You can change it to something you prefer when you first log into our system using the command `yppasswd`.

(You may also see addresses such as `userid@physics.smu.edu` or `userid@mail.physics.smu.edu` in use in the department. These are aliases for USERID@smu.edu and exist for historical reasons; Physics used to run its own email server.)

Once you begin research, you may also request access to the SMU High-Performance Computing System (SMUHPC) and the computing cluster, ManeFrame, for your work. This involves a different account set up by the SMUHPC Administrator. Speak to a Department Computing Committee member for more information.

Until you have your own account on department computers and your desktop, you can use the public computers in FOSC 101 (the undergrad lounge). These allow you to log in using your 8 digit SMU ID number and university password. (This should be the same password used for `my.smu.edu` but won’t be the same as your password for your desktop.)

Offices, Keys and Building Access  You will be assigned a desk in a shared graduate office before or shortly after your arrival. As soon as you know your office number, ask the Department Admin to request a key. Once the request is processed, which may take a few days, you may pick up your key at the Building Access Office in the Dawson Service Center (see the map in Section [17]). The doors to Fondren Science are often locked late at night, on Sundays and holidays, but you can enter using your SMU ID. Ask the Department Admin to add your ID to the list authorizing after-hours access.

Kitchens, Tea and Coffee  There are department kitchens for your use with refrigerators and microwaves in FOSC 103, 206 and 38. There is also a kettle as well as steeping-ready hot water from the tap in FOSC 206 for making tea. There are also multiple Keurig single-cup coffee machines available in FOSC 38, 103, and 206 for which you must provide your own Keurig K-cups. These can be ordered in bulk, for about $0.30-$0.50 per cup, from either the Keurig company website or Amazon.com, for example, or purchased for slightly more from grocery stores. Refillable K-cups can also be found on the web. The faculty who use these may have other sources to recommend.

Graduate Student Lounge and Library  FOSC 38A serves as a de facto graduate student lounge, available for use except when needed for occasional research group meetings. It is next to a kitchen, and includes a large table and small whiteboard intended to provide a place for grads to work together. It also contains the Graduate Library, a growing collection of texts and references for graduate student use, including most course texts and some qual prep books. Please keep these books in the room. Let the department librarian know if there are other texts you’d find useful.

Photocopiers and Printers  The main department photocopier is in FOSC 103. You will need to obtain a password from the Department Admin to use it. Combination printer/fax/copiers are in 38, 103 and 202. See the department Computing Committee for instructions on accessing these printers from your desktop.
9 Qualifying Exam

In order to advance to PhD candidacy, SMU requires students to pass a comprehensive qualifying exam, usually given within the first three years. In Physics, this takes the form of a four-part written exam at the advanced-undergraduate level. Topics include Mechanics, Quantum Mechanics, Electrodynamics and Statistical Mechanics. The exam is intended to determine the academic fitness of students to pursue a PhD, and to encourage them to review and consolidate their knowledge of basic physics before proceeding. Exams are given annually, typically just prior to the start of the Fall semester. Details about exam policies, guidelines for the specific exams, and copies of previous exams can be found at [www.physics.smu.edu/web/grad/quals](http://www.physics.smu.edu/web/grad/quals). The SMU Graduate Catalog also outlines general university-wide requirements.

Students are allowed two attempts to pass all four sections and must do so before the end of their fifth semester in order to remain in the PhD program. We now also require students to take the exam on entering the program to help assess academic strengths and encourage students to come prepared for graduate study. This initial exam does not count against the two attempts, but students will not need to retake sections they pass.

10 Course Registration and Credit-Hour Requirements

Official course requirements for a Physics PhD include eight specified core courses, four elective graduate courses in physics, and at least 48 hours (or units) of graduate courses in total. Students typically take the core sequence of courses, discussed in the next section, during their first two years. In addition, they may take electives during their second year, and sometimes beyond that, according to their interests and in consultation with their research advisor. These may be in physics or related fields, such as math, statistics, engineering and computer science.

Students may also transfer in as many as 24 hours of graduate-level courses. Please discuss courses you wish to transfer in with the Graduate Director to determine how to obtain credit and whether these should replace courses in our core curriculum.

After completing core courses and electives, students typically sign up for 8000-level research courses in their advisor’s name until reaching the required 48 hours. Until then, students must enroll in at least 9 units during the academic year to maintain their status as full-time students. Maintaining your status is crucially important for international students, who may have to leave the US if they do not. After reaching 48 hours, students should maintain their status by registering for the zero-unit course Phys 8049 (Graduate Full-Time Status) until graduation (plus an additional one-unit course; see below).

To satisfy the federal government, students must enroll for at least one unit during every semester and summer while at SMU. This is required for students to maintain their SMU health insurance, and prevents social security taxes from being taken out of their pay. This includes students in 8049. The department offers some one-unit courses to facilitate this, such as the 8100 Research course.

It is extremely important for all students to register for each semester; apparently this can be easy to forget once research begins full time. This is particularly true for international students, for whom failure to register can result in the loss of visa status, and in some cases, expulsion from the U.S.

Finally note that the university requires graduate students to maintain a B average.
11 Core Course Sequence

The department offers a set of ten core courses with an emphasis on particle physics, including Classical Mechanics (6321), Electrodynamics (7311 and 7312), Quantum Mechanics (6335 and 6336), Statistical Mechanics (6351), Introductory Particle Physics (5395), Experimental Particle Physics (7361), and Quantum Field Theory (7314 and 7315), as well as several elective courses. The core sequence runs on a two-year cycle, with some courses offered only in alternate years, as illustrated in Table 11. Students entering in even years follow the first sequence, odd years follow the second.

Table 1: The department graduate core course sequence. Non-core courses must also be taken to fulfill the total credit-hour requirements of the graduate program. Class slots marked Non-Core can be filled using classes within the physics program that meet graduate course credit requirements, such as Computational Physics, Mathematical Methods, Research, or other courses. These can also be graduate-level courses in related departments, such as Statistical Sciences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Even-Numbered Years</th>
<th>Odd-Numbered Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6335: QM I</td>
<td>6335: QM II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7311: EM I</td>
<td>7312: EM II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6336: QM II</td>
<td>7314: QFT I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7312: EM II</td>
<td>7315: QFT II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Core</td>
<td>Non-Core</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Financial Support

Prior to admission to candidacy, most PhD students will receive their stipend for work as Teaching Assistants (TAs), assisting faculty in lecture or lab courses. Assignments are made shortly before each semester. TAs may work up to 20 hours per week during the semester, though 15 hours is more typical. Support is only guaranteed during the fall and spring semesters, though most students who wish can find TA or research work during the summer.

Ideally, soon after admission to candidacy, students will transition to Research Assistant (RA) support working as part of an externally-funded research group, as discussed in Sect. 13. TA positions are often available for students whose advisors who are unable to provide RA support.

Tuition for courses is routinely waived for PhD students. SMU does not allow tuition waivers for MS candidates.

13 PhD Research

Students select an advisor by mutual consent at the beginning of their third year, and a thesis committee of two additional faculty by the end of their third year. Committee members are usually drawn from within Physics, though faculty from related programs are also eligible. The advisor and committee guide research and preparation of a thesis, and, with the addition of an external member, conduct the thesis defense.

University guidelines state that students should complete and defend their dissertations within five years after being admitted to candidacy; that is, after passing their qualifying exams. The Dean can extend this
The following is a rough outline for the process you will follow to select a research topic, find an advisor, and form a committee.

1. During the first two years you will be mainly occupied with courses and TA duties, but should also use this time to learn about research opportunities within the department. Methods include attending seminars and department lunches, talking with more senior grad students and postdocs, sitting in on research group meetings, but mainly by talking with faculty. It’s a small department and faculty are usually happy to discuss their work, but it’s important for you to take the initiative; it’s ultimately up to you to decide what you’d like to work on.

2. It’s especially useful to arrange with one or possibly two faculty members to work on research during the summer after your first year. (Although you may wait until the third year to formally choose an advisor, it’s usually a good idea to begin as early as possible to work with someone on a trial basis; you may change later if you choose.) Some faculty may have funds to support you during the summer, but TA positions are also available. The Graduate Director or Chair can give you information. You should make arrangements for your summer by the middle of your second semester at the latest.

3. By the beginning of your third year, and preferably by midway through the second semester of your second, you should select, by mutual consent, an advisor who is willing to guide your dissertation research and has external funds to support your work. Having had some prior research experience together, as discussed above, will help a great deal here.

   Ideally your advisor will have adequate funds to support you as a Research Associate (RA) until the completion of your dissertation, but it is unlikely that all students can be supported fully on RAs. During semesters when an advisor is unable to provide support, it is possible that a TA position or other sources of funds, such as university dissertation fellowships, will be available. The Chair and Graduate Director will work with you and your advisor to help, but it is important to know that entrance to candidacy does not guarantee support through to completion of your degree.

   If you are having trouble finding an advisor by the end of year two, discuss this with the Graduate Director or Chair.

4. By the end of your third year at the latest, and in consultation with your advisor and the Graduate Director, select two additional department members to serve on your thesis committee. Our intention is that, in addition to participating in your thesis defense, committee members will monitor your progress from an early stage, will be available as sources of collaboration, information and guidance, and a valuable source of recommendation letters if you choose.

5. Shortly after forming your committee, you will present to it a proposal for your PhD work along with a short, formal presentation open to the department. The proposal and presentation will allow you to communicate to your committee basic information about your area of research, the importance of your research subject, your goals, how you will achieve those goals, and to receive feedback. Thereafter, you will meet with your committee no less than once a year to review progress, which the committee chair will report to the department.

   In order to continue in the program, you must successfully complete this proposal and presentation to the satisfaction of your committee no later than midway through your fourth year, but it is to your advantage to do this as early as possible. A reasonable goal is midway through year three.

6. Early in the semester in which you hope to graduate, inform the Graduate Director, who will then give your name to the Graduate Studies Office. If you are unsure whether you will finish that semester, it’s better to get on the list; you can defer later if you need to.
Once the Office has your name, you will be able to apply for graduation at my.smu.edu. There are various other forms to submit and deadlines to meet which you will need to keep track of. Please read through the information at www.smu.edu/graduate/CurrentStudents/Graduation and pay particular attention to the information at the Timeline link.

7. When your dissertation is nearing completion, you and your advisor will schedule a thesis defense in coordination with your committee. Your advisor will also arrange for a final external committee member, usually chosen from another appropriate department from within SMU, though a member from outside is also possible. Your thesis should be delivered to the committee no fewer than 30 days before the scheduled defense. Your defense will consist of a public and open presentation, typically about an hour long, and which includes questions by the committee, followed by a closed session with the committee. A typical thesis defense lasts about 90-120 minutes. The committee then conducts private deliberations and renders a decision on your defense. After the defense, the committee should submit a report to the Graduate Studies Office.

14 Mandatory Training

Within the first semester that you receive RA support, you must complete an online training program on the Responsible Conduct of Research. See www.smu.edu/graduate/CurrentStudents for information and a link to access it. It’s long, but you can spread it out.

15 Health Insurance

SMU requires all full-time students to carry health insurance, and offers the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). You may enroll annually using my.smu.edu after you have registered for classes. As of 2014, the Physics Department will cover your premiums. (Please notify the Department Admin if you are being billed for this.) You also have the option of enrolling members of your immediate family each semester. If you already have coverage, you may choose to waive SHIP. See www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/HealthCenter/Insurance for more detailed information.

16 Health and Fitness

SMU offers free membership to the Dedman Center for Lifetime Sports (see map in Section 17) for both undergraduate and graduate students. The center has basketball courts, an indoor swimming pool, a climbing wall, a boulder wall, and array of modern fitness equipment for cardio and weightlifting. It is located on the southeast corner of campus. Spending time here is a great way to relieve stress. More information can be found at smu.edu/recsports/dedman/default.asp.
Part III
University and Employment Information

17 Campus Map

A map of the campus can be found at sites.smu.edu/apps/campus-map

18 Salary and Direct Deposit Information

Direct Deposit

Note: as of 2016, some of this information on Direct Deposit is obsolete, and this section will be removed. Please refer to www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/OfficeOfBudgetAndFinance/Payroll/InformationAndFAQs/DirectDepositofPaycheck for current information.

SMU will deposit your salary and any reimbursement payments for work-related expenses via electronic transfers to your account in a US bank or another financial institution. Direct deposit is the only method by which SMU will disburse your salary, usually on the 15th and last days of each calendar month when you are paid.

SMU requires every employee to enroll in direct deposit within 90 days of the employee's hire or rehire date. You will need to open a US bank account before setting up direct deposit.

Initial Direct Deposit Enrollment To initiate direct deposit at SMU, an employee must complete the Direct Deposit Authorization and submit it to Payroll for processing. A voided check should be attached to the direct deposit form to provide additional validation of the information provided on the form. The form can be downloaded from University Controller website.

It is preferred that the department submits the direct deposit authorization with the employee’s other payroll papers, but the employee may submit the form directly to Payroll if the job paperwork has already been sent to Payroll.

IMPORTANT: When you go to set up direct deposit, you may have to set up two separate accounts - one for payroll and another for reimbursement of travel expenses. Please bring TWO of everything with you so you don’t have to run this errand twice.

Direct Deposit Changes To submit a change to an existing direct deposit account(s), an employee must complete a new Direct Deposit Authorization and submit it to Payroll for processing. The entire form needs to be completed, even if some of the existing account information is to remain the same. However, a voided check is unnecessary if the checking account information is not changing.

Deadlines New direct deposit forms are due to Payroll by the “Paperwork Due” dates designated on the Payroll Processing Schedule. The direct deposit will be in place for the next regular payroll processing, as
long as the authorization is complete and there are no questions about the information provided.

18.1 W-4 Forms from the Internal Revenue Service


19 International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office provides a variety of services for international students and is located in Blanton Building Suite 216; see the map in Section 17. Their website is [www.smu.edu/international/iss](http://www.smu.edu/international/iss). Walk-in hours are Mon to Thurs 9-11am and 2-4pm. (They may have modified hours the week before classes start; check their site.) They have posted an international student handbook at [www.smu.edu/media/Site/international/iss/prearrival/ISSSHandbookFall%202012.ashx](http://www.smu.edu/media/Site/international/iss/prearrival/ISSSHandbookFall%202012.ashx) which may have useful information.

It is VERY IMPORTANT for international students to check in with ISSS each time they are planning to go abroad in order to have the proper immigration paperwork filed and to be aware of any matters affecting their re-entry into the US.

19.1 Obtaining your I-9

Who must complete an I-9? The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires a Form I-9 to be completed by all SMU employees who are paid wages. New employees hired for regular staff or faculty, student employee, and temporary employee (staff and faculty) positions must complete the Form I-9.

When must the form be completed? New employees must come to the Department of Human Resources on the first day of employment to verify eligibility to work in the United States and complete the I-9. A Human Resources representative will be available for completion of this document during the hours of 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

What are the acceptable documents to complete I-9? New employees should consult the List of Documents Acceptable for Verification of Work Eligibility and Identity prior to the first day of work. The employee will be asked to present either one original document from List A confirming employment eligibility and identity, OR one original document from List B establishing identity AND one original document from List C establishing employment eligibility. The choice of which document(s) to present belongs entirely to the employee. All documents presented must be original and unexpired.

Who must be re-verified? If an employee indicates in Section 1 that he or she is an alien authorized to work until a specified date, then the employee’s work authorization must be re-verified on or before the date indicated by the employee. Every month, a list will be generated by the Department of Human Resources containing the names of all employees whose employment authorization will expire within the next 120 days. HR will send notification to the employee, advising the employee to present an unexpired document of his/her choice from List A or List C evidencing his or her continuing work authorization, no later than the date the current work authorization will expire.
Part IV
City/Region Information

Dallas is a large city with several places to search for housing. A few things to consider:

1. Dallas is a sprawling metropole. Just because something is in Dallas does not mean it is close to campus or that it is a reasonable commuting distance.

2. Campus is surrounded by two small towns, University Park and Highland Park, with high costs of living. Although they are convenient, this makes it difficult to find affordable housing adjacent to campus.

3. Additionally, when searching for housing, it would be recommended to look north of Interstate 30 and south of State Highway 635 to avoid long, traffic-related commutes to and from campus.

More specifically there are areas to look for housing where the primary residents are young professionals.

- “The Village” is a large collection of apartments approximately 5 minutes from campus.
- There are also several apartments located between Mockingbird and Lovers Lane that are readily accessible from campus.
- “Uptown” is a neighborhood approximately 10 minutes south of campus.
- Downtown Dallas has several options and provides access to nightlife and entertainment options within walking distance.

Most importantly, feel free to ask existing graduate students where they live and what housing options they suggest.

20 Transportation

Public Transportation There are SMU Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) bus and rail passes available to students after a $5 card fee. Additionally, the DART 768 bus is free and runs regularly in the campus, with a stop at Bishop Blvd, Expressway Tower east of Interstate-75, and area apartment complexes and stores.

Commuting by Car If living on the west or north sides of Dallas, it might be beneficial to purchase a Toll Tag. This makes commuting on the Dallas North Tollway more affordable as well as providing easier access to DFW airport. More information can be found at [www.ntta.org](http://www.ntta.org).

Airports Love Field Airport is a small airport that is close to campus (about 15 minutes away). If coming to visit campus or looking at flights when moving, this is something to consider. It’s a particularly good airport for regional flights and airlines like Southwest Airlines.

Since most of our research projects involve a component of travel within the United States and across the world, you will also become familiar with the region’s major airport: Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport
(DFW, for short). By taxi cab or car, DFW Airport is about 45 minutes from campus. You can find dozens of direct flights each day to major airports across the United States and the world.

Love Field Airport is accessible by public transportation (Inwood/Love Field Station). DFW Airport will become accessible by DART Light Rail at the end of 2014/beginning of 2015.

21 Outdoor Activities

Dallas has several outdoor attractions. The Katy Trail is a cycling/walking path that connects campus to Downtown. White Rock Lake is a small body of water that is surrounded by walking paths, and has access to recreational opportunities. Klyde Warren Park is a new green space in Downtown that is constructed atop Woodall Rogers Expressway. There are also ongoing efforts to improve the Trinity River, south of Downtown Dallas, called the “Trinity River Project.”

22 Shopping

The Dallas Metroplex is filled with areas to shop, both within the city limits and throughout all of the surrounding areas. Of note, there is an IKEA located at the end of the Dallas North Tollway in Frisco, TX. Be sure to speak with fellow students to find the best locations for shopping for clothes, food, furniture, etc.