



**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
AND STUDY ABROAD**

RESOURCES HANDBOOK

UTEP'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

STUDENT EMERGENCY FUND

Supporting our students during this critical time is our top priority. UTEP has created a [Student Emergency Fund](#) to help students in these very uncertain times. Funds can be used for emergency travel, unexpected expenses related to food, transportation, and access to necessary resources for remote learning. For more info about this resource, please click [here](#).

UNIVERSITY BOOKSTORE

The University Bookstore has set up several policy changes including FREE eBook access, free shipping, and deadline extensions to help ease the financial burden of the crisis and to promote reading and learning during isolation/quarantine. For more information, please visit the [University Bookstore](#).

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL CLOSURES

UTEP has been taking measures to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and faculty as the City of El Paso issued an ordinance to slow the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak. In accordance with UT System guidance, students living in on-campus housing were asked to check out, with few exceptions. These exceptions included international students whose home country had closed their borders, or students who did not have suitable alternative housing.

We Need Your Feedback

1. How did you handle the relocation?
2. How are you coping with online instruction?

Please let us know by sending an email to bevera@utep.edu



COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES HAVE BEEN POSTPONED

In accordance with the guidance of The UT System, UTEP has postponed this spring's Commencement ceremonies.

Graduating students will receive their degrees as scheduled, but the ceremonies have tentatively been rescheduled to the fall. More details will be announced as soon as that decision is made.

The decision follows CDC recommendations for large gatherings. For more information, please click [here](#).

ONLINE COURSES: HOW TO SERVE OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

We know that as an international student you may have concerns, especially if you return home to complete your courses online.

Below are a few suggestions from international students that have been shared with UTEP professors to help them prepare for online instruction. We hope they assist you in communicating any anxieties or concerns with your instructors.

- International students who went home would rather be in your class.
- Their families, governments, or exchange programs are recalling them.
- They are experiencing culture shock and returning to a home very different than the one they left. For many it is a dream cut short.
- They may be in forced home or governmental quarantine for a period of time where they may not have access to internet.
- They may be joining online courses or advising appointments in the middle of the night (their time), where they may share a room with family who are sleeping. Consider making assessments available for a 24 hours periods of time.
- If the mode of instruction will increase spontaneous written response in online discussion, they may be writing with an accent without the opportunity to check



their own writing. As we typically allow people to speak with an accent, consider that in spontaneous writing.

- Some websites are not readily available in all countries but may be accessed through VPN, such as Google products, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. WeChat may also work.
- We have told students to reach out to you about their concerns and technology limitations for their courses to help you in your planning.
- The students are anxious. There is a lot of pressure on them to do well. We continuously remind them to reach out to you to talk about their concerns and limitations.

DHS UPDATES

URGENT TRAVEL ADVISORY: The Department of Homeland Security is restricting non-essential travel across the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders. The announcement was initially made in March, and the restrictions are in effect until at least mid-May. Students who travel between Juarez and El Paso must read the below information before attempting to cross the border, as they may not be permitted to cross.

DHS ANNOUNCEMENTS US/MEXICO TRAVEL: UTEP is proud of its relationship with our sister city of Juarez, Mexico. Juarez has long been an important part of UTEP's rich history, not only because of the thousands of Juarenses that have become proud UTEP alumni throughout the decades, but also because Juarez and El Paso share roots, a culture, and economic ties that have defined the region. Because of this, we understand the importance and need to travel between both countries on a frequent basis.

Given the current situation, it is of vital importance that ALL students, not only Mexican students, be aware of current international travel guidelines and rules both from the University and the Federal Government, and the consequences of not following these guidelines and regulations. If you have not already done so, review the notifications sent



by OIP immediately, especially the email sent on March 21. You may find all COVID-19 related communications from OIP [here](#).

You can find the statements from DHS regarding US/Mexico travel restrictions [here](#) and [here](#).

OTHER TRAVEL: Those wishing to travel internationally for personal reasons are highly encouraged to follow all [CDC guidelines](#) and must understand that self-isolation will be required for 14 days after returning to the U.S. All international travelers must report their travel to UTEP's Department of Environmental Health and Safety using an online form or by calling 915-747-7124. There are currently no reporting requirements for student personal travel, but we encourage you to follow guidelines from the CDC.

For more information regarding UTEP travel guidelines and policies, or to report travel, please click [here](#).

The UTEP community is working together to support our students, staff, and faculty impacted by recent developments at the border. We will continue to update the community as we receive new information.

SELF CARE - DEALING WITH REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

You did not choose to be part of the COVID-19 pandemic, and you may not even be pleased to be back to your home country or displaced to another city in the United States under these unexpected circumstances. These sudden and unplanned changes of location and other aspects of your life will affect you, as they have affected the entire country in different ways.

Family and friends are relieved to have you back or close. Like you, they are also coping with the Cultural Shock that emanates from changing social behavior due to COVID-19. You have that in common. But, they may not understand the changes in you that occurred through the experiences you encountered at UTEP.

- You had to adapt to optimize your experiences, while at the same time maintain your uniqueness and individuality.



- You had to adapt to American teaching and learning methods, overcome social and cultural obstacles, and become more resilient while remaining an ambassador for your country and culture.

It is important for you to remember that many of your peers, friends, and family at home did not have these experiences. Be patient, centered, and tolerant with those around you. Complete the learning circle and be closer to coping with COVID-19. Apply principles learned when “adapting to a new cultural experience” to coping with a pandemic affecting the world around you. With confidence, we believe that reflecting on this “reality” can help you take pride in how much you have dealt with in your learning journey to another culture.

Focus on continuing your education remotely. There is no doubt about it: The world is feeling Cultural Shock, Reverse Cultural Shock, and Cultural Displacement, all in one. We will persevere!

Please feel free to reach out to OIP with your thoughts about this unprecedented time, and how, as an international student you have confronted the challenges that it has presented. We would love to hear them! E-mail bevera@utep.edu with any questions or experiences you’d like to share. And, as always, do not hesitate to contact oip@utep.edu with any immigration-related questions.

STAYING ACTIVE – NEW SOCIAL PARADIGMS

We would like to encourage you to look forward to a continued great future. While our priority right now is for everyone to be safe and comply with all safety guidelines recommended by all health and governmental institutions, it is also important, even in confinement, to do your best to stay positive and look out for your well-being, physically AND mentally! Here are some links to organizations and activities that we believe can be of help in keeping you active, positive, and engaged with others, even from a distance.

- UTEP’s Student Engagement and Leadership Center (SELC) is organizing “Quarantivities” for its **Miners on Monitors** series. They also provide links for virtual tours



of museums and landmarks around the world. You can find more information, including a list of weekly activities, [here](#).

- **Yale University** is offering a FREE online course called “The Science of Well-Being”. For more information, click [here](#).
- **Let There Be Rock** is a performance-based music school in El Paso. Since this crisis happened, they have opened ONLINE courses for people of all ages that want to learn music instruction remotely. This is not just a great opportunity to learn from renowned professionals, but also a great chance to support a local business. For more information, click [here](#).
- Renowned Los Angeles-based dance studio **Fit and Bendy** is offering online fitness, stretching, and dance classes from some of the most prestigious instructors and performers in the U.S. It’s a great way to stay active and healthy! Visit them [here](#) for more information.

AND FINALLY...

These are unique and unprecedented times. While there is no humor in the human tragedy that is unfolding, keeping one’s good humor in trying times is important. No matter what, we will see the light at the end of this tunnel soon enough!

Keep your spirits up :)

