

MILLIGAN



International Student Handbook

#BuffNation

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MILLIGAN

Dear International Students,

Welcome to Milligan College!

We're glad you've chosen to become part of this community, a group of hard-working students and faculty who are dedicated to excellence in all that they do.

Since we were founded more than 150 years ago, we've been committed to the ideal of educating men and women to be servant leaders. No matter what your field of study may be, we hope you'll find excellent career preparation alongside the opportunity to form friendships that will last throughout your entire life.

I encourage you to make the most of your time here, because it will pass by faster than you can possibly imagine. I look forward to seeing your smiling face as you walk across the stage in Seeger and I have the privilege of handing you a Milligan diploma.

So, work hard! Play hard! And most of all, honor God in all that you do by striving for excellence every day.

Welcome!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Greer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "G".

Bill Greer, Ph.D.
President

Important Contact Details at Milligan

Registrar and PDSO - Sue Skidmore.....	SHskidmore@milligan.edu
Dean of Students - Tony Jones.....	TPjones@milligan.edu
Director of Student Success and Disability Services - Heather Jackson.....	HJackson@milligan.edu
Director of the Institute for Servant Leadership - Beth Anderson.....	BAnderson@milligan.edu
Campus Minister - Brad Wallace.....	Bwallace@milligan.edu
Milligan Counselling.....	423-461-8500
Campus Work Coordinator – Tracy Brinn	tnbrinn@milligan.edu
Physical Plant Secretary – Heather Mullins	hmullins@milligan.edu
Health Clinic Nurse – Karen Maughon	KMaughon@milligan.edu

Important Websites

While we seek to keep this handbook up to date and we hope it serves as a strong place to start for the questions and concerns you may have, the world we live in is fluid. As a result of this, government policies and processes are ever evolving, and thus it is always a great idea to double check to see if anything has changed. Please find below a list of government agencies and their websites.

United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS)
www.uscis.gov

United States Customs & Border Protection (USCBP)
www.cbp.gov

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
www.dhs.gov

Being an International Buff

Being an international student at Milligan is a privilege. Milligan truly values the cultural perspective that international students bring to the classroom, the intensity they bring to athletic competition, and the flavor they bring to campus life. Milligan has international students from more than 20 different countries, from the United Kingdom to Kenya and from the Dominican Republic to South Korea.

Immigration and all that paperwork

It is important to understand the wealth of paperwork that internationals must carry with them.

Paperwork

Traveling around the world so many times per year can be a worrying experience, especially when you are carrying around a wealth of paperwork. It might be tempting to dispose of those pieces of paper once their use has been served, but it is suggested that you **keep all of them** for the duration of your study in the U.S. They serve as a fantastic way to validate your stay should an issue arise or if you want to remain in the country longer.

Remaining Legal

An international student must fulfill a few requirements as stated by the United States government to remain legal under their F-1 student visa status. This includes:

- Enroll in a **full-time class load** each fall and spring semester
 - Undergraduate full-time enrollment is considered 12 credit hours
 - Graduate full-time is considered 9 hours.

If you choose to audit a class, this will not count towards your hours' requirement.

Extensions

While it is not common, for some it is necessary to obtain an extension to their visa to complete their program of study. Please note that **academic suspension does not qualify a student for extension**. If you anticipate you might require an extension, please contact Sue Skidmore (Derthick 103).

Passport

You must maintain a valid passport at all times, and it should always be valid at least six months beyond the current date. **Renewing your passport is your responsibility**; no one will remind you at the appropriate time, so mark the date on your calendar.

Any changes (such as extensions, application for employment authorization documents, optional or curricular practical training requests, etc.) to your I-20 are made through the SEVIS program. Any submitted changes requiring adjudication must have a copy of the new I-20 printed out and sent to the service center with the proper fees and documentation. (Check with the Admissions Office to process any changes or applications.)

When you apply for an extension of your immigration status, the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services will require that the passport be valid for six months beyond the requested

extension of stay. To renew your passport, contact your country's consulate or embassy. If your consulate requires proof that you are a student at Emmanuel, ask the Admissions Office to provide a letter stating that this is the case.

Travel

Although regulations may say differently, experience has taught us that **you must have a recently endorsed I-20 every time you leave the U.S.** You must also have a valid passport, and, if traveling to a country besides Canada, you should have a letter from the Registrar stating that you continue to be a full-time student. If family members are to accompany you, this, as well as the purpose of your trip, should also be included in the letter from the Dean.

If you plan to travel and a visa is required, it is best to check with the consulate/embassy that would issue the visa for all necessary information about travel regulations. The nearest consular offices for many foreign countries are in Atlanta.

Unless you are planning to reenter the U.S. to resume full-time studies, Milligan cannot give you an I-20. Therefore, it would be wise to do your traveling before you complete your studies.

If your visa has expired or if you have used up the number of entries it allowed, then you will need to go to the U.S. consulate to apply for a new visa. This must be done outside of the U.S. If you will be applying for a new visa in a country other than your own, you will need to prove that you have a valid reason for applying there.

Key Terminology

- I-20 – Issued by Milligan. The most important document you will carry with your passport, it is proof to the Homeland Security agent upon your arrival that you are still enrolled at school. It is imperative that it is signed once a year.
- I-94 – Access your most recent I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>

A Time of Transition

After having travelled many miles to a place that looks incredibly different from your home country, it is important to recognize there will be a transitional period in your Milligan experience. Northeast Tennessee is a beautiful part of the world, but probably looks, feels, and smells incredibly different from your home. The excitement and adrenalin of being in a new place will carry you through the first few days or weeks of your journey, but there may come a time when you feel disoriented and lost.

Tips for managing this transition:

- **Understand that you are not alone.** There is a community of internationals here at Milligan. From all walks of life and corners of the globe, people have arrived at Milligan and later graduated. Whether you're from Jamaica, Cambodia, South Korea, England, the Dominican Republic, or Serbia, other people are doing what you are doing. Don't be afraid to lean on them.
- **Have realistic expectations.** Something that can often lead to unhappiness is having unrealistic expectations. Understand that things will be different and give yourself time to adjust.
- **You are different – Make the most of it.** There are going to be very few, if any, people from your home country in this part of the world. While that might seem daunting, it's also a fantastic opportunity to be the one and only. Use your accent and story as a way to start a conversation.
- **Reverse the roles** – imagine if you took somebody from northeast Tennessee and dropped them in your hometown! How would they feel? How would you suggest they overcome the shock of being in a place with all sorts of new things?
- **Be open minded** – try not to pass judgement on others, especially on what they see or do as right or wrong. Understand that you will have some situations in which you will feel uncomfortable. However, new experiences can be like that food you always told your parents you didn't like, but, when you tried it, you liked it. If you don't try it, you will never know.
- **Embrace it.** As an international student at Milligan College, you are in a very select group of people.

If you are still struggling with this period of transition and want to talk, please contact the Milligan Counseling Center @ 423-461-8500.

Milligan

The term “liberal arts” is a way of describing a broad education that seeks to prepare students to think, to inquire, and to analyze. At Milligan, a unique interdisciplinary **Humanities Program** lays a common foundation for learning, as students learn about the historical, philosophical, literary, and artistic basis of our modern society. Learning from a liberal arts perspective prepares one for an ever-changing world.

Spiritual Formation Program (More commonly referred to as “chapel” or SFP)

A part of Milligan that will make it different from other schools is its spiritual formation program. To graduate, you must have attended spiritual formation events (including chapel) 150 times, which translates into 18 – 19 events per semester. Typically chapel/convocation takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Transferring to another college

There are many reasons that a student might have to seek another college, but, before you initiate contact with another school, it is highly recommend you speak with your faculty adviser at Milligan.

If you are an athlete, you may have to do the following –

- Obtain a release from your Milligan coach to talk to an athletic department at another school. If you do not, your eligibility may be penalized when you move.
- Exit the U.S. and reenter on the new school’s I-20.
- Follow the transfer procedure while remaining in the U.S.

Key terminology

- **SFPs** – are credits that you are awarded for attending designated spiritual formation events on campus. You must attend 150 of these events prior to graduation.
- **Credit Hour** – Each class you take at Milligan carries with it one or more credit hours, the amount of time you will spend in that class per week. Example: Composition 3 credit hours; Humanities 4 credit hours
- **GPA** – Grade Point Average. Work hard at keeping a good GPA. It is an indication employers and graduate schools will use to determine how well you did during your time at Milligan in one quick glance.
- **SEVIS** - the government-shared database that universities and various government agencies use to maintain and update vital information on international students and exchange visitors.

Work

As an international, there are some restrictions for work. Typically internationals use the Work Study program at Milligan, but your F-1 student visa does permit you to apply for an off-campus job following your first year. Find out more below.

On Campus Work: Work Study

There are many Work Study jobs on campus available to students for up to 10 hours per week. This is a fantastic way to have some money in your pocket. Apply with the Director of Personnel and Work Study Coordinator in the Business Office (McCown Cottage). The jobs range from working in the bookstore to helping out in the athletic training office, to mowing lawns, to working in other offices. As an international student, you will be assigned an identification number which you will use to clock in and out of your work study position.

Off Campus Work

As an F-1 student, you may **not** work off-campus during your **first year** of study. However, working off-campus is a possibility in the three years that remain on your visa. There are three off-campus methods of work:

Curricular Practical Training – CPT

CPT is available while the international student is still pursuing the completion of the degree. The off-campus work must be related to the student's program of study.

Optional Practical Training - OPT

Many people think of the collegiate experience lasting only four years, but as an international student, you are allowed one more year in the country. The optional practical training year (OPT) is the year immediately following graduation when you may use your degree in more tangible ways. If you plan to stay in the U.S. and hope to secure a work visa, using your OPT year can be a fantastic gateway, but be aware of the required conditions:

- You must have had your F-1 student visa for at least 9 months.
- As an international student you may apply up to 90 days before the completion of your academic course.
- If you choose to undertake a higher level of studies after having used your undergraduate OPT, typically you will be eligible for a post-graduate OPT year.
- The job must in some way be related to your **major** field of study.
- You are still accountable to the school during this year, and, in the eyes of the government, an F-1 student.
- You do not have to have a job to apply for your OPT, but you do need to have a job within 90 days of your course completion.
- After your OPT has expired and thus your F-1 student visa, you have 60 days before you have to leave the country.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training Extension (OPT) – Can be used to extend your OPT to 24 months; for the most up-to-date details, please refer to the UCIS website.

Taxes

For an international student, the U.S. tax system can be daunting, but, fear not, it needn't be. Filing of your taxes is an important part of American working life. Here are the important facts about filing taxes as an international.

- An F-1 student who has been in the U.S. for 5 years or less is classified for tax purposes as a nonresident alien. A nonresident alien is taxed only on income from U.S. sources.
- All international students should file their taxes, regardless of whether they have had a job for that tax year or not.
- Your scholarships are considered taxable income and must be listed.
- To file taxes through an external tax agency, you will need to collect a copy of your 1098 and W2 from the Milligan Business Office in McCowan Cottage. It provides a paper trail that may help if you decide to extend your stay in the U.S.

Career Guidance

As an international student at Milligan, it is important to consider how the skills you acquire in class and on campus will transfer back to your home country, should you return. At Milligan, there will be a number of times when you are asked to create documents like a resume or cover letter to help prepare you for job and/or graduate school admissions. Style, terminology, and design may vary from profession to profession and country to country, so you might ask your professor for advice.

Beth Anderson and Heather Jackson in the McMahan Student Center are good resources to help you decide which techniques and styles are appropriate for different settings and countries.

Social Life

Social life is a big part of the experience at college. Milligan requires all undergraduate students to live on campus (unless you live with family members within 30 miles of the campus or are age 24), so there are people around for you to get to know and spend time with. Get involved on campus and also explore the region. Nestled in the northeast corner of Tennessee, Milligan is within easy reach of North Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia, all of which have a lot of things to do. Below are suggested places that locals and tourists like to visit, eat at, and travel to. You can find out more about these online at <http://www.milligan.edu/#location>. Let the exploration begin!

Places to go

Something that attracts many Americans to Milligan is its location and proximity to the Appalachian Mountains. For many, the mountains can take some getting used to, but near Milligan's campus are a lot of natural and FREE things to do.

- Blue Hole
- Dennis Cove
- Buffalo Mountain – White Rock
- Buffalo Mountain – Fire tower
- Twisted Falls
- Boone
- Asheville
- Appalachian Trail

Places to eat

Food in the South isn't just a necessity to survive, it's a way of life. You will find below a selection of local restaurants that are locally-owned. They "ooze" East Tennessee and the pride that people in this part of the world take when preparing and serving food.

- Smokehouse BBQ
- Ridgewood BBQ
- Tupelo Honey
- Jack's City Grill
- Cootie Brown's
- Cookout
- Barberitos
- J's Corner - Elizabethton

Places to travel

Milligan is located in northeast Tennessee, conveniently close to North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Kentucky, and so there are many places you can visit on breaks or weekends.

- Asheville
- Knoxville
- Boone
- Atlanta

If your family visits

When your family makes a commitment to travel around the world to come see where you live, study, and compete, the excitement really begins. There are a number of hotels in the area where they can stay, but Milligan has a special relationship with one:

- Double Tree Johnson City
 - Milligan has a discount partnership with the Double Tree Hotel in Johnson City. To attain this rate, instead of booking online, please have your relatives call the hotel and let them know they are parents of a Milligan student.
- Find more information on hotels and travel at www.milligan.edu/visit.

Advice – Having your family in town can be an exciting time, especially if you are in a sports season. It is worthwhile letting your professors know that your parents are in town. Many will want to meet your family and may welcome them to their homes to visit.

Miscellaneous

In your home country, all of the items found below are usually easy to obtain. When you're an international, obtaining them may be a little more difficult. While they are not required, it is recommended that you think about obtaining some of the things listed below, as they will make your transition into life in Northeast Tennessee much easier.

To obtain any of the following, you must first obtain a signed letter from Tony Jones (McMahan Student Center) or Sue Skidmore (Derthick 103), which will identify your exact address here at Milligan.

Driver's license

As an F-1 student, you will be issued a Temporary Driver's License (TDL). You will notice that this license expires the same day that your F-1 visa does.

The Tennessee driver services began using the SAVE interagency federal database to check the immigration status of all international persons who apply for a driver's license. Due to this additional check, you may not appear in the SAVE system for up to one month after you first begin classes.

Our closest Department of Motor Vehicles Office is located at:

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
2076 Cherokee Park Drive, Suite 3
 Elizabethton, TN 37643
(423) 547-5886

Buying and driving a car in the U.S.

The purchase of an automobile is not the total expense involved in ownership of a car. Insurance, state registration, repairs, and the operating costs often far exceed the actual cost of the car itself. If you live beyond walking distance or have a family, you will likely need to buy a car. Consider these costs before you decide to come. There is no public transportation to the Milligan or Emmanuel campus.

Borrowing a car

If you borrow a car, you still must have your own driver's license and you must make sure the car is covered by insurance that will also cover you as a driver. (Some insurance policies will not cover accidents if anyone other than the owner and other people actually named in the policy are driving.)

Auto Insurance

It is mandatory that you be covered with car insurance. Even "minor" accidents can run into hundreds or thousands of dollars in car repair bills and even more if people are injured. Please know that if you cannot afford auto insurance then you cannot afford to have a car.

Tennessee has a financial responsibility law, which means that insurance is the best way to protect yourself and others. If you have an accident and are uninsured, you may have your license taken away from you and be fined, especially in the case of an injury accident. The minimum legal coverage, which can be obtained from any insurance company, may be inadequate in the case of a major accident or if someone injured in the accident decides to sue you. Listed below are various aspects of car insurance:

Liability coverage is required for bodily injury and property damages. It pays up to certain stated limits, the sums for which you become legally liable in the event you injure someone else or damage his/her property.

Uninsured motorist coverage protects you and your passengers if an uninsured or hit-and-run driver causes injury, but only if the other driver is legally liable because of negligent driving.

Collision coverage pays your losses if your own car is damaged in a collision or a single car accident. This is especially valuable if the collision cannot be proven to be someone else's fault. This is generally used on newer, not older, cars.

Comprehensive coverage pays your loss if the car is stolen or damaged by fire, hail, hurricane, vandalism or most other non-collision causes.

Insurance costs can vary greatly from company to company, so it is wise to check with several companies before deciding which one is best for you and your situation.

Social Security Number

In the U.S., a Social Security Number is a number used for the purposes of taxation and retirement benefits. It is also sometimes used as a means of identification.

Our closest Social Security Office is located at:

818 Sunset Drive
Johnson City, TN 37604
(423) 282- 4761

Please Note: Having a Social Security Number does not make you eligible for work, as you are still on an F-1 student visa. Also note that it does not necessarily mean that you will be able to access Social Security benefits as these are intended solely for U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents.

Cellular Phone

One of the first things you will want to acquire is a phone. There are two options that you have as an international student:

1. Non-contract

A great option in your first few months until you get settled in the area and have the relevant and necessary paperwork to obtain a contract phone should you so desire.

Walmart is a great place to purchase a SIM card that comes with minutes, texts, and data and can often be placed directly into your existing phone.

2. Contract

- a. To obtain a contract phone, you will need a Social Security Number for the network provider to check your credit.

- b. Typically an international student does not have credit and often will have to pay a deposit to guarantee the phone and line.

Health Insurance

The U.S., unlike other countries, does not offer a healthcare system that automatically covers everybody who resides there. As a result of this, you need to obtain healthcare insurance. As a young student, you often feel healthy and safe, but unforeseen circumstances can happen at any time. Many healthcare insurers are available, and we advise you take the time to find a plan that best suits you.

HCCMIS offers insurance for international students studying in the United States. Please note that if you are an international student playing a sport, your coverage MUST have intercollegiate athletics built into it.

FAQ'S – Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I get packages and mail?

All Milligan students are strongly encouraged to obtain a Milligan Post Office Box (PO Box) once you arrive. If you are receiving a package that needs a physical address, use:

Student's Name
Milligan College Physical Plant
1 Richardson Drive
Milligan College TN 37682
United States of America

If I don't have a driver's license to validate my address, how do I validate I am a resident here at Milligan College?

Both Donna Godsey in the Dean of Students Office and Sue Skidmore in the Registrar's Office can provide you with a document on school letterhead validating your residence here at Milligan. Keep this document. It will serve as an ID when you go to get things like a bank account or driver's license.

When I look at flights, they are expensive. How can I reduce the cost?

Flights quickly add up, especially when you are travelling back and forth 3-4 times a year. You have three airport options if you want to be close to Milligan: Tri-Cities (TRI) is the closest, Asheville (AVL) second, and Knoxville (TYS) third.

Advice - Instead of hopping between providers, find a route with one airline provider and stick with it. Sign up for their air miles service and accrue miles. By the time you get to junior and senior year, you will have enough miles to trade in for a heavily discounted flight. Lastly, airline companies and travel services have become incredibly clever regarding tracking how much you check flights. If you delete your history and cookies in your web browser, you will see the flights reduce dramatically. The more you look, the more the website recognizes you are interested/in need and thus the price increases substantially.

Thank you!

We are incredibly glad that you chose to attend Milligan College. As an international student, you will see the school and this part of the world through a different lens, one of which brings a much-desired perspective to the campus. Share your experiences and cultural differences with your classmates, teammates, and residence hall.

If you need anything explained in greater detail, have questions about any aspect of campus life, or just want to talk about your experience, please don't hesitate to contact Sue Skidmore in Derthick 103 or Tony Jones in the McMahan Student Center.