

# Postdoctoral Handbook

Updated as of August 2020



*Postdoctoral Affairs and the University of Arizona Postdoctoral Association (UAPA) collaborated on the creation of this handbook to support new, current, and future postdoctoral scholars. This handbook offers resources to help with the logistics of moving to Tucson, finding housing, and learning about the UA and its surrounding community.*

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# Welcome Letters

## Welcome Letter from the Director of Postdoctoral Affairs

Dear Postdoctoral Scholars,

Welcome to the University of Arizona where postdoctoral scholars are highly valued members of our campus community. Now that you have made the important decision to come to the University of Arizona, we want to help make your arrival here as smooth as possible and your stay here enjoyable and fulfilling. This handbook is part of the effort to guide you through this stage of your career.

The office of Postdoctoral Affairs supports postdoctoral scholars by:

- Assisting with the transition and arrival to the university through orientations and website resources (<http://postdoc.arizona.edu/>);
- Keeping postdoctoral scholars apprised of relevant events through an opt-in listserv;
- Providing professional development opportunities through in-person and web-based workshops, small group discussions, and personal consultations;
- Working to build community among postdoctoral scholars.
- Serving as advocate for postdoctoral scholars and as liaison between the postdoctoral community and the university administration;
- Helping prepare postdoctoral scholars for the next steps in their career, whether it be in academia, industry, government, or other settings.

It is our goal to make your postdoctoral experience at University of Arizona a successful and productive one. We look forward to serving you. Please contact us with questions or just to say “hello.”

Jenny Hoit, PhD  
Director, Postdoctoral Affairs



Marédil León Cedeño, PhD Candidate  
Graduate Associate.  
Postdoctoral Affairs



1600 E. First Street, Tucson, AZ 85721  
[postdoc@email.arizona.edu](mailto:postdoc@email.arizona.edu)

## Welcome Letter from UAPA

Hello, and welcome to the postdoctoral community at the University of Arizona! The University of Arizona Postdoctoral Association (UAPA) is a postdoc-led organization that was founded in 2016 to better support the community of postdoctoral researchers at the University of Arizona. Our three main goals are to promote social interaction and networking, provide opportunities for professional development, and serve as an advocate for postdocs on important issues. The UAPA is led by a rotating executive board, and works in collaboration with the Postdoctoral Affairs office to provide the best solutions, innovations and support possible.

To connect with other postdocs and get involved with UAPA, we recommend that you 1) join the opt-in listserv run by the Postdoctoral Affairs office (information about all of our sponsored events are sent out via the listserv – see instructions later in this document on how to join), 2) check out the UAPA website ([uapostdocs.weebly.com](http://uapostdocs.weebly.com)) for profiles of rockstar-postdocs at the University of Arizona, a calendar of events, and a variety of other helpful resources, and 3) join the UA Postdocs Group on Facebook (search for University of Arizona Postdocs). If you are interested in becoming involved in UAPA, would like to join the Executive Board, or have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at: [uapostdocs@gmail.com](mailto:uapostdocs@gmail.com).

We hope you enjoy your time as a postdoc at the University of Arizona, and hope to hear from you!

The UAPA Board

[uapostdocs@gmail.com](mailto:uapostdocs@gmail.com)

Grace Niemiro, Allison Rubenok, Hamid Dashti, Alexandra (Bobbie) Garvin, and Priyanka Kushwaha

Former UAPA Board members:

Diana Ferro, Jenna Coalson, Natasha MacBean, Brittany Peterson and Keaton Wilson

# Welcome to Tucson, Arizona!

Official Website: <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/>



In the American Southwest, Tucson is situated in the Sonoran Desert and is surrounded by five mountain ranges. It is an hour north of the Mexican border and an hour and a half southeast of Arizona's capital city, Phoenix.

Tucson has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Pronounced "TOO-sahn," Tucson has the great natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert and an unsurpassed climate of 360 sunny days a year.

A unique blend of Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Anglo-American influences, Tucson has had various groups inhabiting the area. Spanish settlers arrived in the area in 1776. Tucson officially became part of the United States with the Gadsden Purchase of 1854. Despite its mild-high heat, Tucson is a wonderful place for the outdoor enthusiast. Visitors are recommended to

explore nearby Mt. Lemmon, Sabino Canyon, and many other hiking spots in the vicinity.

Tucson is home to the premier research institution University of Arizona, which is known for many fields of innovative research including optics and astronomy among others.

The city of Tucson has a population of over 500,000 people and around 240 sq mi/ 612 sq km of land area. Yearly high temperatures range from 65-100F/18-38C.



We hope that your time in Tucson, Arizona will be a pleasant one.

# Getting started at the University of Arizona

## Prior to Arrival

### Hiring Process

All open positions at the University of Arizona are advertised at

<https://uacareers.com/>

- Once you submit your application you will be contacted by a department representative or supervisor regarding the interview and hiring process if you are being considered for a position
- Your employment can be considered official after you sign an offer letter.
- If you are not a US citizen your department will work with you on the visa process, see more information at <https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/immigration-services>

For those coming to the UA as a visiting scholar or research associate in an unpaid position (or those who have external funding) you will be set up as a Designated Campus Colleague (DCC). Your department representative can guide you through this process. Basic information needed to setup DCC status is

1. Your Full Name
2. Your Date of Birth
3. Your personal email (a non-UofA email is required)
4. Your citizenship status (NOTE: If you're a non-US citizen, you will need to provide copies of your passport and visa documents. See "International hires" for details.)
5. The name of your faculty mentor, and a 1-2 sentence description of the work you'll be doing in their lab (200 character limit, ~25 words).
6. Your current CV/Resume, in English (PDF doc is preferred)

## Employee ID, Email, & Online Accounts

If you are paid by the University of Arizona, you will be issued an employee ID number upon hire. If you are not paid by the University of Arizona (i.e., externally funded), you will need to be granted Designated Campus Colleague (DCC) status—this DCC status will generate an employee ID number for you.

Once you have been issued a UA employee ID number, you can sign up for your UA "NetID" and email address here: <http://email.arizona.edu/>.

You should consider enrolling in NetID+, which provides a second layer of security for programs that require you to login using your UA NetID. More information can be found here <https://netid.arizona.edu/>. Some programs, like VPN require NetID+.

You can complete your hiring paperwork remotely and therefore have your employee ID, UA NetID and email address setup before you start. However, these tasks can be completed upon arrival if necessary.

## Benefits and Health Insurance

### *Overview*

All postdocs are required to have health insurance. Be aware that not all contracts provide health insurance. A useful summary of benefit options for UA-employed Postdocs can be found here:

<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/benefits/benefit-options-ua-employed-postdoctoral-scholars>.

You must enroll in benefits within 31 days of being hired. Each autumn, you can change benefits plans during Open Enrollment season. Depending on your contract, you may be eligible for other benefits including dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, short-term disability insurance, or retirement. Since different job titles make you eligible for different benefits, you should check benefits being offered before signing your contract and may be able to negotiate for retirement benefits (see above link for a summary of this information). For some of these benefits the University will pay all or some of the costs. You can find more information on benefits here:

<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/benefits/benefits-overview-and-eligibility/new-hires-newly-eligible-employees>.



UA employees are eligible to enroll for health insurance benefits only after they are officially hired. When determining your official start date, keep in mind that benefits coverage does not begin until the pay period after your enrollment.

International Postdocs: Check with the International Faculty and Scholars Office on the health insurance requirements of your visa. It is likely you will have to obtain health insurance from the point you enter the US until you receive benefits from the UA (if your contract permits this). Please see the [International Hires](#) Section below for more information.

## Visa requirements for International postdocs

If you require a visa to work in the United States you must get in touch with the International Faculty and Scholars office (your department will likely put you in touch with them). Please see the following website for extensive information on immigration procedures: <https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/immigration-services>

Start immigration procedures as soon as possible after you have received confirmation that you have a job at the UA; i.e. you have signed the offer letter and returned it. See the [International Hires](#) Section below for more information.

## Housing

Tucson has many housing options and you can get really nice apartments (or even small houses) at very affordable prices. More housing is available immediately than in advance. You can sometimes find housing more than a month in advance listed online (see below), or by directly contacting managers of apartment buildings. Sometimes a later rental date can be negotiated for a property that is listed as being available immediately.

Many postdocs have also had success moving to Tucson with temporary housing (see below) and securing a rental within a few weeks. If you are in town and see an apartment building that you like, you can inquire with the manager on site. Another good plan is to contact future colleagues, Ph.D. students, or current postdocs. With 2-3 weeks of temporary housing, or someone from your new department to check out a place, it is very doable to find suitable housing.

Quality of houses varies, and **it is not recommended to rent a place you have not visited in person.** If you are unable to go yourself, ask someone in your program or any friend/acquaintance to see the place. It could save you serious time, hassle, and money.

To connect with the UA Postdocs for advice on where to live or to see if people have a room/house available for rent, join and post to the University of Arizona Postdocs [Facebook Page](#).

### Neighborhoods

The vast majority of postdocs live within a roughly 3 mile radius of campus. The most popular areas are south of Downtown in Armory Park, north of Campus up to E Fort Lowell Road and east of campus up to about N Swan Road.

For more information, google Tucson neighborhoods and ask your UA Postdoc advisor to be put in touch with other grad students and postdocs.

A good resource is to check the stats for neighborhoods, which provide info on crime, education, cost of living, livability, among others:

<https://www.tucsonaz.gov/police/statistics>.

### Types of housing

Roughly there are three to four types of housing in Tucson. Apartments in gated complexes, single homes (often one storey, 1-2 bedrooms with a yard), sharing in a larger house or historical adobe style house in Armory Park or the Barrio Viejo (south of downtown). Have a look around and consider which type of housing best fits your needs.

### Prices & Important Housing Consideration

#### Costs

Depending on the neighborhood and the condition of the place, one bedroom apartments normally run from \$400-800/month and more for other options. Be aware that neighborhoods that are not as safe and further from campus might be cheaper than those that are more proximal and safe.

#### Utilities

Utilities such as electricity and gas (AC) can be extremely expensive in hot months and should be considered when looking for housing. Utilities can range from \$60-120/month depending on usage and the quality of the type of AC. Ask landlords for previous bills from tenants and average prices.

You probably will look for either an apartment or a small house. In my experience prices are low south of the UA and increase north, toward the mountains. Most

students and some postdocs live in the vicinity of the university (mostly north and east); many postdocs live north of the university and most faculty lives in or close to the foothills. The closer you are to the mountains in the north the nicer the houses/apartments and the neighborhoods are, but the commute is somewhat longer.

Some (older) houses have "evaporative cooling" or a "swamp cooler" instead of regular A/C. Some people like swamp coolers because they increase humidity in the house, some people recommend against them because they get sick. They also don't cool efficiently during Monsoon season. Alternatively, [cool mist humidifiers](#) that are widely available can be highly effective for keeping indoor rooms cool.

#### Temporary Housing Upon Arrival

- [Airbnb](#) is generally affordable, but prices can jump in February, due to the Gem and Mineral Show
- Ask to send an email to Postdocs and Grad students in your new Department/Program.
- Send an email to contact in your network to ask for recommendations as they might well know someone who has a place to stay temporarily or for a longer duration.
- Extended stay hotels.

#### Where to Find Housing

Here are some recommendations for finding the right place for you:

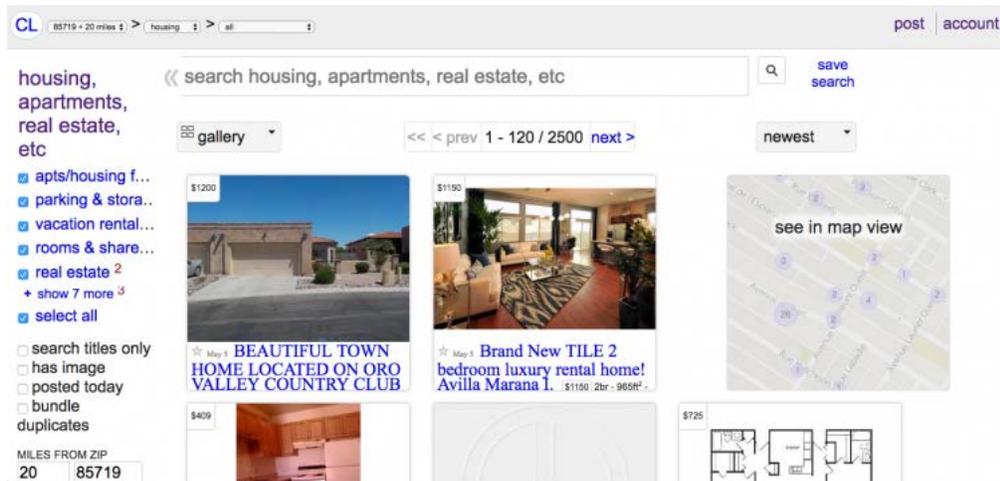
- Craigslist: <https://tucson.craigslist.org/search/apa>
- [www.zillow.com/](http://www.zillow.com/)
- [www.homes.com](http://www.homes.com)
- [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)
- [www.apartmentfinder.com](http://www.apartmentfinder.com)
- The UA lists rental housing on their website (<http://offcampus.arizona.edu/>).
- Housing can also be found through rental agencies that list properties on the web (e.g. TRT management: <http://www.trtmanagement.com/> or REDI Rentals: <http://www.azredirentals.com>).
- Some departments have listservs or newsletters where you can ask about available housing.
- Often, driving/biking/walking around neighborhoods and looking for "For Rent"

signs provides the most success. If you willing to find a temporary AirBnb or stay with someone for a couple of weeks while you look, this can be a good strategy.

## UA Off-Campus Housing Listings



## Craigslist Housing



## Apartment Guide

The screenshot shows the Apartment Guide website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Apartment guide' logo and links for 'Find Apartments', 'Blog', 'Get Our App', 'Next Steps', and 'Advertise Your Property'. On the right, there are links for 'My Places', 'Register', and 'Log In'. Below the navigation is a search bar with 'Tucson, AZ' entered, and filters for 'BEDS', '\$500-\$700', and 'MORE'. A 'Search Apartments' button is present. Below the search bar, there are filter buttons for 'Min \$500' and 'Max \$700', and a 'Clear Filters' button. The search results show 'Apartments Found: 198'. The main content area features a 'Spotlight Apartments' section with a featured listing for 'The Springs Apartment Homes' at '4900 East 5th, Tucson, Arizona 85711'. The listing shows a price range of '\$489 - \$720' and '6 units available now'. It also includes a 'Current Rent Specials | Reserve Now' button and a phone number '(520) 829-1297'. To the right of the featured listing is a section titled 'Average Rent in Tucson, AZ' with a list of rent ranges for different unit types: Studio: \$512, 1 bedroom: \$705, 2 bedroom: \$867, and 3 bedroom: \$1046. Below that is a 'Featured Communities' section with a thumbnail for 'Northpointe Student Community'.

## Above and Beyond

Above and Beyond is a relocation service that the UA contracts. They help match people with realtors who help them buy or rent a place to live. They had a big emphasis on the "match" aspect of the service. This service has been free to postdocs in the past.

The screenshot shows the website for Above & Beyond Relocation Services, LLC. At the top, there is a navigation menu with 'ABOUT', 'CLIENT', and 'CUSTOMER' links. Below the navigation is the company logo, which consists of a stylized house icon with a cactus to the right, and the text 'ABOVE & BEYOND' in a curved font above it, and 'RELOCATION SERVICES, LLC' below it. Below the logo is a tagline: 'REMARKABLE PEOPLE EXPECT AND DESERVE REMARKABLE SERVICE.' followed by a paragraph: 'Above & Beyond Relocation Services (ABRS) believes everyone should be excited about the idea of living in Arizona. Our role is to educate and facilitate on behalf of Candidates, New Hires, Transfers and their Families in Phoenix and Tucson.'

## Renters insurance

Nearly every insurance company in the states offers Renters Insurance policy. Rates are determined by specifics you provide about your home/condo/apartment, your location (often determined by zip code) and the value of your belongings and a company can



often provide you a quote over the phone in a few minutes. Rates are usually inexpensive (<\$20/month) and can be adjusted to cover the replacement cost of your belongings in the event of a fire, home invasion, natural disaster, etc. As an added bonus, many companies will offer a “bundled” rate if you combine Renters and Car Insurance plans.

## Furniture

Will you be bringing furniture or would you prefer a furnished apartment/house?

- Thrift Stores: Tucson has a wide selection of second-hand and thrift stores that can help you furnish your new home beautifully on a budget. Consider the website Craigslist to contact sellers or check out several used furniture stores around town (e.g., casa de los niños, Habistore, Re-Store or any goodwill or thrift store are good for cheap furniture), or at estate sales.
- **It is highly recommended NOT to buy used mattresses** due to bedbugs and other infectious diseases.
- For furniture you should consider Ikea - this is in Phoenix, about 1.5 hours drive, but it is probably the best place to buy affordable and decent furniture. The Tucson Mall on Oracle is the largest mall in the town, other Malls you may want to check out are the La Encantada (most upscale) and Park Place Mall.

## School Districts

### About Schooling

If you are coming to the UA with school-age children, you need to know about schools. U.S. law requires all school-age children to be enrolled in school, although the definition of school-age can vary from state to state. In Arizona, current law defines school age as ages 6-16 (note that age 16 is generally not completing high school). You can choose to delay official schooling until the age of 8, but you need to file an affidavit with the County Government if you intend to do so. However, it is common practice to go to school from kindergarten through high school (grades K-12).

### Types of schools

You have four options:

- 1) Public schools (free, open to all legal residents).

- 2) Charter/magnet/open enrollment schools (free, but focused on special curriculums, needs, or interests. May have a waiting list and/or entrance requirements).
- 3) Private schools (charge tuition; may be secular or religious. May have a waiting list and/or entrance requirements).
- 4) [Homeschooling](#). Parents may teach their children at home, but must meet state requirements for curriculum, testing, and file an affidavit with Pima County Government stating their intention to homeschool.

**Public school:** If you are a legal resident, you have the right to enroll your children immediately for free in the local school in the district where you live. ***You must live within the boundaries of a school attendance area for your children to attend that school. This means picking a place to live must depend upon the school you want your children to attend, if you want them to attend a public school.*** You must enroll them in person at their school, and will be asked to provide proof that you live in the school's boundaries. Arizona law also requires that you prove that you and your children reside in the U.S. legally. Public schools also require that your child be vaccinated for certain diseases before they can attend. Public schools provide school bus service to transport your child to and from school.

**Charter/Magnet/Open Enrollment school:** These are also free public schools, but often are focused on special curriculums, needs, or interests. You don't have to live within the local school boundary to attend, but these schools may have a waiting list, and often don't provide transportation. You need to apply as soon as possible, but your child may not be admitted for a year or even more depending upon space, or not at all if they don't meet entrance requirements. Some high-demand schools operate a lottery system to secure a place. Charter and magnet schools will also require proof of legal residence, and vaccinations.

**Private schools:** private schools charge tuition and can often be quite expensive. Many are run by churches, mosques, temples, or other religious groups, but some are secular. Many provide accelerated learning. Some are quite competitive and require children to pass entrance exams to enroll. Many have years-long waiting lists (so apply early). They will require vaccinations, but may or may not ask about residency or legal status.

**Homeschool:** <http://www.schools.pima.gov/schools/home-school-information>

**ELL (English Language Learners):** If your children do not speak English fluently, public and private schools are required by law to provide English Language instruction. Some schools are better at this than others.

**Special education:** Public schools are required by law to accept and accommodate students with disabilities (physical, emotional, intellectual disabilities). They must also provide specialized

preschool for qualified special education students, generally based upon screening exams. Private schools are not required to provide such services, but some do.

<http://www.azed.gov/special-education/>

**Gifted education:** Most public schools have some sort of programming for intellectually gifted children; at the elementary level it is usually a couple of extra hours a week. Some charter schools, public schools and a few private schools specialize in gifted children, but entrance is by exam. For example, University High School in TUSD (public) is for gifted students, and often listed among the top ten high schools in the U.S., but students must live with TUSD district boundaries and pass the entrance exam (an IQ test as well as skills-based testing). BASIS schools (charter) provide an accelerated curriculum, and the high school is also often listed among the top ten public schools in the U.S. University High School and BASIS high school often occupy the number 1 and 2 slots in national rankings.

**Preschool/kindergarten:** All TUSD K-8 schools provide free all-day kindergarten, and some provide free preschool for kids with special needs. The policies of the other districts vary. Generally public schools only provide free preschool for kids with special needs; and sometimes kindergarten is only half-day depending on the school district. There are several private schools in town that provide preschool; and there are stand-alone preschools as well.

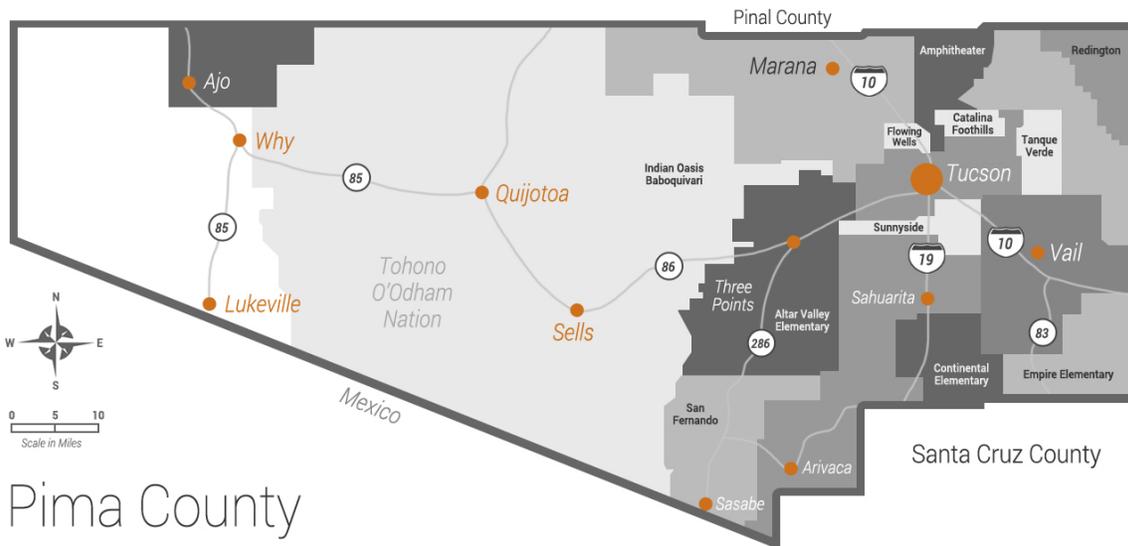
**After-school care:** School days generally end by 3PM. Many schools provide after-school activities and programs until 5 or 6 PM. What is offered, and the cost, varies from district to district and school to school (generally needs to be paid for). If you will need this after-school care to accommodate your work schedule, be sure to find out what the options are at any school you are considering. The same applies to school holidays.

**School rankings:** <https://www.azreportcards.org/> You can look up schools by name, or put in an address and/or zip code to get the rankings of schools in your area. Generally the districts in the suburbs of Tucson have the best reputations: Catalina Foothills to the north, Tanque Verde to the northeast, and Vail District to the southeast, are considered uniformly excellent. Amphitheater has some good elementary schools; the quality of the upper schools varies. Tucson Unified schools vary much more in terms of quality, depending upon the neighborhood in which they are located (generally north and east schools are better).

**Public School Districts in Tucson: (map)**

- Tucson Unified School District #01
- Flowing Wells Unified #08
- Amphitheater Unified School District #10
- Sunnyside Unified School District #12
- Tanque Verde Unified School District #13
- Vail Unified School District #20

Catalina Foothills School Unified District #16  
Sahuarita Unified #30



<https://pima-county-schools.s3.amazonaws.com/CMS/79/pima-county-schools-map.jpg>

**More information:**

**Arizona Department of Education:** <http://www.azed.gov/parents/education-options/>

**Pima County Information about schools:** <http://www.schools.pima.gov/schools>

**Homeschool information:** <http://www.schools.pima.gov/schools/home-school-information>

**AZ School report cards:** <https://www.azreportcards.org/>

## Upon Arrival

Getting set-up on campus: UA guides for new employees

Be sure to read this guide from Human Resources for new employees:

<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/new-ua>

Including the very useful [New Employee Checklist](#)

## Department orientations

Overall, orientations and policies regarding different compliancy training vary by department. However, information regarding policies outlined by the RDI (Research, Discovery and Information) can be found [here](#). Many departments implement these as required training and compliance.

## Health Insurance Benefits

See the [Benefits and Health Insurance](#) Section in Prior to Arrival for more information on health insurance.

Human Resources provides a one-day benefits orientation for new employees. More information and upcoming dates are listed here:

<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/new-ua/new-employee-orientation-programs#hdr-1>

Be sure to mention that you are a postdoc, since many of the policies are different for postdocs - see this summary table here:

<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/benefits/benefit-options-ua-employed-postdoctoral-scholars>

## Transport to campus

See the [Transportation](#) sub-section within the [Living in Tucson](#) Section in this handbook.

Also look at the useful information on the Postdoctoral Affairs website:

<https://postdoc.arizona.edu/content/transportation-and-parking>.

## Postdoctoral Affairs Orientation

The office of Postdoctoral Affairs, established in January 2017, offers orientations to welcome postdoctoral scholars to the University of Arizona. These orientations are designed to provide information about Postdoctoral Affairs and other campus resources that can help make the postdoctoral years more productive and successful. [Check the Postdoctoral Affairs website to learn more.](#)

## Sign up to Listservs (including the Postdoc listserv and Facebook page!)

A repository of the UA Listservs can be found here: <https://list.arizona.edu/sympa/>.

Once you have a UA NetID you can sign in (button in the top right hand corner) and search for relevant listservs. For example, to join the opt in UA Postdoc listserv, type “postdoc” in the search bar and our listserv ([ua\\_postdocs@list.arizona.edu](mailto:ua_postdocs@list.arizona.edu)) should appear.

To join a listserv, send an email to [list@list.arizona.edu](mailto:list@list.arizona.edu) with

"subscribe [LISTSERV] [YOUR\_FIRST\_NAME] [YOUR\_LAST\_NAME]" in the subject line of the email.

E.g. if Harry Potter was going to subscribe to the **UA Postdoc listserv**, the subject line would be:

"subscribe [ua\\_postdocs@list.arizona.edu](mailto:ua_postdocs@list.arizona.edu) Harry Potter"

Ask your advisor and the administration team in your department which department listservs you should sign up to.

Also connect with the vibrant UAPA community by joining the University of Arizona Postdocs [Facebook Page](#).

## Family Life at the University of Arizona

University support for family life including childcare, elder care, and employee wellness can be found through UA Life & Work Connections <https://lifework.arizona.edu/>

Postdoctoral scholars who are benefits eligible employees have the following family/child benefits:

- Paid Parental Leave  
<http://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/leaves/paid-parental-leave>
- Reimbursement for some Qualified Childcare Expenses  
<https://lifework.arizona.edu/cc/childcare-choice-employee>
- Sick Child and Emergency/Back-up Childcare  
[https://lifework.arizona.edu/cc/sick\\_child\\_and\\_emergency\\_back\\_up\\_care\\_program](https://lifework.arizona.edu/cc/sick_child_and_emergency_back_up_care_program)
- Childcare Resources and Referrals (520) 621-1530

All postdoctoral scholars have access to family resources (family restrooms, lactation rooms, etc.) on campus

<https://lifework.arizona.edu/sites/all/themes/lifework2015/map/>

Non-benefits eligible postdocs (e.g., fellows) should refer to their specific funding mechanism for parental leave policies (NIH example below)

[NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards \(F32\)](#)

## Work-related Travel

- Check with the business office in your department (or find their website for all travel related questions, including travel authorization (<http://www.fso.arizona.edu/travel>) and reimbursements.

- See here for more information on travelling **outside the US** (registering with the international insurance website at U of A): <https://ua-risk.terradata.com>
- Note that International Postdocs on a visa have additional requirements (see the [International Hires](#) Section for more information).

## Campus resources and professional development

### Campus Resources

Learn more about campus resources, including libraries, support services, etc on the Postdoctoral Affairs Resources page: <https://postdoc.arizona.edu/content/resources>. If any information is missing that you think would be useful for postdocs, please email [postdoc@email.arizona.edu](mailto:postdoc@email.arizona.edu).

### Professional Development Resources on Campus

[Postdoctoral Affairs](#) connects postdoctoral scholars with a plethora of resources and organizations on campus. Examples of resources include data management workshops from the UA Libraries, webinars from the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), career services, and information about teaching certificates.

Resources constantly update and are best found on the Postdoctoral Affairs Professional Development pages: <https://postdoc.arizona.edu/content/professional-development>. Stay up-to-date with specific events by looking at the Postdoctoral Affairs [calendar](#). For more specific information, email [postdoc@email.arizona.edu](mailto:postdoc@email.arizona.edu).

### Health Services

Please see: <https://www.health.arizona.edu> and the [Benefits and Health Insurance](#) of this handbook.

### Emergency Services

Please see: <https://cert.arizona.edu/emergency-numbers-and-resources>

# Living in Tucson

Take a look at the Visit Tucson website for a list of things to do, places to eat etc:

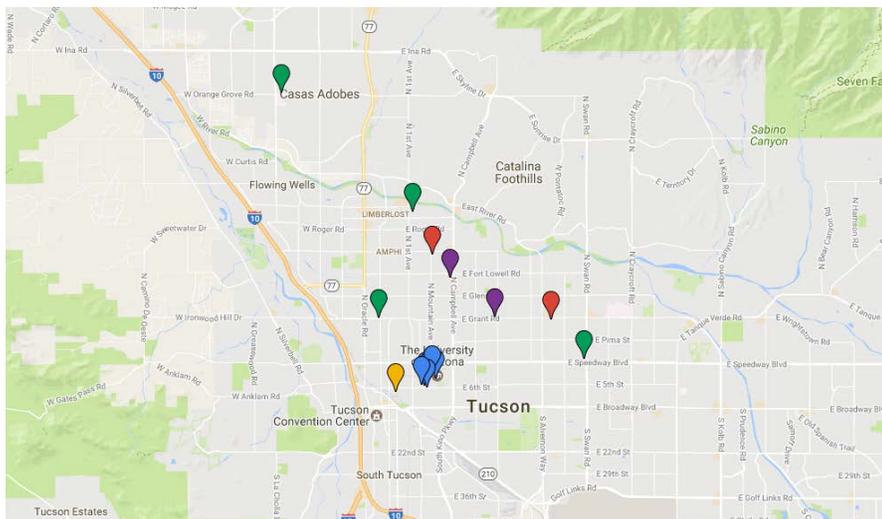
<https://www.visittucson.org>

Daily guide to what's on in Tucson: <http://tucsonhappenings.com/today.asp>

Weekly guide to what's on in Tucson:

<http://www.tucsonweekly.com/TheRange/archives/the-weekly-list/>

More information on things to do/see is provided in the sub-sections below. Click the image for the [Google Map](#) for a list of useful places in Tucson.



## Finances

**Bank/money/deposit** (different types of banks, safe deposit boxes)

There are several options for banking in the US. While you might want to consider a smaller local banks like:

<https://www.oneazcu.com>

Note that they do not have as many ATMs available as the three big banks:

<https://www.wellsfargo.com/> (one is located in the Central Student Union in the basement)

<https://www.bankofamerica.com/> (one is located about 2 miles away from campus on 902 N Stone Ave, Tucson, AZ 85705)

<https://www.chase.com/> (one is located near campus - go north on Park Ave at: 947 N Park Ave, Tucson, AZ 85719)

At each of these banks you will want to open a checking account and additionally maybe a savings account. To open these you will need:

-> some money to deposit (check with banks for current offers, and what is the minimal amount of money on account so they bank waives the account fee)

-> passport, visa, offer letter with amount of income

-> lease agreement (this is somewhat optional and you can talk yourself out of it, depending on how nice the bank-person is. They will want an estimate on your rent though).

You will also want to get a credit card while you are opening an account, as the US is very credit card based. Do your research, but do not be surprised if your initial limit is low. Ask with the bank person how you can increase it.

## Transportation

We recommend that you walk or bike to campus, but here are other options detailed below.



- Where to Purchase Bikes

Tucson is a relatively bike friendly city, but used bikes in Tucson can be quite expensive because a few big buyers snap them up off Craigslist and sell them at inflated prices. Many of the bikes listed on Craigslist will be advertised by one of these sellers. That said, keep an eye on the listings in Craigslist and Facebook

marketplace and you should be able to find a reasonable offer from private sellers.

Here are a few shops in Tucson that are worth investigating:

- Bicas: <http://bicas.org/bikes/> (A bicycle co-op. You can rent tools and buy refurbished bikes).
- Fair Wheel Bikes: <https://fairwheelbikes.com/> (South side of campus on 6th).
- Sonoran Cycles: <https://www.sonorancycles.com> (West side of campus on University)
- Performance Bikes:  
[http://www.performancebike.com/bike-shop/store/tucsonspeedway?utm\\_source=local&utm\\_medium=organic%20&utm\\_campaign=gmb](http://www.performancebike.com/bike-shop/store/tucsonspeedway?utm_source=local&utm_medium=organic%20&utm_campaign=gmb)

There are also regular “bike swaps” in Tucson where you can sometimes find deals on old stock or refurbished bikes

<https://www.facebook.com/GabaBikeSwap/>

Alternatively, if you have access to a car, the drive to Phoenix isn’t too bad and opens up more options.

- **Bike Parking:**

For those who prefer to bike, the University offers a variety of useful services for employees. Employees can register their bike for free, sign up for free use of Campus Recreation showers and lockers, and can make use of a free bike valet program, located near the Quad, to safely store your bike.

More information is located here: <https://parking.arizona.edu/bicycle/>

If you are traveling East to West, the Third Street/University Bike Boulevard is a good option:

<https://www.tucsonaz.gov/projects/3rd-street-university-bicycle-boulevard>

- **Bike repair**

There are many bike shops around campus and downtown. You can also (learn to) fix your own bike at [BICAS](#).

- **Cars**

If you have your own car, you can purchase annual parking permits for various parking lots and garages around the University Campus here:

<https://parking.arizona.edu/parking/permit-rates/>

The Highland Avenue, Tyndall, and Cherry Avenue garages are popular, but expensive choices.

- **Streetcar or Shuttle**

- [Sunlink Schedule](#) (*University area only*)

- CatTran Shuttle (*University area only*)
- Bus
  - Suntran Tucson Bus System: SunTran runs a variety of bus routes, many of which reach the University. Employees can get a subsidized annual bus pass (the U-pass, available here: <https://parking.arizona.edu/transportation/sungo/>), the cost of which can be deducted from your paycheck in installments. This allows unlimited transportation on all major bus routes as well as the tram that goes from the University to Downtown. The number 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 15 bus routes all provide decent service to campus. The number 3 goes directly down 5th/6th St, the number 4 goes down Speedway, and the number 8 goes down Broadway. These three routes get you relatively close to campus, and also run East-West down the three major highways in Tucson.
  - Greyhound Bus intrastate and interstate travel.
- Taxis and Renting Cars:
  - ZipCar
  - Rideshare: <http://www.pagregion.com/Programs/TransportationPlanning/SunRideshare/CommuterServices/tabid/228/Default.aspx>
  - Uber
  - Discount Cab
  - Yellow Cab
  - Cool Cab
  - Limousine Service
  - Lyft
- Train
  - Amtrak Passenger railroad system
- Air travel
  - Tucson International Airport
  - Airport shuttle
  - Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport
  - Tucson-to-Phoenix airport shuttle
- Travel Outside the United States for internationals:
  - <https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/travel-outside-us>

## Getting Around

- Bikes, bike map of Tucson  
Tucson has reasonably good bike infrastructure around campus and downtown areas.  
<https://www.tucsonaz.gov/bicycle/maps>  
For recreational purposes, the loop along the river is a well-maintained and safe bike-path.  
[http://webcms.pima.gov/government/the\\_loop/](http://webcms.pima.gov/government/the_loop/)
- On-campus bike sharing and other services:  
<https://parking.arizona.edu/bicycle/>
- Cars:  
Buying a car  
If you want to get a car you can find local car dealerships, which also carry used cars. [www.drivetime.com/UsedCarDealer](http://www.drivetime.com/UsedCarDealer). This is one aspect of commerce in the US in which negotiation is actually expected, so be prepared.

### Insurance:

You can often save money by combining car insurance with other forms of insurance (i.e. renter's insurance) from the same company. Again, it's worth shopping around to get a few quotes. Common providers include AAA/Triple A ([www.az.aaa.com](http://www.az.aaa.com), who also provide roadside services like towing and repairing flat tires if you get a 'Triple A Membership'), Progressive ([www.progressive.com](http://www.progressive.com)), Geico ([www.geico.com](http://www.geico.com)), State Farm ([www.statefarm.com](http://www.statefarm.com)), All State ([www.allstate.com](http://www.allstate.com)), and countless others.

If in a car accident, it is likely worth calling the police to get formal documentation of the incident for future insurance claims, even if the damage appears minor. Car repairs in the US are often much more expensive than you would anticipate. Arizona is also a typical 'fault' state when it comes to accident claims, so having legal documentation from the police of who was at fault for the accident is likely to be critical for claims submitted to insurance. More information about that, as well as the legal minimum requirements is available here:

<http://www.all-about-car-accidents.com/resources/insurance-law/car-insurance/arizona-auto-insurance-> and through the Department of Transportation (DOT) website: <https://www.azdot.gov/mvd/faq/vehicle-services/mandatory-insurance>.

Drivers licence: Registering and titling cars and getting a driver's license will all be done through the AZ Department of Transportation. Do as much as possible online in advance, as the in-person waits can be extremely long. Appointments can be set up online for certain services. Most of the information you'll need is available at the following website: <https://www.azdot.gov/mvd/NewtoAZ>

- Public transport:

All university employees can purchase a U-pass, in various increments of time (weekly, monthly, annually), the cost of which is deducted from your payroll. This allows unlimited rides on all bus lines as well as the Trolley that goes from campus to downtown. The most useful routes are the 3, 4, and 8, which go East-West down the three major highways in Tucson, reaching the University, as well as several shopping malls and grocery stores as well. Local taxi companies. Uber and Lyft are generally more reliable taxi transportation than yellow cab or private taxi companies. Also, they are cheaper and you do not need to pay tip. You just need to download the Uber or Lyft app on your phone, enter debit or credit card and use it. There is a specific place for Uber/Lyft pickups at the airport. Walk towards the Rental Car section and you will see the sign that shows you where to go.

## County library system

The local libraries are good places to meet others in the community. They host local cultural events and club meetings, and offer free children's activities. You can also rent movies and audiobooks, as well as check out books. And the Downtown location has a seed library, where you can check out garden seeds to start a garden!

<http://www.library.pima.gov/>

## Family life

Tucson is a great place for children with lots of year-round outdoor and indoor fun, festivals, and special family days at UA. Some highlights are below:

[Reid Park Zoo](#)

[Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum](#)

[Children's Museum Tucson](#)

[Playformance](#) children's play center

[Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium](#)

[Tucson Symphony](#) Just For Kids concert series

[Centennial Hall](#) performances

[Tucson Festival of Books](#)

[UA Spring Fling](#) carnival

[UA Poetry Center](#) family days

[UA Museum of Art](#) family days and Art Sprouts

## Dining out/bars/nightlife:

Did you know that Tucson is designated a UNESCO World City of Gastronomy - the first in the United States?! Some articles on the designation (and good foodie tips!) here:

- <http://ediblebajaarizona.com/tucson-designated-unesco-world-city-of-gastronomy>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/dining/tucson-food-unesco.html?mcubz=1>
- <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/introducing-americas-first-capital-gastronomy-180957793/>

Tucson foodie website is a good source of information:

- <http://tucsonfoodie.com/>

Most of the nightlife takes place Downtown (near Congress St.), on Fourth Avenue and University Blvd/Main Gate Square (near campus)

- <https://www.downtowntucson.org/visit/nightlife/>
- <http://www.fourthavenue.org/>
- [Hotel Congress](#) for breakfast, lunch, dinner, concerts, nightclub and all sorts of random events
- [Main Gate Square](#)

Tucson also has a great craft brewery scene. Some good bars, breweries and distilleries include:

- [Dragoon Brewery](#)
- [Barrio Brewing Co.](#)
- [Tucson Hop Shop](#)
- [Crooked Tooth Brewing](#)
- [Tap and Bottle](#)
- [Thunder Canyon Brewstillery](#)
- [Pueblo Vida Brewery](#)
- [Good Oak Bar](#)
- [Owls Club](#)

- [R Bar](#)
- [Independent Distillery Tucson](#)

Let us know if you find more and we'll add it to the list!

## Music/concerts

Tucson has a vibrant music scene with local musicians and musicians/band from other places.

- See this link for a list of upcoming events:  
<http://www.chicagomusicstore.com/live-music-calendar/>
- [The Rialto Theater](#) - One of the larger music venues in town
- [The Fox Theater](#) - Caters to an older crowd, shows film noir occasionally
- [Club Congress](#) is a great smaller venue that gets surprisingly big names. You can see a band that would play a sold-out show in LA in a small club-like setting here.
- The University of Arizona Centennial Hall Hosts events on campus via [UA Presents](#).
- [Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance](#) - A regional non-profit that hosts music series, art shows, and frequent culinary events around town. Ticketed events often sell out in advance.

## Cinema

The Loft (independent cinema): <https://loftcinema.org>

The Roadhouse (dine-in movie theater with reclining seats!):

<https://roadhousecinemas.com>

Century Cinemas: e.g. <https://www.cinemark.com/arizona/century-park-place-20-and-xd>

## Events & Community

- 2nd Saturdays Downtown: <http://www.2ndsaturdaysdowntown.com>
- Fourth Avenue [Street Fair](#) (once in Winter, Spring)
- Tucson Meet Yourself (each Fall): <https://www.tucsonmeetyourself.org>
- Winterhaven (December/Christmas) [winterhavenfestival.org/](http://winterhavenfestival.org/)
- Tucson Jazz Festival in January: <http://tucsonjazzfestival.org>
- Tucson Folk Festival in Spring: <http://www.tucsonfolkfest.org/folk-festival/>

- Dia de los Muertos (October/November: [allsoulsprocession.org](http://allsoulsprocession.org))
- La Fiesta de los Vaqueros / Tucson Rodeo: <http://www.tucsonrodeo.com>
- Pima County Fair in Spring: <http://pimacountyfair.com>
- Cinema La Placita (summer outdoor film series): <http://www.cinemalaplacita.com>
- LGBTQIA Community
  - Surly Wench Pub, IBT's bar, Queer Dance Party at La Cocina bar, Fluxx Studio and Gallery, Tucson Pride in October
- [Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance](#) - A regional non-profit that hosts music series, art shows, and frequent culinary events around town. Ticketed events often sell out in advance.
- Other social activities in town see the meetup website: <https://www.meetup.com/cities/us/az/tucson/>

## Museums

- The University of Arizona: <http://www.arizona.edu/arts-museums>, including:
  - [Arizona State Museum](#)
  - [Center for Creative Photography](#)
  - [Museum of Art](#)
  - [Biosphere 2](#)
  - [Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium](#)
  - [Poetry Center](#)
- The [Desert Museum](#) (mostly outdoors) provides a good impression of the flora and fauna of the Sonoran desert.
- [Tucson Museum of Art](#)
- [Presidio San Agustín del Tucson Museum](#)

## Outdoor Life

### Hiking

The mountains around Tucson are great for hiking, and there are many trails. A popular place to start is [Sabino Canyon](#) which has a shuttle that runs along the canyon. Heat stroke, water availability, and flash floods present serious seasonal risks in Arizona. Educate yourself and be prepared. Always carry enough water. Be mindful of sunburn



(Tucson is at a >2000 ft. elevation), prickly planets (cacti), and the local fauna (rattlesnakes)

General:

National Parks have excellent, well maintained trail systems. Book well in advance (by fax) to obtain overnight backcountry permits for multi-day hikes.

Many National Forests have excellent trail systems and campgrounds (daily fee). Some trails are not maintained, and roads may not be passable at certain times of year. Contact the local US Forest Service office or ranger station for up-to-date information.

Dispersed camping is free in National Forests and on BLM lands.

Hiking information and maps:

Green Trail Maps available at REI (regional and National Forest recreation maps)

Falcon Guides: 'Hiking Arizona', 'Best Easy Day Hikes: Tucson', and others.

Hiking near Tucson:

Santa Catalina Mountains, Santa Rita Mountains, Tucson Mountains, Rincon Mountains, Saguaro National Park, Picacho Peak

## Mountain biking

Tucson has fantastic mountain biking trails and great weather for it for much of the year.

Mtbproject is a great resource for finding nearby trails.

<https://www.mtbproject.com/directory/8007022/tucson>

For all ranges of skill, Sweetwater preserve is nearby and great fun.

<https://www.mtbproject.com/directory/8012492/sweetwater-preserve?search=1&type=area&method=dropdown&query=sweetwat>

The Robles-Starr Pass system is also fantastic and nearby, but slightly more challenging.

<https://www.mtbproject.com/directory/8012738/robles-trail-system?search=1&type=area&method=dropdown&query=robles>

The really awesome trails are up on Mt. Lemmon. La Milagrosa is highly recommended in the cooler months

<https://www.mtbproject.com/trail/306975/la-milagrosa?search=1&type=trail&method=resultsPage&query=milagrosa>



In the summer, the higher elevation trails are cooler, and also excellent. Be sure to check out Aspen Draw, Kellog/Incinerator Ridge (very challenging) and Bug Springs.

For enthusiasts, be sure to get involved with TORCA. <https://torca.org/>

## International Hires

**If you are an international postdoc, your primary source of information should come directly from [International Faculty and Scholars \(IFS\) Office](#) within Global Initiatives.**

### Visas & Immigration

[Immigration Services](#) within the IFS will help you obtain any visas you need. Once you start your hiring processes with the administration in your department they will likely assist you in contacting the International Office for Faculty and Scholars to start the immigration process. If they do not, contact IFS yourself.

Depending on your country, your job offer, there are different types of visas you could apply for (J-1, H1-B or if you were a graduate student in the US you can keep your F-1). Each visa has a different procedure, application fees, and required documents. See [Immigration Services](#) for more info.

Most postdocs are hired with a J-1 visa (visitor scholar), and you can find most of the details here:

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/j-1-exchange-visitor>

Some postdocs who were on an F-1 visa or are just arriving to the US will be hired on an H1-B visa. The details regarding the H1-B visa can be found here:

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/h-1b-employee>

For those postdocs, who completed their graduate studies in the US and are on an F-1 visa check out the STEM OPT, which allows you to extend your visa for 24 months. Find more info here: <https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/f-1-student-employment>

Other kinds of visas, for example TN for Mexicans and Canadians are explained here:  
<https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/tn-visa>.

**IFS will assist you in obtaining your visa and will provide you with all the information you need. This includes *health insurance requirements for your visa*. If you have a question, do not hesitate to contact them (they are very helpful!). They can also help you with information on your dependents.**

**Once you arrive in Tucson, go into the IFS office (they will ask you to do this) to verify all your documents.**

**Once you start your job you will be invited by the IFS to an orientation for the particular visa that you are on. It is imperative that you go to this to learn about particular rules for your visa (e.g. procedures for *travel outside the US on your visa* and any *restrictions on leaving the US/returning to your home country after your visa has expired*).**

## Health insurance

IFS will give you information on the health insurance requirements of your visa. UA benefits-eligible employees are eligible to enroll for health insurance benefits only after they are officially hired. When determining your official start date, keep in mind that benefits coverage does not begin until the pay period after your enrollment. If you are facing a gap in health insurance coverage, short-term insurance may be available through the companies such as the following:

- <https://www.health.arizona.edu/student-health-insurance>
- <https://www.sevencorners.com/>
- <http://www.visitorguard.com/>

However, these are only listed as examples for guidance. We urge you to investigate these and other options yourself, and **be sure to check with IFS that the insurance policy you obtain to bridge the gap between entering the US and receiving benefits from the UA meets your visa requirements.**

## English Proficiency

Check the University of Arizona for the different options. If you did your PhD at an English Language University, you could submit proper documentation and avoid taking language proficiency tests. See below:

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/j-1-exchange-visitor>

## Taxes for Internationals

The University of Arizona provides access to GLACIER (online-tax.net) to help with your federal tax return as a non-resident alien. Please read the links posted at the bottom of this section for more information than we can give you here. You should receive an email with login details not long after you join the UofA. GLACIER will ask you a series of questions such as your country of citizenship, your duration of stay in the US, and the fields on your income statement. At this point it will calculate the taxes that will be withheld and whether you're exempt from paying FICA taxes (social security, medicare and medicaid).

### **Federal Taxes**

When the time comes to fill in your tax return to declare your taxes (usually April each year, but check this online), log back into GLACIER and follow the instructions. GLACIER fills in your federal tax return automatically for you (it also determines which forms are required). As a non-US citizen, you must then physically post your tax return to the address given.

Although GLACIER does check for tax treaties and country-specific exceptions, it may not know how to handle more complex cases. It is recommended that you independently check if a tax treaty applies to you in your particular circumstances. It may be easier to contact a tax counselor in your home country rather than trying to get information about your country's taxation relationship in the US.

NOTE: some tax-exemptions are only valid if you stay in the US less than two years. If you stay longer you may have to pay back taxes for the first two years. Check the specific details of the treaty that applies to you (if one does exist between your country and the US).

## AZ State Tax

Internationals must also complete an Arizona state tax return. GLACIER does not help with this. Most people will need to fill in the non-resident form 140NR, which is available from the Arizona Department of Revenue website, along with more detailed instructions (link below). The form is a “fillable” pdf which gives some guidance and assistance. Typically you will only need your W2 income statement to complete your state return (this will be available through your UAccess account). Like your federal return, you will need to physically post your state return, but to a different address (link with postal addresses below).

**Contact the IFS and/or UA Payroll if you have any questions.** Note that they cannot provide you with specific tax advice as they are not qualified to do so, but they can explain the system for you and point you in the right direction.

General information - taxation for internationals:

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-faculty/taxes>

<http://www.fso.arizona.edu/payroll/employees/international>

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/us-tax-system>

More information on GLACIER:

<http://www.fso.arizona.edu/tax-services/nra-tax/glacier>

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/resources-tax-assistance-0>

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/glacier-and-glacier-tax-prep>

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/filing-your-2015-taxes>

State taxes:

<https://www.azdor.gov/Forms/Individual/Form140NR.aspx> (140NR and instructions)

<https://www.azdor.gov/ContactUs/WheredoImailmyreturnandorpayment.aspx> (Postal addresses)

## Social Security Number

You can go and apply for your Social Security Number after you arrive in Tucson. More information on how, where and when you can do this will be in the information package that IFS send to you. If not, ask them.

The procedure for internationals is also explained here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10096.pdf>.



The lines at the Social Security office can be very long. It is often worth it to queue up well before it opens at 9 am.

Tip for finding housing: If you do not yet have a Social Security number when renting a house, you can ask your department for an official letter stating that you are employed here. You can also obtain your Social Security Number 2 days after you have applied for it (even though you will not yet have received the official social security letter and card). The number alone will be enough to conduct background checks for renting purposes.

## Driving for Internationals

You may drive in Arizona on an overseas license. However, if your license is not in English, it is a good idea to bring an international driver's permit along with your license to ensure that your license is accepted.

If you intend to stay in the US for a while, it is highly recommended that you get a US license, because it can be very difficult to get car insurance without one (and insurance is compulsory). To get a US license you go through the same process as a new Arizona driver, doing both a written and road test. In addition, you will need to provide details on your visa and immigration status (DS-2019 or I-20, I-94 and Passport/Visa). You must provide your own vehicle for the road test.

More information:

<https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/drivers-license>

<https://www.azdot.gov/mvd/driver-services/driver-license-information/foreign-visitors>

## Phones and Networks

There are several cellphone companies in town. Verizon has a very good network, but prices are a bit high. Other companies include T-mobile and AT&T are a bit cheaper, and you can have pay as you go. It is frequently cheap to get on a “family plan” with other people, but it can be hard to find willing participants to join a group with you. Also check out “Mobile Virtual Network Operators” (MVNOs) such as Google Fi:

<https://fi.google.com/>. This may be an easier option for getting a cellphone.

# Acknowledgements

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