



Office of International Students & Scholars



International Student Orientation Survival Guide – Home Away from Home Fall 2010

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Housing

- **Rice Graduate Housing**

- Rice Graduate Apartments on Bissonnet St.
- Rice Village Apartments in Rice Village
- Morningside Square Apartments in Rice Village

For details visit: <http://campushousing.rice.edu/graduate/>

**Rice Village
Apartments**



**Rice Graduate
Apartments**



**Morningside Square
Apartments**



Housing

- **Amenities of Rice Graduate Housing**
 - For RGA and RVA: internet, cable TV, water, trash.
 - Graduate housing shuttle from 7am to 10pm on weekdays
 - Shopping shuttle service every Saturday. Runs from 10am to 3pm, every 45 minutes.
- **Off-campus housing**
 - <http://offcampus.rice.edu>
 - GSA announcements
- **Choosing Electricity**
 - <http://www.powertochoose.org>
- **Choosing Internet**
 - AT&T, Comcast & Phonoscope

Graduate Student Loan Closet

- **Location**
 - Rice Graduate Apartments Room 149
- Run by volunteers in Faculty Women's Club for all Rice Graduate Students.
- For a \$25 registration fee (with a renewable rates every year), you may borrow items such as; bed linens, dishes, cutler, cookware, tables, chairs, irons, bookcases etc.
- Items borrowed must be returned to Loan Closet when you no longer need them or when you leave Rice.
 - **Days of opening in August**
 - August 19, Thursday
 - August 20, Friday
 - August 22, Sunday (for new students only)
 - August 27, Friday

Staying Safe

- **Your safety**

- Avoid walking around late at night
- Use the shuttle service from campus to RGA/RVA
- RUPD's Night Escort Service
- Blue light phone program
- Register your bike with RUPD & use U-lock
- When moving to off-campus housing, ask about safety of neighborhood



- **Your information**

- **DON'T** give personal information to strangers (SSN, Bank/Credit card)
- **DON'T** give E-mail account information to anyone. Watch for PHISHING scams.

- **In case of an Emergency**

- Call RUPD, 713-348-6000 (if you are on-campus)
- Call 911 (if you are off-campus)

Credit Cards and Credit History

- **Credit History**

- A record of an individual's or company's past borrowing and repaying, including information about late payments
- An indicator of your “trust-worthiness” for paying back your debt
- Plays a role when you rent a house, take a loan, purchase an iPhone OR just get internet at your apartment. Basically, it plays a role in the approval of almost every recurring service you plan on using.

- **Why you should a credit card?**

- Simple. To start building a credit history.
- And, to have some funds for unforeseen situations

- **How to build a credit good history?**

- Pay back all your bills on time (phone, rent, credit cards, etc.)
- Avoid too many credit cards
- The longer you have a credit card, better your history gets

- **Credit card companies**

- CHASE, Citibank, Bank of America, CapitalOne, American Express, etc.



Shopping

- **Grocery stores**
 - Fiesta & Target (On graduate shopping shuttle route)
 - Kroger & Randalls
 - H-E-B & Central Market
 - Walmart
 - Costco & Sam's Club have annual membership
- **Ethnic Groceries**
 - Indian groceries and restaurants (Hillcroft Ave)
 - Chinese groceries (Chinatown)
 - Mediterranean & middle-eastern (Jerusalem Market & Turkish Market)
- **Clothing**
 - SEARS (near Wheeler Stn on LightRail)
 - Ross (near Fiesta on graduate shopping route)
 - Marshall's
- **Shopping Malls**
 - Galleria (Biggest Mall in Texas)
 - Premium Outlet (SH 290W)
 - Katy Mills (I-10 W)

Electronics

- **Phones**

- **Wireless phone carriers options**

- AT&T, Sprint, T-mobile & Verizon (15% discount for Rice students)

- **Phone Plans**

- Prepaid (Preferred for short stay in US, limited handset options)
 - Postpaid (generally 2 year contract, good handset options)

- **International Calling**

- Calling cards, VOIP & Skype

- **Computers & Other Electronics**

- **Reliable brands**

- Dell, Toshiba, Lenovo, HP, Apple and others

- **Online retailers**

- Amazon, CompUSA, Fry's, Newegg

- **Local stores**

- BestBuy, Microcenter, Radioshack

- **Sales, Deals & Coupons**

- Thanksgiving day, 4th July weekend
 - BEWARE of fraudulent websites. If something is too good to be true, check the website reviews first!



Eating Out

- **Houston has restaurants for all kinds of cuisines**
- **Restaurants in Rice Village**
 - American – Hungry's, Ruggles Bakery
 - Indian – Shiva's and Bombay Brasserie
 - Turkish – Pasha, Istanbul Grill
 - Thai – Patu Thai and Thai Village
 - Italian – Collina's and D'Amico
 - Vietnamese – Saigon Café
 - French – La Madeleine and French Bistro
 - Desserts – Ruggles Bakery, Ben and Jerry's and Chocolate bar
 - Fast food – Jason's Deli and Chipotle
- **Useful websites**
 - www.yelp.com
 - www.ricevillageonline.com
 - <http://www.b4-u-eat.com>

Entertainment

- **Movies**

- In Theaters
 - IMAX 3D, Edwards Cinema, AMC 30 (ask for student discount)
- At Home
 - NETFLIX, HULU, YouTube, Blockbuster

- **Passport to Houston**

- Provides free or discounted access to Zoo, Museums, concerts, etc

- **Concerts**

- Toyota Center, Reliant Stadium, Miller Outdoor Theater, Downtown

- **Museums**

- Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of Natural Science, Children's Museum, Health Museum

- **Other attractions**

- Houston Zoo, Downtown Aquarium, NASA – Johnson Space Center, Galveston, Kemah Boardwalk
- Houston Livestock Rodeo (February – March each year)
- Basketball, Baseball, American Football and Soccer games

Campus Life

- **Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

- Represents the common needs and interests of Graduate Students to the Administrators
- Organizes social and community events. Upcoming events are:
 - Orientation Picnic – 18th August 2010
 - Fall Picnic – 10th September 2010
 - Halloween Party – 23rd October 2010

- **College and IM Sports**

- GSA competes for the President's Cup against the UG colleges
- Variety of sports ranging from table-tennis to soccer

- **Clubs**

- Several sports clubs like Karate, Cycling and Triathlon, Cricket, Badminton, etc.
- Cultural clubs like Chinese Student Asso, Indian Student Asso, Turkish Student Asso, Rice International Student Asso.

Campus Life

- **Recreation Center**

- Facilities like cardio room, weights room, multipurpose courts, swimming pools, etc.
- Annual fee of \$120. Payroll deduction available.

- **Eating Options**

- Sammy's Café (Serves lunch on weekdays and dinner on select nights)
- 13th Street Deli (Serves breakfast in the morning and sandwiches later)
- Valhalla (serves subs during lunch)
- Willy's pub (serves Quizno subs and pizza)
- Undergraduate servery
- Coffeehouse

- **Hedgehopper's card**

- Provides Rice student discount in different stores around Houston

Moving Around Houston

- **Bikes**
 - Target, Walmart, Academy sports, BikeBarn, Bicycle World of West U.
- **Public transport**
 - LightRail (Downtown to approx. Reliant stadium)
 - Metro Bus system
- **Q-card**
 - Provides discounted travel on LightRail and Metro buses
 - Available in Cashier's office
- **Cab service**
 - Yellow Cab Houston
- **Useful Websites**
 - www.ridemetro.org
 - <http://transit.google.com>

Domestic and International Travel

- **By road & rail**
 - Greyhound bus service
 - AMTRAK (service to California through San Antonio and to New Orleans)
- **By Air**
 - Airlines
 - Continental, Southwest, American Airlines, US Airways
 - Travel Reservation
 - Expedia, Kayak, Hotwire, Statravel, Travelocity
 - Travel agents (particularly for international travel)
 - Rice Travel portal: www.campustravel.com/university/rice
- **Reaching the Airport**
 - Super shuttle (IAH - \$27, Hobby - \$23 one-way)
 - Airport Direct (Downtown – IAH \$15)

Traveling by CAR

- **Purchasing a new car**
 - Dealers
 - CARMAX, Sterling McCall, Fred Haas, Joe Myers
- **Used Cars**
 - Craigslist (<http://houston.craigslist.com>)
 - CARFAX report (complete records for a vehicle)
 - Kelly Blue Book (www.kbb.com)
- **Car Rental**
 - Hertz, Enterprise (look for Rice discount), National Car Rental (look for Rice discount), Avis Car Rental, ZIPcar
- **More info**
 - Driving License (Texas DPS)
 - Driving History (consists of all parking citations and offences on record)
 - Auto Insurance (GEICO, AAA, State Farm, Progressive and others)

Questions

- Housing
- Safety
- Credit cards
- Shopping
- Electronics
- Eating Out
- Entertainment
- Campus Life
- Transportation
- Anything ELSE?