

Dating Norms

In the U.S., dating is often casual, with people going on dates with multiple people before becoming exclusive. Also, once exclusivity is discussed and agreed upon it is expected. It can be helpful to discuss feelings and intentions with the people you are dating. Online dating is very popular!

Many people practice equality, with both partners contributing equally to dates and decision-making.

Remember, these norms can vary depending on people's religion, culture, and individual preferences, so it's always best to communicate openly with your partner.

Conversations With Family Back Home

Attending university and moving abroad can change your opinions and develop your identity in new ways. It's okay if you're not ready to share every detail of your experience with your family back home.

Adjusting to a new country can be challenging, and you don't have to discuss difficult or personal topics if you're not comfortable.

It's fine to focus on the positive aspects of your journey without feeling obligated to explain everything to others.

If you're struggling with navigating conversations back home the [Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center](#) has staff that can help you navigate these challenges.



Connect With Us

Email: international@uccs.edu

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Monday- Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Resources

The online version of this brochure containing clickable links can be accessed at the International Affairs website, international.uccs.edu.

UCCS Resources

- [Mental Health Resources at the Gallogly Wellness and Recreation Center](#)
- [UCCS Wellbeing and Safety Resources for Students](#)

Outside Online Resources

- [International Students: First 48 Hours Video](#)
- [University of North Texas - International Students Perspective on US Culture](#)
- [Brown University - Adjusting to Life in the US](#)
- [University of Southern California - Navigating Culture Shock: A Guide for International Students in the U.S.](#)
- [NYU Local - Dating stories from International Students](#)
- [Hookup Culture in the US: Encountering it and Navigating It](#)
- [International Students and Experiences with Race in the United States](#)
- [Exploring Racial and Ethnic Identities as an International Student Studying Abroad](#)

International Student Survival Guide

A Guide to Life and Culture in the U.S.



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U.S. Cultural Customs



Cultures all around the world view being on time, being individual vs. family focused, and socializing in different ways. Here are some of the ways U.S. culture views these things:



Time - When you make plans to meet with someone you are expected to meet at the time you scheduled. People will expect you to communicate if you will arrive later than the time you agreed upon.



Individuality - U.S. Culture values individuality. People tend to think of themselves as individuals before they think of themselves as part of a family or a group. People believe that relying on yourself is important.



Socializing - Friends and peer groups often make plans in advance rather than spontaneously deciding to do something.



Professor & Student Communication - In the U.S. students might informally refer to their professors. Additionally, it is appropriate to email professors questions about course materials or inquire about grades and assignments outside of class or during office hours.

Pronouns - When meeting new people, you may notice people stating their pronouns or asking for yours. Pronouns, such as she, they and he, are ways to refer to people in a way that matches their gender identity. Common pronouns people use include she/her, he/him, and they/them.



Race & Ethnicity

The U.S. is diverse, with people from many racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Race - a social construct based on perceived physical traits, such as skin color and facial features. It is a key aspect of identity in the U.S. You may be racially identified differently in the U.S. than in your home country. You will often be asked to identify your race on paperwork.

Ethnicity - a social group of people who share a common culture, language, religion, or other distinctive characteristics. In the U.S. it's common for people to celebrate their ethnic culture through festivals, food, and family traditions.



Where Will I See This?

You may see questions like the example below about race or ethnicity when filling out applications or paperwork at doctors' offices:

What term best describes your race and/or ethnicity (select all that apply):

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Native American or Alaska Native or First Nations
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to disclose
- The race/ethnicity I most closely align with is not listed (please specify): _____

If you have questions about this you can always ask the International Affairs Office!

Mental Health



In present day U.S. Culture, it has become increasingly normal to talk about mental health openly, especially among peer and friend groups.



1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience mental illness in a year.

(National Alliance on Mental Illness)



More than half of University Students in the U.S. struggle with their mental health.

(APA Article)

International Students often have increased stress due to unique things they experience such as culture shock, financial stress, and/or language barriers.

UCCS offers free and affordable mental health services at the Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center. These services are also confidential, meaning the staff are not able to tell anyone you are using them.

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If you notice some of these signs of decreased mental health, it may be good to reach out to the UCCS Wellness Center or another trusted adult in your life:

- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling down and not interested in your hobbies
- Unexplained anger, frustration, or emotional instability.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Withdrawing socially from friends and family