



STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear student!

We are glad to welcome you at TPU in 2008-2009.

***Please, consider the information in this handbook
before planning your trip to Tomsk***

Centre for International Academic Programmes

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Tomsk city

- Founded: 1604
- Population: >500 000
- River: Tom
- Universities: 6
- Students: 85 000



Tomsk is located almost in the geographical centre of Russia. It was founded 400 years ago on the picturesque bank of the River Tom.

Tomsk is a prominent academic and scientific centre. There are 6 universities, 20 higher research institutes and many specialized colleges and schools training specialists in engineering, medicine, education, art, etc. About 85 thousand students live and study in Tomsk. Currently, each sixth person of the city is a student. Tomsk is often called "students' town".

There are more than 70 industrial enterprises in Tomsk region and their production is well-known world over. The main branches of industry are: oil and gas, instrument making, machine building, metal and wood processing, food processing, thermal and electric power production.

Tomsk Scientific Center of Siberian branch of Russian Academy of Sciences is located here. It consists of 5 academic institutes and a number of subdivisions.

Practical training during the course study at numer-

ous Tomsk enterprises gives the students of Tomsk Polytechnic University the opportunity to make successful career.

Tomsk is a cultural centre. There are many theatres, Philharmonic Society, art and museums of local lore, cinemas, libraries and historical places. The pride of our city is the State University library and one of the largest and richest gardens of the world - the Siberian botanical garden. Tomsk is remarkable for its wooden architecture. Tomsk carefully keeps houses and buildings of 19th century in the «Old Town». Acknowledged as historical sites, they are preserved by the State.

The city is constantly growing. Many new buildings and districts spring every year. It becomes younger and better. The citizens of Tomsk are proud of their beautiful city, which had celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2004.

Green area of Tomsk amounts 18% of its territory.

You are welcome to our ancient and ever young city on the bank of the River Tom!

Siberia

When a foreigner hears "Siberia", images of frozen tundra and prison camps come to mind. But things are changing. Tundra and prison camps are still there but people go to concerts of organ music and dig ground out of pure curiosity.

To many foreigners the name evokes a popular misconception that Siberian settlers are exiles or forced laborers, but most Siberian settlers have been also free migrants.

Most Siberians are Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. Such Mongol and Turkic groups as Buryats, Tuvinians, and Yakuts lived in Siberia originally, and descendants of these peoples still live there. About 70% of Siberia's people live in cities. Novosibirsk is the largest city in Siberia, with a population of about 2 million.

Despite long winters with subzero temperatures, about a tenth of Siberia's mineral and forest wealth has been tapped and is under development by prospectors.

Climate in Siberia is quite severe with cold winter and hot summer. Weather can change very quickly, from a warm sunny day to a cold rainy afternoon. The average temperatures in winter are -10-15 degrees C

below zero. Sometimes the temperature falls below -30 C. But frosts normally don't stay for a long time, maximum for 2 or 3 weeks. Most of the time it is really nice in winter, people enjoy skiing, skating and spend a lot of time outdoors.

Average summer temperatures are about +15-20 degrees C above zero. Sometimes it gets really hot in summer, 30-35 degrees C above zero.



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Adjusting to Russia

Adjusting to your new environment can be exciting, overwhelming & challenging! This is normal – you have been taken out of your familiar environment and placed in an entirely new setting! Dealing with new customs can get exhausting.

Here are some tips to help you:

- Be patient! It gets easier as time goes by.
- Maintain a positive attitude.

- Try to have an open mind!
- Participate in conversations and group activities.

Many Russians would like to learn about you, your country and your culture. Meet people and socialize so that you can practice your Russian, learn more about the country and its traditions and tell others more about you and your culture.

Stereotypes

It's extremely cold in Russia.

Actually, winters here are usually rather cold - the average temperature is about -15/18 degrees Celsius (about 5 degrees Fahrenheit), but they don't last all year long. And we also have summer, when you can wear t-shirts and sunglasses and even get sun-burned.

Russian fashion is very special: people wear big fluffy hats, fur coats and valenki (warm woolen boots) because it is always very cold in Russia.

Fluffy hats were fashionable in the past times. People mostly in small towns wear fur hats but they are not big and not that fluffy. As for valenki, they are still popular in the countryside, especially among farmers. In winter some old people in villages wear valenki even at home. Others put them on before going outdoors. They put on rubbers on valenki in order to keep them dry. So, these boots are very good if you live in a village where there is always a lot of snow. We actually follow fashion and try to look stylish.



Vodka is our national drink.

Yes, it is. As well as tequila in Mexico and schnapps in Germany. But it doesn't mean it's the only thing Russians drink. Beer is as popular as vodka, especially among the young generation. It is also very acceptable to be teetotal.



VOODKA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Russian mafia controls everything.

Yes, there is criminality in Russia. Is there no criminality in other countries? Our criminals don't control the whole planet. The truth is, Russian mafia exists only in American movies, such as "From Russia with Love".



Food peculiarities

As previous exchange students say, it is difficult to describe the Russian food. Russia is mainly a northern country with long-lasting cold winter. The food should give much energy and warmth to survive during the winter time. So, the essential components of Russian cuisine are those, which provide more carbohydrates and fat rather than proteins. Fresh fruits and vegetables are rarely used in food. So, the top five components of a Russian meal are:

1. **Potato** (boiled, fried, baked, potato chops, potato pancakes, potato soup, smashed potato)
2. **Bread** (bread, toasts, bread-crumbs)
3. **Eggs** (boiled, fried)
4. **Meat** (pork and beef – chops, stakes)
5. **Butter** (usually added in all meals and spread on bread)

Also popular: cabbage, milk, sour cream, curds, mushrooms, lard, cucumbers, tomatoes, apples, berries, honey, sugar, salt, garlic, onions.

So what are some of the most common traditional foods on a traditional Russian menu? Borshch, of course, which is beet soup, and one of the most famous

Russian traditional foods.

You may have already heard of **pirozhki**. These little pastries can be packed full of potatoes, meat, cabbage, or cheese. **Bliny** are also served rolled with a variety of fillings: jam, cheese, onions, or even chocolate syrup. At any restaurant where you aren't sure of any of the other dishes, blini are always a safe bet.

Pelmeni are pastry dumplings filled typically with meatballs. They can be served alone, slathered in butter and topped with sour cream, or in a soup broth. Definitely a favourite in Russia and abroad!

Russians believe in hot food. They say if you are warm inside you'll stay warm outside!



Money matters

Getting money from home:

Western Union: This company will transfer money from overseas for a fee. Go to www.westernunion.ru to find Western Union offices in Tomsk and an office closest to you and check transfer rates.

The most convenient way to bring money with you is to have it on a credit card. Major cards (VISA, MasterCard) are accepted at almost all ATM's so you will be able to withdraw some cash when you need it.

You can also open a local bank account in Tomsk with a debit card for spending purposes while in Russia, and transfer money from your home bank account to your local Tomsk bank account as you need.

Currency exchange:

US Dollar (USD) and Euro (EUR) are the best recognized and accepted of all foreign currencies in Russia.

When coming to Russia you will need to exchange your money. It's good idea to exchange a little sum of money in Moscow, but you should remember that exchange rate in the airport is not advantageous. Make sure that your money bills are good physical condition: there should not be any holes, prints, signatures, scuffs or damages on your notes. Otherwise you will have to pay a commission of 6%-10% from the sum total. Anyway, we will help you to do this in Tomsk. To check the current conversion rates, visit: <http://cbr.ru/eng/>

Currency in the Russian Federation



The **ruble** or **rouble** is the currency of the Russian Federation. The ruble is subdivided into 100 *kopecks*. Currently there is no official

symbol for the ruble, though руб or RUR is currently in use.

The amount of 10 rubles (in either bill or coin) is sometimes informally referred to as a *chervonets*. The practice of using the old kopeck coin names for amounts in rubles is now not very common. In modern Russian slang only these names are used:

10 rubles – *Desyatka*



50 rubles - *Poltinnik or Poltos*



1000 rubles - *Shtuka or Kosar*



100 rubles – *Stolnik*



500 rubles – *Pyatikhatka*



5000 rubles - *Pyat' Shtuk*



About your money

- Keep your money in a safe place! Try to carry some cash with you. In Russia you are expected to pay cash almost everywhere. Keep it in a wallet under your clothes if you are carrying larger amount of money with you.
- Budget wisely! Be careful about overspending.

About University



Founded in 1896, **Tomsk Polytechnic University** is the oldest technical educational institution in the Asian part of Russia. Since that time, the university scholars and graduates have greatly contributed to the Russian science, education, culture and industry development. All this has been achieved by the joint efforts of the university scientists, instructors, students and graduates. More than 120 000 specialists have graduated from the university, over 300 of them have become Academicians of the Russian Academy of Sciences, honorary instructors and researchers, winners of prestigious Russian and international awards. Graduates of Tomsk Polytechnic University work at many industrial plants, research institutes, and socio-economic services throughout Russia and abroad. The centenarian history and the today's leading position of TPU has

resulted in receiving a status of especially esteemed object of cultural heritage of Russian Federation by the President Decree of April 2, 1997.

The motto of the university is «Scentia. Libertas. Prosperitas».

It is the university tradition to emphasize on:

- harmonious development of an individual commitment to innovations in education and science;
- development of fundamental sciences and applied research;
- combination of research-based training and sound knowledge in fundamentals;
- substantial practical engineering training that ensures a better adjustment to the current industrial environment;
- motivation of students, teachers, scientists, and managers to most effectively performing their duties;
- collaboration with the leading scientific, educational, industrial Russian and overseas institutions;
- providing life-long learning through a business career;

Nowadays, 23400 under- and post-graduates, 580 PhD-students and 46 doctoral students study at the university comprehending more than 120 courses in different fields of engineering, economics, marketing, management, humanities and linguistics under the guidance and supervision of 1924 professors and instructors of which 195 Doctors and 800 Candidates of Sciences (Ph.D). Annual number of graduates amounts to nearly 2000.

There are 4 attached Research Institutes, where senior students carry out their labs and make research using modern and unique equipment at the university.

7 university branch campuses and 12 representative offices functionate in many cities of Russia, CIS countries, as well as in Germany (Karlsruhe), Czech Republic (Prague), Republic of Cyprus (Nicosia).

Accommodation

The accommodation in the student dormitory will be reserved for you before your arrival.

The cost for room depends on the dormitory. The standard dormitory costs 32€ per month. No accommodation fee is charged if such condition is provided in academic exchange agreement between universities.

Its conditions:

- There are 4 rooms in a section (2 double-rooms and 2 for three persons), so 10 people live in a section.
- There is a bed, wardrobe, table, chairs, bedside-tables, curtains, fridge or TV set in each room.
- The section includes 1 shower, 1 toilet, 2 washstands.
- The kitchen is common. There are 2 electric ovens,

table, and cupboard, refuse shut, and sink in a kitchen.

- There is a studying room and a lounge place on each floor.
- There is a laundry room.
- There is an International students centre on the first floor of the dormitory where students can gather together, make presentations, do ballroom dances, celebrate national holidays.
- Each student gets bed-clothes, pillow, coverlet, counterpane, and set of pots and pans.
- Bed-clothes are changed once ten days.
- It's not allowed to smoke in the room.

Also there is a dormitory of hotel class, but it has limited number of rooms available and much higher costs.

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Registration

Remember that you must register in Tomsk **within first three days** on your arrival. For registration you will need the following:

1. Passport
2. **Migration card(that you get on airplane)**
3. Tickets

4. Six photos on dull paper (black&white)
5. 400 rubles

You will need to have some rubles exchanged before coming to Tomsk in order to pay registration fees and get your registration done in time. Exchanging money may take time, so plan ahead. We can also assist you in that process.

Medical insurance

According to Russian Federation legislation every foreign student staying on the territory of Russia **must have medical insurance**. It will be more convenient, faster and cheaper for you to make your insurance here in Tomsk. The cost of insurance

depends on the period of your stay in Russia: 8€ per month. Please, be informed that having medical insurance is also one of the terms of your learning agreement – **without insurance you will not be accepted to studies**.

Medical care

When staying at one of our dormitories you must have several medical certificates:

1. health certificate for occupation in the dormitory (40 rubles)
2. fluorography certificate (50 - 70 rubles)

To get the certificate you will have to undergo a simple doctor's examination. It's compulsory procedure in Russia for all students.

Remember that fluorography examination may be taken once a half-year. Thus, in case you have already taken fluorography check in your home country, you should bring your certificate with you. Though, you will have to translate into Russian and notarize your fluorography certificate here in Tomsk. That could result in additional expenses.

Pick-up service

You should inform TPU exchange coordinators 10 days before your arrival in Tomsk if you want to be picked-up. Otherwise you will have to make your way to the dormitory on your own.

If you arrive in Tomsk airport / train station (not other Russian city) then your pick-up service will be free, otherwise you have to pay for transport spending.

Orientation week

After you were met in the airport or railway station you would be transported to the dormitory. Coordinator will show you nearest supermarkets, banks, mobile SIM cards shops. Your coordinator will give you a tour of

university campus and of historical places in the city.

NB! If you come to Tomsk in fall semester, do not forget to bring warm clothes with you.

Contacts

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anna Tseluyko | Academic exchange coordinator (scholarships, academic transcripts) | Tel: 563 236 e-mail: tseluiko@tpu.ru |
| Alexander Zamulin | Academic exchange coordinator (orientation program, extracurricular events) | Tel: 563 236 zamulin@tpu.ru |
| Elena Osovskaya | Visa, registration | Tel: 563 296 epo@isc.tpu.edu.ru |
| Elena Surnina | Dormitory | Tel: 563 304 enigma@tpu.ru |
| Valery Obnosov | Sports activities | Tel: 563 299 ovi@isc.tpu.edu.ru |
| Evgeniya Danilevskaya | Curriculum, time-tables; Organization of Russian as a foreign language (TORFL) certificates | Tel: 563 304 del@tpu.ru |

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Approximate price levels

Meals

| N | Foodstuff | Average price, RUR | Average price, USD |
|----|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | White bread | 15 | 0.4 |
| 2 | Milk (1 liter) | 20 | 0.7 |
| 3 | Chicken (1 kg) | 130 | 4.81 |
| 4 | Mutton (1 kg) | 150 | 5.55 |
| 5 | Fish (1 kg) | 70 | 2.59 |
| 6 | Salami (1 kg) | 200 | 7.4 |
| 7 | Haricot (1 kg) | 20 | 0.7 |
| 8 | Tea (25 sachets) | 50 | 1.8 |
| 9 | Coffee (Nescafe 100 g) | 100 | 3.6 |
| 10 | Coca-cola (0,3 liter) | 13 | 0.48 |
| 11 | Apples (1 kg) | 50 | 1.8 |
| 12 | Oranges (1 kg) | 45 | 1.6 |
| 13 | Bananas (1 kg) | 40 | 1.4 |
| 14 | Potato (1 kg) | 25 - 50 | 0.9 - 1.8 |
| 15 | Tomato (1 kg) | 85 | 3.14 |
| 16 | Sugar (1 kg) | 25 | 0.9 |
| 17 | Salt (1 kg) | 6 | 0.22 |
| 18 | Eggs (10) | 35 | 1.35 |
| 19 | Butter (1 kg) | 200 | 7.4 |
| 20 | Oil (1 liter) | 50 | 1.8 |
| 21 | Curds (1 kg) | 80 | 2.96 |
| 22 | Cheese (1 kg) | 140 | 5.18 |
| 23 | Fruit juice (1 liter) | 60 | 2.22 |

Other Expenses

| N | Expenses | Average price, RUR | Average price, USD |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Public transport (bus) | 9 | 0.25 |
| 2 | Cinema ticket | 150 | 5.55 |
| 3 | Theatre ticket | 150 | 5.55 |
| 4 | Night club | 250-500 | 9.25-18.50 |
| 5 | Fitness (a month) | 1200 | 44.4 |
| 6 | Taxi (through the city) | 100 | 3.7 |
| 7 | Man hair cut | 150 | 5.55 |

Price levels are approximate and may vary, depending on place, availability, season and/or other factors.
Last updated: December 2008.

