Frequently Asked Questions
Hi,
First of all, congratulations on your admission in FIT! We look forward to meeting you. Let us assure you that you are going to have the time of your life!

Please go through the following FAQs that are attempted to address your concerns, questions and queries. This however does not mean that you cannot ask questions 😊.

_How can I reach Melbourne from Orlando when I arrive in the United States?_

There are many ways to reach Melbourne.

• **Cab** - You can book a cab beforehand. Cab services are efficient. Most students call John, the owner of Serenity Taxi (321-872-5883) or John, Black Diamond Taxi (321-216-6055). Both charge approximately $90 for airport pickup.

• **Florida Tech Pick-up** from Orlando International Airport- Use the following link to book a shuttle. However, there is a deadline for booking this shuttle service.


• **Requesting current students**- Current students pick up students entirely on the basis of good will. They may or may not charge for pick up.

• **FIT Forum**- Many students request for pick-ups on FIT Forum, which amounts to a cheaper rate than cab services

  _First Day of Orientation_

**What should I expect on the first day of orientation?**

Expect a lot of students from all countries! It is a lovely sight! Expect to be baffled! It is normal! To ease things up, waive at all the beautiful ladies and handsome gentlemen you will be with.

• Carry all your documents including your passport. Do not forget your I-20 at any cost.

• Arrive on time at the Clemente Centre. Grab a campus map from the Commons building or download the FIT app on your phone.

• Complete all the registration formalities. They are very easy and smooth and there are people to help at every step. Make sure you have a pleasant smile for your Student ID card.

• Ask questions. No question is silly!

• Do attend the International Student’s reception at the Hartley Room at SUB. It is fun and informative.

• Do attend the International Student’s Orientation. You learn a lot from it.

• Walk around the campus. Breathe it all in!
Finances / Bank accounts

What are the Tuition and Fees?
It really depends on the type of program you are enrolled in. But essentially, it is charged every semester based on credit requirements. Check this link to know about the current tuition rates. [http://www.fit.edu/registrar/registration/tuitionchrgs.php](http://www.fit.edu/registrar/registration/tuitionchrgs.php)

Are there any additional fees I need to pay along with the Tuition fees?
Yes! Additional fee include (but is not limited to) Student Activity fee and Health Insurance.

Where can I access my bill for payment?
- Login to [https://access.fit.edu/](https://access.fit.edu/) with your TRACKs ID.
- Click on Payments & eBills.
- Select Term (Fall / Spring / Summer).

Can I pay my fees online?
Yup! Follow the above steps and click on “Make Payment”

Can I transfer my fees from India?
Yes! You can transfer your fees from any location in the world provided you have the Bank information, SWIFT code of FIT. You need to mail them and ask for the latest information. But trust me, it is possible and less burdensome!

Can I pay in installments?
Yes! The Panther Payment Plan is just that! [http://www.fit.edu/sfs/paymentplans.php](http://www.fit.edu/sfs/paymentplans.php)

Can I seek financial aid or scholarships?
Florida Tech provides financial aid to students. You do not need to apply for it. You will receive a letter about it with your confirmation letter if you are the lucky one! Alternatively, if you choose to pursue research and IF your professor is impressed by your performance, he/she might fund your coursework! Go impress them!

* Word of Caution: * availability of funding is purely at the discretion of the professor or your department. Not ALL deserving candidates get funding and not ALL professors have funding. Sad.

How can I open a bank account?
You will find PNC Bank officials on the first day of orientation for you to open an account. It is a very easy process. There are other banks like Wells Fargo, Chase, and Bank of America where you can open accounts too. Visit their websites for more information.

Can money be transferred from India to my bank account here?
Yes! Give your parents your account number, swift code and bank details to get money transferred.
How can I deposit and withdraw money?
There are 2 PNC ATMs located on campus. One is outside the dining hall and the other at the Student Centre. You can also deposit checks there.

Can I withdraw money from any ATM?
Yes! But withdrawing money from another bank ATMs comes at a cost.

How can I carry money from India?
Carry as little cash as possible. You want to be safe. Carry your money in a world travel card / US Dollar card. You can use this card anywhere. Some people also pay their fees using this card. Contact your bank in India to know more about this.

Can I use my travel card to withdraw money?
You can use any bank’s ATM to withdraw cash but be aware that there will be an additional cost for each transaction. Checking your account balance however can be done at no cost!

Classes, Professors and Academics

How do I register for classes?
Use your PAWS or ACCESS account to register online. Ask upper classmen and professors for the kind of courses you should take for your major and interest. What can be more brilliant than designing your academic pathway on your own!

Are the professors friendly?
Yes! Yes! Professors here in the US are more friendly and approachable. They like aspiring students. Hard work is well rewarded at Florida Tech. Approach your professor for ANY question pertaining to your course whatsoever. NEVER EVER shy from asking questions.

How can I contact my professor?
Professors are readily available through email or through CANVAS.

Is there a dress code I must follow for classes?
Wear clothes you are comfortable in. However, business casuals are encouraged when you have to make presentations in class.

I am having trouble understanding the course. What should I do?
Most students here in the US form study groups. If you can’t fight the battle alone, you might as well do it together with your classmates. Interact with your classmates and form study groups. That way, you can help others and others can help you. We reemphasize that the professor is the BEST go-to person in case of doubt! Make sure you know the office hours of your Professor. For undergraduates, you can also approach your GSA for clarity.
What is the word on Plagiarism and cheating?
This country has a **VERY STRICT** and **ZERO TOLERANCE** towards plagiarism (copying from a source and claiming it’s your own work) and cheating. If you are caught doing these acts, you WILL be severely punished in accordance to University Policies and depending on the degree of offence, you might even face legal prosecution. Not even kidding! So please be smart about your life decisions.

Can I get textbooks from India?
Nope. You should buy them here. Amazon.com, abebooks.com, FIT Forum and the campus bookstore are your options to buy books from. Alternatively, you can issue books from the Evans Student Library.

What is the exam pattern in Florida Tech?
It varies from department to department. Contact your department for the same.

Health Services

What is the most important thing I need in order to access health services?
Health insurance! Nothing works here without it.

Where can I buy an insurance policy?
You should buy an insurance policy here in the US. The safest bet is buying the one provided by FIT.

Will the University accept my insurance policy bought from India?
If you are a graduate student, then no. There are different rules for undergraduates and as one, you should check with the university.

Why wouldn’t my Insurance Policy from India work in the US?
Just because *insurance* policies outside the US do not conform with the US Insurance coverage policies.

Can I buy any other insurance policy apart from the one provided by FIT?
The university accepts it if the insurance policy of your choice satisfies the requirements. However, the safest bet is buying the one provided by FIT.

What all tests do I need to get done before arriving here?
The health form is self-explanatory and easy to fill. TB test is a must for all of us. As a graduate student, you can waive off some tests. Undergraduates however, have to get the tests done. Refer to page 2 of the form for all your queries.

*Remember to fill this form, get it signed by your doctor and bring it to the first day of orientation. You can also email a scanned copy beforehand to the health center.*
**Where should I go if I fall sick?**
Go to the **Holzer Health Centre** on campus. It is free for students but they charge for labs and tests, should you need them. Carry your insurance card.

http://www.fit.edu/health/

**What if the Holzer Health Centre is closed and I need medical attention?**
Call 911 in case it is an emergency!
Alternatively you can go to an **Urgent Care** clinic. The closest is the one at Dairy Road and is open all days till 7 pm.

http://www.dairyyroadurgentcare.com

**Holmes Regional Medical Centre** is a huge hospital in Melbourne where you can go in case the Urgent Care is closed.

http://www.health-first.org/hospitals_services/hrmc/

*ALWAYS carry your insurance card with you!

**Are there any nearby pharmacy stores?**
Walgreens at the intersection of Babcock and Palm Bay and CVS at the intersection of Babcock and West New Haven. Both are less than 5 minutes by car from FIT.

**Employment Opportunities**

**What is the on-campus job scenario?**
As a student, you can work in various departments on campus including (but not limited to) the food services, campus services, admissions, continuing education, and international student services. Jobs are available but scarce.

https://fit.hiretouch.com/

You can also work in your respective departments as Graduate Student Assistants in the form of Teaching Assistants, Exam Graders and Research Assistants. Expressing interest to your professors and department heads are a good way to start.

**How many hours can I work on campus?**
You can only work a maximum of 20 hours per week. Salary is given based on the number of hours you work in a week and is paid fortnightly. For some kind of jobs, students need to fill and submit their timesheet on their PAWS/ACCESS accounts.

**How will I receive my salary?**
Once employed on campus, you will register yourselves with the Human Resources at FIT who will get your salary account up and running. You will either receive a check/cheque or you can choose to get your money deposited directly into your bank account. You will have to fill a form for direct deposits, which can be obtained from the HR. Please note that every department functions differently in paying salaries. It is also important to file tax returns.
*Remember to submit your **Social Security Number** within 90 days of being employed. Failure to do so will result in loss of job and hamper future opportunities to seek employment on campus.

**Can I work off-campus?**
Working off campus is illegal. Period.

**Can I intern outside FIT?**
Internships after completing one academic year at FIT are legal and encouraged. They also add weight to your CV.

**Will I get paid during internships?**
This depends entirely on the organization you are interning at.

**How can I get a Social Security Number (SSN)?**
SSN can be obtained from the Social Security Administration Office of Melbourne. To be able to apply for one, you will need an On-Campus job and also a signed application form from the International Students Office at Florida Tech Commons.

**Are there career fairs at Florida Tech?**
Yes indeed! They are conducted every semester. Polish your CVs, bring out your best formals and tempt employers to hire you.

**What are the job prospects after graduating from Florida Tech?**
The most famous question! Florida Tech claims it has a placement record of 90+% of graduates. But what are numbers when we don’t provide our inputs and efforts. Let’s be honest, job market fluctuates. Getting a job is also competitive. Don’t be disheartened by the fact that most companies hire only US citizens. There are many opportunities available if you look in the “right” direction, which involves web surfing and most importantly NETWORKING with people.

**Accommodation/Housing/Everyday life**

**Where can I stay?**
You can either stay on campus or off campus in neighborhood apartments.

**On-campus**
There are a number of residence halls on campus that vary in price and number of rooms. You need to book a room in a residence hall of your choice online. Buying a meal plan is mandatory if you live on campus.

http://www.fit.edu/housing/

http://www.fit.edu/food/mealplan.php
**Off-campus**
The nearest apartment’s complexes where many Indian students live are Landmark at Grand Meadows, Saratoga Apartments and University Village. They all have one, two and three bedroom apartments that most students rent on a sharing basis. Applications can be filled online.

  https://landmarkgrandmeadow.residentportal.com/resident_portal/

  http://www.milestonerents.com/melbourne/saratoga/

If you buy a car, your accommodation options increase and you can live farther away from FIT too.

**Can I share an apartment with already residing students?**
Of course! Contact people on the ISA Facebook page to seek roommates. Alternatively, you can find roommates on Fit Forum too.

**Can I get temporary accommodation until my apartment is made available to me?**
Yes! Posting a request on the ISA Facebook page will help you.

**Are the utilities (electricity, water, and internet) included in the rent?**
No.

**Are the apartments furnished?**
No. You have to bring your own furniture. You can buy new furniture from the furniture stores in Melbourne or Ikea in Orlando. Alternatively you can buy second-hand furniture from Craigslist and FIT Forum.

  http://spacecoast.craigslist.org

**Do the apartments come equipped with amenities?**
All apartments are equipped with a basic cooking range (stove and oven), dishwasher and refrigerator. Saratoga apartments come equipped with some more amenities. Please go through the apartment websites to obtain specific information about amenities in all the apartment complexes.
Where can I buy an electricity connection?
Florida Power and Light Company (FPL) is the agency that supplies electricity. You need to have an account with them before you can possess the keys to your apartment. The billing amount depends on your usage.

http://www.fpl.com

What else do I need to possess the keys to my apartment?
You need to have a Renter’s Insurance Policy. Check with your leasing authority for the same.

Do I need a water connection?
No. Your leasing authorities will send you a combined water, sewage and pest control bill at the end of each month, which needs to be paid along with the rent.

How can I get an Internet connection in my apartment?
Bright House is the most popular Internet and Cable service provider.

http://brighthouse.com

Where can I buy groceries?
The closest store is Neighborhood Walmart next to the Hess gas station and before Saratoga Apartments on the Babcock Street. The Palm Bay Walmart Supercenter is about 10 minutes away by car and sells almost everything you need to run a house. Name it and they have it!

Thrifty Produce and Aldi that are 5 minutes by car are other stores for fresh vegetables and fruits at a much cheaper price compared to Walmart. Publix is amazing but slightly expensive. For Indian groceries, Best India store, which is 15 minutes by car, is the go to place. It sells most Indian groceries, raw materials and other household things you might need. They sell some yummy frozen Indian foods too. The Middle Eastern store opposite to Landmark apartments is a go-to store for some quick purchase of Indian groceries too.

All these places are well connected by bus.

• Walmart is open 24/7.

What is the weather like in Florida?
• It is called the Sunshine State 😊
• It rains massively and unpredictably so always carry your umbrella and check weather forecast often.
• Carry a light pullover/jacket.
Communication and Technology

Is there any online forum for students to communicate?
Yes. You should join FIT Forum, which is an online list-serve. All exchange of Information happens through this forum. You can also join the FIT Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/FloridaInstituteofTechnology

How can I subscribe to FIT Forum?
- Login to your FIT mail account with your TRACKs ID
- Create a Message
- Send a blank message to fitforum-subscribe@lists.fit.edu
- You will start receiving mails from the Florida Tech community.

Where can I buy a phone connection?
There are a number of service providers. AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Cricket, MetroPCS are the most popular. Some students also join MetroPCS and Walmart Family plans. You should get free data, call and text for anywhere between $ 35-40.

How can I make calls to India?
Vonage, Dial91, Reliance, Pidipompi are some calling card options you can use. Of course there are many more options that you can find online. But Skype is the way to go! (Even Google Hangout)

High speed internet and all! I bet I can torrent all my favorite movies. Right?
Heck No! Torrent-ing in the United States is ILLEGAL. If you are caught torrent-ing you will face serious charges of copyright violation; the perfect opportunity for companies to sue you and extract the life out of you. Also, if you torrented using the University’s Wi-Fi, be assured you will be banned from the network. So please don’t torrent. All your favorite movies and shows are available for viewing online at blazing Internet speed amigo!

Transportation

Can I drive here?
If you are 18 years and older, yes!

What are the frequently used modes of transport?
- Most students use bicycles (they are called bikes here) to commute within short distances. You can also rent “bikes” for free on campus from the Student Government Association office.
- The public transport in Melbourne is limited in terms of frequency of buses. However, all areas in Melbourne are fairly connected by bus.

http://www.ridescat.com
• You can use cab services too. Most students call John, the owner of Serenity Taxi (321-872-5883) or John, Black Diamond Taxi (321-216-6055). You can also Call-a-Cab on 321-733-0700.
• Students also rent cars to drive around the city and travel in Florida.

**How can I rent a car?**
You need to have a driving license from India to begin with. People rent cars from car rental services such as Enterprise. Once you have a Florida State License, you no longer need to carry your Indian license.

[http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do](http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do)

*Students younger than 21 years cannot rent a car.*

**Do I need an International Driving Permit from India to be able to drive here?**
No. You don’t need that at all. Your regular license is good enough.

**How can I obtain a driving license in Florida?**
The first step is to get a learner’s license only after which you can apply for a driving license. The process is fairly similar to that in India. A learner’s license is obtained once you pass the written test. Remember to practice for both the written test and the actual driving test (road test). And follow rules! 😊


* Your driver’s license also holds valid as a state ID (This means you can stop carrying your passport around!).

**Recreation** 🌴

You live in a beach state. There are beaches in every direction that you can visit. 😃
Watch the beautiful sky at sunrise and sunset and occasional meteor showers. The ISA committee organizes events around important Indian festivals and they are a lot of fun.

Depending on your religious affiliation, you can visit the two temples in Melbourne (Brevard Hindu Mandir and Manav Mandir) and also offer help during festivals and religious occasions. There is also a mosque in the eastern part of Melbourne. The closest Gurudwara is in Orlando.

[https://www.mmbrevard.org/](https://www.mmbrevard.org/)
[http://isbcmelbourne.org/community/?page_id=2](http://isbcmelbourne.org/community/?page_id=2).
What are the places for shopping?

Melbourne Square Mall is the nearest mall (and the ONLY mall), about 7-10 min by car from FIT. Ross and Target are some other places you can shop from. Office Depot, Staples are the stationary go-to place. However, they are slightly expensive. Some people also go to the Outlet Mall in Orlando to buy branded stuff at cheaper factory outlet rates.

* Look out for deals! This country is huge on them.
* Black Friday is the day to shop all you want!
* Cyber Monday is the day you want to buy all your electronics for dead cheap rates!
* Every county in this country holds a tax-free shopping day in August. Google for the tax-free shopping day for Brevard County for this year.

What are my eating options?
There is a dining hall, a SUB cafe and Rathskeller cafe on campus. There are also plenty of restaurants within short distances of FIT. You may find some fancy restaurants Downtown.

Are there any Indian restaurants in Melbourne?
Taste of India, Tandoor and Bombay Curry are the most famous Indian restaurants here. All serve delicious Indian cuisine and have a lot of options for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

[http://www.tandoormelbourne.com](http://www.tandoormelbourne.com)

How is the nightlife of Melbourne?
Melbourne downtown, which is only 5 min away by car from FIT has some nice clubs and pubs. You have to be 21 and older to enter them. Carry your passport or a Valid Florida State ID with you.

[http://www.downtownmelbourne.com](http://www.downtownmelbourne.com)

Are there any other options?
Orlando is the closest city and has a pretty decent night life :)

What is the legal age for drinking here?
21 and over.

Do I have to prove I am 21 or older?
Yes! They are very strict about checking IDs. Carry your passport till you don’t have a Florida State ID.

Can I use my Indian driving license as a proof of age?
No. They do not accept Indian driving license as a proof of age. Use your passport in such cases. (No photocopies! Anywhere!)
What are some things I should take care of when I go clubbing downtown?
• Don’t drink and drive.
• ALWAYS carry an age proof.
• Do not drink with a person who is younger than 21 years. You will both face consequences.
• Do not walk on the roads with open alcohol bottles.
• Do not get into fights in clubs. You are on an F1 visa. Any report against you will result in very negative consequences.
• JUST don’t drink and drive. We can’t emphasize enough on that!

* This country is very law abiding and you can face serious consequences if you fail to follow rules. Be safe and DON'T EVEN THINK of bribing the authorities!!

Do I need to show my ID for buying alcohol from liquor stores or Walmart?
Yes. At all times. Carry your passport till you don’t have a Florida State ID.

What are some other fun things to do within Melbourne?
You can watch movies at Premier Oaks, Cinema World and Roxy Cinema Grill 10 in Melbourne. The popcorn with extra butter is to die for! You can also watch Indian Movies in Orlando.

How about outside Melbourne?
The Sunshine state, Florida, has many cool cities to offer such as Miami, St. Augustine, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, Key West and Sebastian. You can even go fishing, camping, sky diving, snorkeling, deep sea diving and of course pump your adrenaline at Universal, Disney World and Busch Gardens. Welcome to one of the most happening states in the USA!!!