

## **USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **PASSPORTS**

All awardees must possess a valid passport.

### **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Prior to departure from their home countries, awardees must apply for a non-immigrant visa "F" from the Royal Thai embassy or consular representative in their respective countries. Those who live in countries where there is no Royal Thai Embassy or consulate may apply for a "Visa on Arrival" at Bangkok International Airport. Students need to check the period of stay stamped in their passport by the immigration officer and inform TICA of the need to arrange for a visa extension at least one month prior to the visa's expiration date. Students who submit their passports to TICA on short notice, and therefore overstay their visas, will be fined 500 baht for each day overstayed.

### **AIRPORT MEETING SERVICES**

Upon the arrival at **Suvarnabhumi International Airport**, the awardees can look for **TICA sign** at the **AOT Limousine customer relation counters** and proceed to it. Then show the Instruction of the Scholarship Award at the counter so that arrangements for airport transfer will be made for you to the reserved accommodation. **DO NOT TAKE TAXI.**

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Awardees are not permitted to return home during their period of study except in exceptional circumstances. In the event that it is necessary for awardees to return home temporarily, they must obtain permission from TICA and the institute at which they are studying before they leave. They also need to apply for re-entry visa before departure and are responsible for the fees by themselves. The awardees must cover the cost of their return airfare and should be aware that their monthly allowance will be temporarily suspended during their absence.

### **FAMILY MEMBERS**

Awardees are not permitted to bring any of their family members with them.

### **BANK ACCOUNTS**

It is compulsory for TIPP fellowship recipients to open an account with the Government Savings Bank. At the beginning of each month, TICA will transfer the fellowship recipients' monthly allowance into their bank account.

### **CUSTOMS REGULATIONS**

#### **Prohibited Items:**

All narcotics (marijuana, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin) obscene literature, pictures or articles.

#### **Firearms:**

Importation of firearms and ammunition can be done only after a permit has been obtained from the Royal Thai Police or local Registration Office.

#### **Personal Effects:**

A reasonable amount of clothing for personal use, toiletries, and professional instruments may be brought to Thailand free of duty.

#### **Tobacco & Alcoholic Beverages:**

Cigarettes, cigars, or smoking tobacco each or in total must not exceed 250 grams in weight. Cigarettes must not exceed 200 in quantity. One litre each of wine or spirits may be brought in free of duty.

#### **Household Effects:**

A reasonable amount of household effects, accompanied by the owner on change of domicile, are also free of duty.

#### **Plants & Animals:**

Certain species of fruits, vegetables and plants are prohibited. Please contact the Agricultural Regulatory Division Bang Khen, Bangkok. Tel: (662) 940 6573 ext.109

## **ABOUT THAILAND**

### **LOCATION**

Asia, making it a natural gateway to Indochina, Myanmar and Southern China. Its shape and geography divide into four natural regions : the mountains and forests of the North; the vast rice fields of the Central Plains; the semi-arid farm lands of the Northeast plateau; and the tropical islands and long coastline of the peninsula South.

The country comprises 76 provinces that are further divided into districts, sub-districts and villages. Bangkok is the capital city and centre of political, commercial, industrial and cultural activities. It is also the seat of Thailand's revered Royal Family, with His Majesty the King recognized as Head of State, Head of the Armed Forces, Upholder of the Buddhist religion and Upholder of all religions.

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, or King Rama IX, the ninth king of the Chakri Dynasty, the present king. The King has reigned for more than half a century, making him the longest reigning Thai monarch. Thailand embraces a rich diversity of cultures and traditions. With its proud history, tropical climate and renowned hospitality, the Kingdom is a never-ending source of fascination and pleasure for international visitors.

### **GOVERNMENT**

Thailand is governed by a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament. King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) is the head of the state.

### **PEOPLE**

The vast majority (roughly 80%) of Thailand's nearly 65 million citizens are ethnically Thai. The remainder consists primarily of peoples of Chinese, Indian, Malay, Mon, Khmer, Burmese, and Lao decent. Of the 7 million citizens who live in the capital city, Bangkok, there is a greater diversity of ethnicities, including a large number of expatriate residents from across the globe. Other geographic distinctions of the population include a Muslim majority in the south near the Malaysian border, and hill tribe ethnic groups, such as the Hmong and Karen, who live in the northern mountains..

### **RELIGION**

Thailand is one of the most strongly Buddhist countries in the world. The national religion is Theravada Buddhism, a branch of Hinayana Buddhism, practiced by more than 90 % of all Thais. The remainder of the population adheres to Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other faiths all of which are allowed full freedom of expression. Buddhism continues to cast strong influence on daily life. Senior monks are highly revered. Thus, in towns and villages, the temple (wat) is the heart of social and religious life. Meditation, one of the most popular aspects of Buddhism, is practiced regularly by numerous Thai as a means of promoting inner peace and happiness. Visitors, too, can learn the fundamentals of this practice at several centres in Bangkok and elsewhere in the country.

### **LANGUAGE**

More than 92% of the population speaks Thai or one of it's regional dialects. While the Thai language is the official language of Thailand, as a result of its cosmopolitan capital city and established tourism infrastructure, English is spoken and understood throughout much of Thailand.

### **CLIMATE**

Thailand can best be described as tropical and humid for the majority of the country during most of the year. The area of Thailand north of Bangkok has a climate determined by three seasons whilst the southern peninsular region of Thailand has only two.

In northern Thailand the seasons are clearly defined. Between November and May the weather is mostly dry, however this is broken up into the periods November to February and March to May. The later of these two periods has the higher relative temperatures as although the northeast monsoon does not directly effect the northern area of Thailand, it does cause cooling breezes from November to February. The other northern season is from May to November and is dominated by the southwest monsoon, during which time rainfall in the north is at its heaviest.

The southern region of Thailand really has only two seasons -- the wet and the dry. These seasons do not run at the same time on both the east and west side of the peninsular. On the west coast the southwest monsoon brings