Iran

2009-2010

Country Orientation Guide
DISCLAIMER

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Welcome
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you very much for accepting to teach in Iran!

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) at the Fischler School of Education and Human Services has prepared this country guide to provide you with basic and general information on the country you are about to visit.

This guide is intended to help you prepare for your trip. As you travel in the country, please let us know if you find that there are details that need to be added or changed so that we can keep our guides updated. Although we have tried to make it as comprehensive as possible, all of us know that our world moves very rapidly and changes happen everyday; however, we have tried our best to include all of the details you need to make sure you are comfortable in your new environment.

This information has been compiled with the help of the Office of Strategic Initiatives and Global Enterprises for Academic Development (SIGEAD), and the contribution from the OIA team members and our Field Associates and Regional Liaisons around the world. To all of them, and to you, thank you very much for helping these programs become as successful as they are today, and as a result, for making a difference in our students' lives, wherever they are located.

Have a wonderful experience and please be sure to meet with us upon your return so we can discuss your experience and solicit your input for future cohorts. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be any assistance to your prior to your departure, or while you are teaching.

Bon voyage!

Anthony DeNapoli, Dean of International Affairs
Alejandra Parra, Associate Dean of International Affairs
# NSU Emergency Contact

## Contact at the Office of International Affairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Cell</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>954-629-1698</td>
<td><a href="mailto:abell@nova.edu">abell@nova.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Travel Office Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Office 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.</th>
<th>Office 954-262-8888</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel Office (ONLY after contacting airline or hotel directly)</td>
<td>1-800-809-8858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a charge of $20 if you contact this number.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Passport Issues**

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify United States passports.

The Passport Services Office provides information and services to American citizens about how to obtain, replace or change a passport.

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of over 9,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver’s license.

Acceptance facilities include many Federal, state and probate courts, post offices, some public libraries and a number of county and municipal offices. There are also 13 regional passport agencies, and 1 Gateway City Agency, which serve customers who are traveling within 2 weeks (14 days), or who need foreign visas for travel. Appointments are required in such cases.

You will need to apply in person if you are applying for a U.S. passport for the first time:

- If your expired U.S. passport is not in your possession;
- If your previous U.S. passport has expired and was issued more than 15 years ago;
- If your previous U.S. passport was issued when you were under age 16;
- Or if your current valid U.S. passport has been lost or stolen.

*To obtain more information on obtaining a passport please visit*

http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_832.html

*To renew an existing passport please visit*

http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html
Weather Information
For weather information on specific countries please visit:
http://worldweather.wmo.int/

Central Intelligence Agency-The World Factbook

The World Factbook provides valuable geographic and demographic information. For more information on individual countries, please visit:

TSA Travel Tips

Make Your Trip Better Using 3-1-1

3-1-1 for carry-ons =

- 3 ounce bottle or less (by volume);
- 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag;
- 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin.

One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. 3 oz. container size is a security measure.

Consolidate bottles into one bag and X-ray separately to speed screening.

Be prepared. Each time TSA searches a carry-on it slows down the line. Practicing 3-1-1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience.

3-1-1 is for short trips. If in doubt, put your liquids in checked luggage.

Declare larger liquids. Medications, baby formula and food, breast milk, and juice are allowed in reasonable quantities exceeding three ounces and are not required to be in the zip-top bag. Declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint.

Come early and be patient. Heavy travel volumes and the enhanced security process may mean longer lines at security checkpoints.

TSA working with our partners. TSA works with airlines and airports to anticipate peak traffic and be ready for the traveling public.
Useful Phone Numbers
Sources of information include:

U.S. Dept. of State Travel Advisory: tel. 202-647-5225 (manned 24 hr.)

U.S. Passport Agency: tel. 202-647-0518

U.S. Centers for Disease Control International Traveler's Hotline: tel. 404-332-4559

Lost & Found

Be sure to tell all of your credit card companies the minute you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen, and file a report at the nearest police precinct. Your credit card company or insurer may require a police report number or record of the loss. Most credit card companies have an emergency toll-free number to call if your card is lost or stolen; they may be able to wire you a cash advance immediately or deliver an emergency credit card in a day or two. To report a lost or stolen

American Express - To protect your information, you can only report a lost or stolen card by calling American Express Customer Service at 1-800-992-3404. Outside the United States call, collect 336-393-1111.

Diners Club - Call Diners Club Customer Service at 1-800-234-6377. Outside the United States call, collect 702-797-5532.


If you need emergency cash over the weekend when all banks and American Express offices are closed, you can have money wired to you via Western Union. Call tel. 1-800-325-6000 www.westernunion.com.

Identity theft and fraud are potential complications of losing your wallet, especially if you have lost your driver's license along with your cash and credit cards. Notify the major credit-reporting bureaus immediately; placing a fraud alert on your records may protect you against liability for criminal activity. The three major U.S. credit-reporting agencies are Equifax (tel. 800-766-0008; www.equifax.com), Experian (tel. 888-397-3742; www.experian.com), and TransUnion (tel. 800-680-7289; www.transunion.com). Finally, if you have lost all forms of photo ID, call your airline and explain the situation; they might allow you to board the plane if you have a copy of your passport or birth certificate and a copy of the police report you have filed.
Here are some quick tips to make your travel easier and safer:

- **Register so the State Department can better assist you in an emergency:** Register your travel plans with the State Department through a free online service at [https://travelregistration.state.gov](https://travelregistration.state.gov). This will help us contact you if there is a family emergency in the U.S., or if there is a crisis where you are traveling. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts will not be released to others without your express authorization.

- **Sign passport, and fill in the emergency information:** Make sure you have a signed, valid passport, and a visa, if required, and fill in the emergency information page of your passport.

- **Leave copies of itinerary and passport data page:** Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends, so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.

- **Check your overseas medical insurance coverage:** Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance.

- **Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws:** While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. The State Department web site at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html) has useful safety and other information about the countries you will visit.

- **Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime:** To avoid being a target of crime, do not wear conspicuous clothing or jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of money. Also, do not leave unattended luggage in public areas and do not accept packages from strangers.

- **Contact us in an emergency:** Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). Also, note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling from overseas.
U.S. Customs Restrictions – What You Cannot Bring Back With You

Some items may not be brought into the U.S., or may only be brought in under certain restrictions. For information on U.S. customs regulations and procedures, see the Customs and Border Protection booklet “Know Before You Go,” available at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg.

Customs and Border Patrol Top 10 Travelers Tips

1. Have all required travel documents for the countries you are visiting, as well as identification for re-entry to the U.S.
2. Declare everything you are bringing in from abroad, even if you bought it in a duty-free shop. This merchandise is also subject to U.S. duty fees and other restrictions.
3. Be cautious when buying something from a street vendor. Keep in mind that the merchandise may be counterfeit and/or unsafe and you might have to surrender it to U.S. Customs and Border Protection when you get home.
4. Know that the things bought abroad for personal use or as gifts are eligible for duty exemptions. If you are bringing them back for resale, they are not.
5. Know the difference between prohibited merchandise (such as ivory, tortoise shell products, absinthe, and counterfeit items) and restricted merchandise.
6. Be aware that many foreign-made medications are not FDA-approved, and you cannot bring them into the U.S. Also, when traveling abroad, bring only the amount of medication you will need during the trip.
7. Do not bring any Cuban-made products into the U.S., not matter where you purchased them.
8. Do not bring any food into the U.S. without first checking to see if it is permitted. Also, any and all live birds and bird products, whether for personal or commercial use, may be restricted and/or quarantined.
9. Understand that CBP officers can inspect you and your belongings without a warrant. This may include your luggage, vehicle, and personal searches, and is meant to enforce our laws as well as protect legitimate travelers.
10. Read our helpful brochure, “Know Before You Go,” before traveling. Print copies may be requested online, or view the web version at www.cpg.gov under the Travel section.
Iran is a pluralistic society. Persians are the largest predominant ethnic and cultural group in this country, though many are actually of mixed ancestry. The population of the country has important Turkic elements (e.g., Azeris) and Arabs predominate in the southwest. In addition, Iranian citizens include Kurds, Balochi, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities, such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and Brahuis (or Brohi).

The 1979 Islamic revolution and the 1980-88 war with Iraq transformed Iran's class structure politically, socially, and economically. During this period, Shia clerics took a more dominant position in politics and nearly all aspects of Iranian life, both urban and rural. After the fall of the Pahlavi regime in 1979, much of the urban upper class of prominent merchants, industrialists, and professionals, favored by the former monarch, the shah, lost standing and influence to the senior clergy and their supporters. Bazaar merchants, who were allied with the clergy against the Pahlavi shahs, also have gained political and economic power since the revolution. The urban working class has enjoyed somewhat enhanced status and economic mobility, spurred in part by opportunities provided by revolutionary organizations and the government bureaucracy. Though the number of clergy holding senior positions in the parliament and elsewhere in government has declined since the 1979 revolution, Iran has nevertheless witnessed the rise of post-revolutionary elite among lay people who are strongly committed to the preservation of the Islamic Republic.

Most Iranians are Muslims; 89% belong to the Shi'a branch of Islam, the official state religion, and about 9% belong to the Sunni branch. Non-Muslim minorities include Zoroastrians, Jews, Baha'is, and Christians.
Banking

**Banking and business hours** - The workweek in Iran is Saturday through Thursday; however, many government offices and private companies are closed on Thursdays. Friday is the day of rest when all establishments are closed. Offices in Iran are generally open to the public during the morning hours only. Credit cards and bank cards are not widely accepted in Iran. It is difficult to change dollars to rials in Iranian banks and you may not be able to access your U.S. bank accounts via the Internet from Iran. You will not be able to access your U.S. bank accounts using ATMs in Iran. Travelers checks can be difficult to exchange. Bring enough hard currency to cover your stay, but make sure you declare this currency upon entry. There is no Western Union or similar institution and bank transfers may not be possible. Exchange money only at banks or an authorized currency exchange facility, not on the street, and keep your exchange receipts.

**Currency** - The present unit of Iran currency is Rial. For Iran currency coins are available in denominations of 10, 50, 100 and even 250 Rial. The Rial has replaced the earlier currency known as the Iranian Toman. Iran currency can be bought from the foreign exchange banks as well as the leading money exchanges. The exchange rate of Iran currency keeps changing every day. Normally Iranian Rial is the same as 100 Dinars. It is always wise to bring hard currency for exchange purposes.

Banknotes of 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 Rials are currently circulated. Rial is represented by ISO4217, code IRR.

Communication

**Language** - Iran has a heterogeneous population speaking a variety of Indo-Iranian, Semitic, and Turkic languages. The largest language group consists of the speakers of Indo-Iranian languages, who in 1986 comprised about 70 percent of the population. The speakers of Indo-Iranian languages are not, however, a homogeneous group. They include speakers of Persian, the official language of the country, and its various dialects; speakers of Kirmanji, the term for related dialects spoken by the Kurds who live in the cities, towns, and villages of western Iran and adjacent areas of Iraq and Turkey; speakers of Luri, the language of the Bakhtiaris and Lurs who live in the Zagros; and Baluchi, the language of the seminomadic people who live in southeastern Iran and adjacent areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Approximately 28 percent of the population speaks various dialects of Turkish. Speakers of Semitic languages include Arabs and Assyrians.

**Internet** - Internet cafes are found in major cities.

**Telephone** – The international dialing code for Iran is +98. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. +44 for the United Kingdom). Public telephones accept 5-10 and
50 Rial coins and/or telephone cards. Iranian mobile telephone systems are not compatible with those of other countries except for satellite phones.

**Documents Needed**


U.S. citizens traveling to Iran are being fingerprinted upon entry. The Iranian press has reported that foreign tourists may obtain seven-day tourist visas at the airport in Tehran. However, U.S. citizens are not eligible to receive these visas and have to obtain valid visas from the Iranian Interests Section in Washington. Note: possession of a valid Iranian visa will not guarantee entry into the country. Some American travelers with valid visas have been refused entry at the border without explanation. U.S. citizens do not have to obtain a visa for travel from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to Kish Island.

Visa extensions are time-consuming and must be filed at least one week in advance of the expiration date. As of March 21, 2006, a foreign national and anyone accompanying him/her will pay a fine of 300,000 rials or 30,000 ottomans per day for each day of unauthorized stay in Iran.

**Electricity**

The voltage used throughout Iran is uniformly 220 volts, A.C. 50 Hertz. A convertible type of electrical appliance such as a hair dryer, travel iron and shaver will therefore be handy; otherwise a step-down transformer is required to convert the voltage. There are no columnar-shaped plugs or 3-pin plugs used in Iran but 2-pin plugs are used instead. It is therefore advised to purchase a plug adapter beforehand.

**Emergencies**

**Emergencies** – To reach the police, dial 110; ambulance, dial 115; fire department, dial 125.

**Embassies & Consulates** There is no U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Iran. The Embassy of Switzerland serves as the protecting power for U.S. interests in Iran. The U.S. Interests Section at the Swiss Embassy is currently located at Afrika Avenue, West Farzan Street, no. 59, Tehran. The telephone numbers for the U.S. Interests Section are (98) 021-8878-2964 and 98-021-8879-2364, fax 98-021-8877-3265, email: tie.vertretung@eda.admin.ch. The workweek is Sunday through Thursday. Public service hours are 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. The Interests Section does not issue U.S. visas or accept visa applications. The limited consular services provided to U.S. citizens in Tehran include:
(a) registering U.S. citizens;

(b) answering inquiries concerning the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens in Iran;

(c) rendering assistance in times of distress or physical danger;

(d) providing U.S. citizens with passport and Social Security card applications and other citizenship forms for approval at the U.S. Embassy in Bern, Switzerland;

(e) performing notary services on the basis of accommodation; and,

(f) taking provisional custody of the personal effects of deceased U.S. citizens.

Americans living or traveling in Iran are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department’s travel registration website so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Iran. They may also register on the web site of the U.S. Interests Section at www.eda.admin.ch/tehran. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate before flying to Iran. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the U.S. Interests Section to contact them in case of emergency.

**Hospitals** - Basic medical care and medicines are available in the principal cities, but may not be available in rural areas. Medical facilities do not meet U.S. standards and sometimes lack medicines and supplies.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC’s web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization’s (WHO) web site at [http://www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en). Further health information for travelers is available at [http://www.who.int/ith/en](http://www.who.int/ith/en).

In 2006, there were reports of Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, mostly in the southeastern Sistan va Baluchistan province. See [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs208/en](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs208/en) for more information. Iranian authorities have confirmed outbreaks of avian influenza (bird flu) in January 2008 in northern Iran, as well as earlier reports among wild swans in the Anzali Wetlands and in domestic poultry in the northern provinces of Azerbaijan and Gilan. There have been a number of fatalities from avian flu reported in eastern Turkey, 45 kilometers from the Iranian border.

**Police** – To reach the police, dial 110.
Holidays
Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the
dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid
al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be
interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there are restrictions on smoking
and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha may
last anything from two to 10 days, depending on the region.

The following are the dates of the holidays for 2008-2009 only.

2008

- September 9 – Birthday Imam Mahdi
- October 2 – Eid-e Fitr (Ramadan Ends)
- October 15 – Martydom Imam Ali
- November 18 – Martydom Imam Jafar Sadegh
- December 9 – Eid-e Ghordan
- December 29 – Islamic New Year

2009

- January 7 – Ashura
- January 19 – Tassoua
- February 11 – Victory of Islamic Revolution
- March 9 – Arbaeen
- March 18 – Demise of Prophet Mohammad
- March 20 - Martyrdom of Imam Reza
- July 20 – Prophet Mohammad received his call
- August 8 – Birthday of Imam Mahdi
- September 21 – Eid-e-Fitr (Ramadan Ends)
- October 15 – Martydom Imam Ali
- November 28 – Eid-e Ghordan

Safety
U.S. citizens who travel to Iran despite the Travel Warning should exercise caution throughout
the country, but especially in the southeastern region where westerners have been victims of
criminal gangs often involved in the smuggling of drugs and other contraband. American
citizens should avoid travel to areas within 100 kilometers of the border with Afghanistan,
within 10 kilometers of the border with Iraq, and generally anywhere east of the line from Bam
and Bandar Abbas toward the Pakistan border.

Terrorist explosions have killed a number of people since 2005. Be aware that the Iranian
government has blamed the U.S. and/or UK governments for involvement in the February 2007
bombing that killed Iranian military forces in Zahedan in the southeast and the 2005/2006 bombings in Ahvaz/Khuzestan in the southwest. A number of British firms were damaged in attacks in August and November 2005.

U.S. citizens are advised to avoid demonstrations and large public gatherings. Increased tension between Iran and the West over the past several years is a cause of concern for American travelers.

Iranian security personnel may at times place foreign visitors under surveillance. Hotel rooms, telephones and fax machines may be monitored, and personal possessions in hotel rooms may be searched. Photography near military and other government installations is strictly prohibited and could result in serious criminal charges, including espionage, which carries the death penalty.

Major crime is generally not a problem for travelers in Iran, although foreigners occasionally have been victims of petty street crime. Young men in unmarked cars have robbed foreigners and young men on motor bikes have snatched bags. There have been reports of robberies by police impersonators, usually in civilian clothing. Insist on seeing the officer’s identity card and request the presence of a uniformed officer/marked patrol car. Travelers should not surrender any documents or cash.

Travelers should not carry large amounts of hard currency. In view of the possibility of theft, passports, disembarkation cards, other important documents and valuables should be kept in hotel safes or other secure locations. Pre-booked Taxi are safer than those hailed from the street.

Americans should check with their hotel or tour guide for information on local scams.

**Time Zone**
The time zone in Iran is +3:30 hours GMT or equivalent to +8:30 hour EST. Daylight Savings Time starts on March 21st and ends September 21st.

**Transportation**
**Air** – The main airport in Tehran is the Iman Khoemeini International Airport. It is located about 30 kilometers south of the city.

**Taxi** - With car pools now being hailed as the answer to urban traffic problems the world over some credit must be given to Iran’s already long-established system of taxi-sharing. The key difference between a private cab and a shared taxi is that complete strangers who happen to be going the same way will jump in with you. Drivers position themselves at bus stops and other major junctions and either call out a destination of their own choosing or be open to suggestions from a largely fixed set of popular nearby locations. Some travellers simply
choose a strategic point on a main road and call out to passing cars – chances are one or more of them will be a shared cab. It might be that you have to take more than one shared cab and walk a little to reach your destination but, at a fraction of the cost of a private cab, the shared taxi is a cost effective and efficient mode of transport between Tehran’s major centres and a lesson waiting to be learned by the West.

Rental Car - Travelers in possession of International Driver’s Permits may drive in Iran, though the U.S. Interests Section in Iran does not recommend that tourists drive in Iran. Iran has a very high rate of traffic accidents, the second highest cause of mortality in the country. Drivers throughout Iran tend to ignore traffic lights, traffic signs and lane markers. Urban streets are not well lit. It is therefore particularly dangerous to drive at night. Sidewalks in urban areas only exist on main roads and are usually obstructed by parked cars. In the residential areas, few sidewalks exist. Drivers almost never yield to pedestrians at crosswalks. If you are involved in an accident, no matter how minor, do not leave the scene. Wait until the police arrive to file a report. Iranian authorities sometimes set up informal roadblocks, both in cities and on highways, often manned by young, inexperienced officers. They are often suspicious of foreigners. Ensure you carry a form of identification with you and avoid getting into disputes.

Water
Tap water is safe to drink in most of the country, although it tends to be chalky. Bottled water is widely available.

Academic System

Overview
Education is a high priority for Iranians. In Iran, the literacy rate is 80% of the population. About 90% of the children go to school. Public schools are free to all Iranian families. There are number different private schools although they charge tuition.

Structure of School System

Primary
Type of school providing this education: Elementary School (Dabestan)
Length of program in years: 5
Age level from: 6 to 11
Certificate/diploma awarded: Certificate of Completed Primary Education

Lower Secondary
Type of school providing this education: Middle (Guidance) School
Length of program in years: 3
Age level from: 11 to 14

Upper Secondary
Type of school providing this education: Academic Secondary School
Length of program in years: 3  
Age level from: 14 to 17  
Certificate/diploma awarded: High School Diploma (Diplom-Metevaseteh)

**Vocational Secondary**  
Type of school providing this education: Vocational Secondary school  
Length of program in years: 3  
Age level from: 14 to 17  
Certificate/diploma awarded: Post-Diploma Degree (Technician)

**Pre-university**  
Type of school providing this education: Secondary School  
Length of program in years: 1  
Age level from: 17 to 18  
Certificate/diploma awarded: Pre-University Certificate

**K-12**  
Primary education lasts for five years leading to the Certificate of Completed Primary Education. Secondary education (Reform system) covers three years of lower secondary and upper secondary and a one-year pre-university program. Secondary education comprises three branches: theoretical, technical-vocational and skill-knowledge (kar-Danesh). Each is divided into different fields. The required total number of credits leading to the High School Diploma is 96. The courses offered in the first year are common and after successfully completing the first year, based on aptitude, interest and the grades obtained in guidance school, students can continue their studies. The one-year pre-university program prepares students to enter university and higher education institutions. To enter this course, students should pass the appropriate exam. After successfully passing the one-year period, they are granted the Pre-University Certificate and can sit for the National Entrance Exam of universities and higher education institutions (Concou). Qualified students entering the technical-vocational branch can continue studies leading to the Post-Diploma degree (technician) or sit for the Pre-University Examination. Those who wish to acquire skills before completing secondary education can enter the skill-knowledge branch and obtain first or second-class Skill Certificate or sit for the Pre-University Examination as well.

**Higher Education**  
Higher education is provided by comprehensive universities, specialized universities, universities of technology, medical universities, teacher training centers and private institutions. Most universities are State institutions. University activities are coordinated by the Supreme Council on Higher Education Planning (SCHEP), and the Ministry of Health and Medicine.
Professor/Student Relationship
Persian parents are used to trusting that the teacher knows best and to not interfere. In Iran it is unusual for parents to be involved in the classroom. Persian parents are interested and want to know if something does go wrong with their children's education the minute it happens, not weeks or months later.

In Iran, when a teacher enters, students stand up in respect. Persian parents wonder why there is a need to make learning fun as learning is considered a serious business and is not supposed to be fun.

Teacher Education
Training of pre-primary and primary/basic school teachers - Primary school and guidance school teachers (in the general section) are trained in two years in teacher training centers where they obtain an Associate degree. In the technical/vocational sections, they are selected from graduates of technical and vocational schools.

Training of secondary school teachers - Lower secondary teachers must hold an Associate degree in one of the ten specialized subjects. To teach at upper secondary level they must hold a Bachelor's degree in one of the fourteen specialized subjects.

Training of higher education teachers - Tarbiat Modares University has been established to train faculty members and researchers in different scientific fields.

Etiquette
Cultural Orientation
Iranians prefer to do business with those they know and respect, therefore they expect to spend time cultivating a personal relationship before business is conducted. Who you know is often more important than what you know, so it is important to network and cultivate a number of contacts. Expect to be offered tea whenever you meet someone, as this demonstrates hospitality. Since Iranians judge people on appearances, dress appropriately and stay in a high standard hotel.

Introductions are generally restricted to members of the same sex since men and women socialize separately. Greetings tend to be affectionate. Men kiss other men and women kiss other women at social events. If they meet on the street, a handshake is the more common greeting. When Iranians greet each other they take their time and converse about general things. The most common greeting is "salaam alaykum" or more simply "salaam" (peace).

Business Practices
Appointments are necessary and should be made 4 to 6 weeks in advance. Confirm the meeting one week in advance and when
you arrive in the country. It is a good idea to avoid scheduling meetings during Ramazan (Ramadan) as the need to fast would preclude your business colleagues from offering you hospitality. Arrive at meetings on time, since punctuality is seen as a virtue. The first meeting with an Iranian company is generally not business-focused. Expect your colleagues to spend time getting to know you as a person over tea and snacks. Be patient - meetings are frequently interrupted. Written materials should be available in both Farsi and English. Do not remove your suit jacket without permission. Do not look at your watch or try to rush the meeting. If you appear fixated on the amount of time the meeting is taking, you will not be trusted.

Business attire is formal and conservative. Men should wear dark colored conservative business suits. Ties are not worn by Iranians but it would not be seen as negative if you did so. Dress well to make a good impression. Women should always dress modestly and cover their hair.

Protocol
If you are invited to an Iranian's house:

- Check to see if the host is wearing shoes. If not, remove yours at the door.
- Dress conservatively.
- Try to arrive at the invited time. Punctuality is appreciated.
- Show respect for the elders by greeting them first.
- Check to see if your spouse is included in the invitation. Conservative Iranians do not entertain mixed-sex groups.
- Expect to be shown into the guests' room. It is usually lavishly furnished with European furniture.
- Shake everyone's hand individually.
- Accept any offer of food or drink.

Table manners: Iranians are rather formal. Although some meals in the home are served on the floor and without eating utensils, it does not indicate a lack of decorum. In more modern homes, meals are served on a dining table with place settings.

- Wait to be told where to sit.
- Eat only with the right hand.
- Try a bit if everything that is served.
- Meals are generally served family-style.
- Most tables are set with a spoon and fork only.
- There is often more food than you can eat. Part of Iranian hospitality is to shower guests with abundance.
- Expect to be offered second and even third helpings. Initial refusals will be assumed to be polite gestures and are not taken seriously.
- Leave some food on your plate when you have finished eating.
- Restaurants generally have two sections - "family" where women and families dine and "men only".
Tipping
A 10%-15% service charge is normally included in the hotel bill. Small change is an appropriate tip in restaurants. Elsewhere, tipping is not expected.
References


