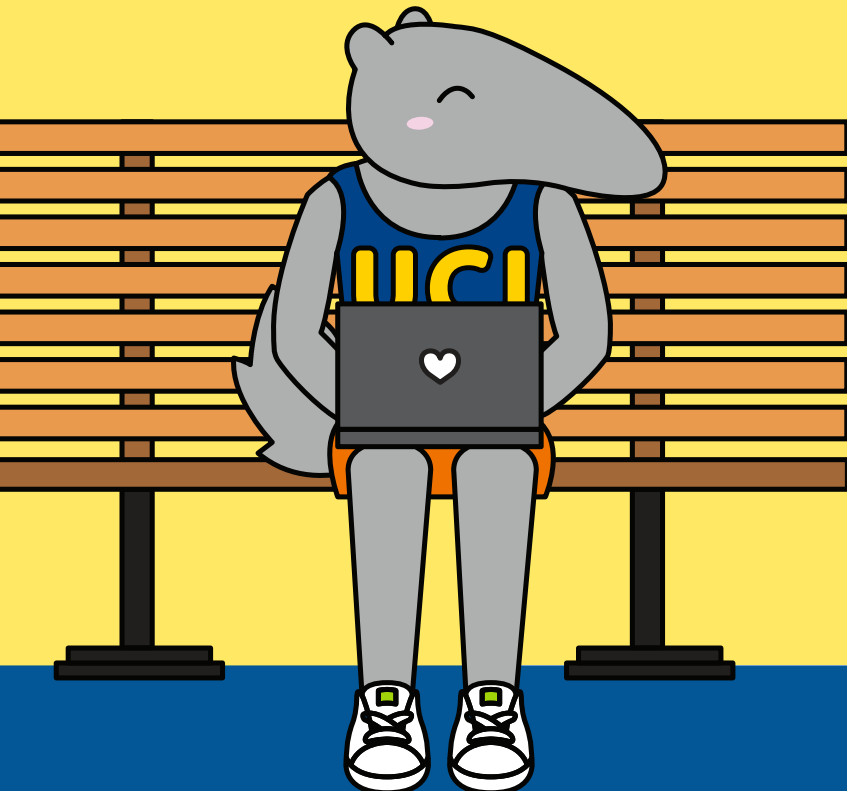




**2024-25**

**UCI** International Center

# New International Student Handbook



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## IMPORTANT DATES

### 2024

Fall Semester (Law) Begins	Aug. 19, 2024
Fall Fee Payment Deadline	Sept. 16, 2024
IC Welcome Picnic	Sept. 20, 2024
Anteater Involvement Fair	Sept. 23, 2024
Welcome Week	Sept. 23-27, 2024
Fall Quarter Begins	Sept. 23, 2024
Fall Instruction Begins	Sept. 26, 2024
Winter Fee Payment Deadline	Dec. 16, 2024
Fall Quarter Ends	Dec. 13, 2024
Fall Semester (Law) Ends:	Dec. 18, 2024

### 2025

Winter Quarter Begins	Jan. 2, 2025
Winter Instruction Begins	Jan. 6, 2025
Spring Semester (Law) Begins	Jan. 9, 2025
Spring Fee Payment Deadline	Mar. 17, 2025
Winter Quarter Ends	Mar. 21, 2025
Spring Break	Mar. 24-28, 2025
Spring Quarter Begins	Mar. 26, 2025
Spring Instruction Begins	Mar. 31, 2025
Spring Semester (Law) Ends	May. 8, 2025
Spring Quarter Ends	Jun. 13, 2025

# WELCOME

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS!



We are pleased that you have chosen to be part of the UC Irvine campus community where you will join international students and scholars representing over 100 countries. We encourage you to share your culture, experiences and perspectives. Your contributions will enhance the experience of everyone at UCI.

Throughout your time at UCI, you will have many opportunities to meet and connect with others. The relationships you develop will help you build a sense of community and will make your experiences at UCI most enjoyable, and the friendships you will make during your college years may last a lifetime.

If you need help in making connections with others, a good place to start is with the International Center's activities and programs, such as the English Conversation Program (ECP) and the International Student Transitioning to Educational and Personal Success (I-STEPS) course, see page 11. International students have reported these programs have helped them gain confidence to make new friends!

Become familiar with the International Center's services and programs on page 11. We are looking forward to meeting you!

Welcome and best wishes, may your time at UCI be fulfilling and enjoyable.

Sincerely,

**Anna Carrera Wimberly, M.S.**  
**Director, International Center**

## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook will provide you with critical information needed to maintain your F-1 or J-1 immigration status and take full advantage of its benefits. Keep it with you at the time you depart your current place to help you get started at UCI.

## COMING TO UC IRVINE

### MOVING TO IRVINE

Moving to a new place can be very exciting! Adjusting to American culture, the culture in California and the UCI community may take some time. Some of the initial challenges international students experience is cultural misunderstanding in the following areas: dating, the casual style of dress, the emphasis on self-reliance and independence, and the seemingly impersonal manner of people toward one another.

The International Center and the Office of Student Life & Leadership have numerous programs and events that will help you understand life and culture at UCI.

**International Center:** [ic.uci.edu](http://ic.uci.edu)

**Student Life & Leadership:** [studentlife.uci.edu](http://studentlife.uci.edu)

As you become more familiar with your new surroundings you will discover commonalities and differences between your home country and the U.S. You are encouraged to maintain your own standards and values, and be aware that there may be times when it will be more appropriate to conform to the customs of the people among whom you are living. Experience and familiarity will help guide you.

Remember to always be yourself, friendly, relaxed, and open to learning about American customs and teaching others about your culture and country!

### ORANGE COUNTY

UC Irvine is located in Orange County (OC), California. OC is located between Los Angeles County and San Diego County.

Irvine is a diverse city with a population of over 303,000.

### WEATHER

The warmest month of the year is August with an average temperature of 83°F/28°C while the coldest month of the year is December with a minimum temperature of 40°F/4°C.

Rainy season in Southern California runs from December to March.



Peter the Anteater, UCI's Mascot

# ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

Orientation programs are the first step to success at UCI. The information you receive will be important for your successful academic and personal transition.

## UNDERGRADUATE FRESHMAN STUDENTS

[orientation.uci.edu](http://orientation.uci.edu)

The **Student Parent Orientation Program (SPOP)** is offered many times each summer in July and August for new freshman students and their parents/guardians. Orientation is mandatory for all incoming freshmen.

- International freshmen who attended high school in the United States are encouraged to attend SPOP.

The **International Student Parent Orientation Program (I-SPOP)** is designed for new international freshmen and their parents/guardians. It will be held in late September.

- International freshmen who attended high school outside of the United States are required to attend I-SPOP. **ISPOP will take place Wednesday, September 18, 2024 – Thursday, September 19, 2024.**

## STUDENT VISA INFORMATION FOR FRESHMEN STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

If you are transferring your SEVIS record from a U.S. high school, English or college preparation program and you are NOT traveling to your home country between the end of classes from your current school and start of classes at UCI, you are able to stay in the U.S. during the summer in F-1 status. This option will allow you to attend SPOP. You may travel outside the U.S. and return anytime during the summer months but **you must return to the U.S. with an I-20 or DS-2019 from UC Irvine**, not the I-20 or

DS-2019 from your previous school.

## TRANSFER STUDENTS

[orientation.uci.edu](http://orientation.uci.edu)

The transfer experience at UCI should be positive and enriching, both academically and socially. The **Mini T-SPOP** orientation seeks to promote this by exposing transfer students to the various resources and services available on campus. In addition, new students will have an opportunity to meet current UCI students and learn “survival secrets” from the pros - current students! This is an optional program and does NOT include academic advising.

## STUDENT VISA INFORMATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

If you will transfer in your SEVIS record from a U.S. college and you are not traveling to your home country between the end of classes at your current college and the beginning of classes at UCI, you are able to stay in the U.S. during the summer. This option will allow you to attend one of the Transfer Success dates. You may also travel outside the U.S. and return anytime during the summer months but **you must return to the U.S. with an I-20 or DS-2019 from UC Irvine**, not the one from your previous college.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

[New Graduate Student Welcome and Orientation - UCI Graduate Division](#)

The **Campuswide New Graduate Student Orientation** helps new students navigate their graduate career at UC Irvine. This event, in addition to school/department-based orientations, covers common aspects of the UCI graduate student experience, including sessions on graduate support services (such as programs offered through the Graduate Resource Center), as well as important administrative topics (like health insurance). This event will give new students the opportunity to connect with fellow grad students from other disciplines across campus.

The **New International Graduate Student Orientation** helps new international students navigate their graduate career at UC Irvine. This event, in addition to school/department-based orientations, covers common aspects of the UCI international graduate student experience. Sessions include graduate support services as well as important administrative topics. This event gives new international graduate students the opportunity to connect with fellow international students from other disciplines across campus.



Welcome Picnic 2023

# IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

## YOUR DATE OF ENTRY INTO THE U.S.

You can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date stated on your I-20 or DS-2019.

## F-1 OR J-1 IMMIGRATION STATUS

The International Center issues a certificate of eligibility called I-20 for F-1 students and DS-2019 for J-1 students. This certificate of eligibility (also known as visa document) must be used to apply for a student visa at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. After your student visa is issued, you can make plans to come to the U.S.

(Note for Canadian citizens: a student visa is not required but you must obtain F-1 or J-1 status when you enter the U.S.)

## SEVIS

The Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) is a database system used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of State (DoS) and SEVP certified schools (like UCI) to maintain information about students in F-1 and J-1 status. Before UCI was able to issue you a visa document (I-20/DS-2019) it created a record for you in SEVIS and you were assigned a SEVIS number, which is printed on your I-20 or DS-2019 (visa document) form. You and UCI are required to keep your SEVIS record current. Any changes that you make during your academic program at UCI will be updated in your SEVIS record and visa document. Your SEVIS record is part of your visa status. It is important that the information in your SEVIS record is accurate.

## APPLYING FOR A F-1 OR J-1 STUDENT VISA

### Required documents:

- I-20 (for F-1 Visa) or DS-2019 (for J-1 Visa)
- Non-immigrant visa application form DS-160.
- A passport valid for travel to the U.S. and with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the U.S.
- One (1) 2" x 2" photograph
- An MRV fee receipt to show payment of the visa application fee (for information visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate website where you are going to apply for your F-1 or J-1 Visa).
- I-901 SEVIS fee receipt - [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- Admissions Letter from UCI
- Financial documents
- Documents to demonstrate a connection to your home country

## WHEN & WHERE TO APPLY FOR AN F-1 OR J-1 VISA

The International Center recommends you apply for your F-1 or J-1 visa once you obtain your I-20 or DS-2019 at a U.S. consular office in your home country.

**APPLY EARLY** Some visa applications may require further administrative processing. This can add several weeks to the process.

The International Center is unable to intervene on your behalf to speed up this process. The U.S. consular officer will determine whether you qualify for the student visa. No assurances regarding the issuance of visas can be given in advance. For U.S. Consular offices, visit [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov).

## TIPS FOR YOUR VISA INTERVIEW



### 1. Ties to Your Home Country

Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. Be prepared to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States.

### 2. Speak Clearly

Keep it brief and in English. Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point. Plan for the interview to be conducted in English and not in your native language.

### 3. Be prepared to explain your major and how it fits your future career plans

You should be able to explain the reasons you will study in a particular major and how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

### 4. Employment

Your main purpose in coming to the United States is to study, not for employment opportunities before or after graduation. While many students do work during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education.

### 5. Maintain a Positive Attitude

Stay calm and friendly throughout the process. Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

# PREPARING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

## FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

- 1. Review your I-20 or DS-2019.**  
Contact the International Center immediately at [internationalcenter@uci.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@uci.edu) if a correction is needed.
- 2. Pay the SEVIS fee.**  
The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- 3. Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to schedule a visa appointment.**  
A list is of consulates is available at [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)
- 4. Gather documents needed for the visa interview.** Follow guidelines provided in this handbook and requirements specific to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will have your interview. We recommend that you read Frequently Asked Questions on Student Visas at [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html).
- 5. Be prepared for your interview.** This will be a short conversation and a review of your documents. Be sure you are able to explain why you want to study in the U.S. and why this is important for your future career.
- 6. Make travel arrangements AFTER you receive your visa.**
- 7. Carry documents with you on the airplane.** Keep your I-20 or DS-2019, passport, student visa, admissions letter, SEVIS I-901 fee receipt and financial documentation with you when you travel. Do not put these immigration documents in your checked luggage. You will need to present these to a Customs and Border Patrol officer (CBP) when you enter the U.S.

## FOR STUDENTS ALREADY IN THE U.S. COMPLETING A TRANSFER OF THEIR SEVIS RECORD

- 1. Review your I-20 or DS-2019.**  
Contact the International Center immediately at [internationalcenter@uci.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@uci.edu) if a correction is needed.
- You do not have to pay the SEVIS fee again if the SEVIS record from your previous school was transferred to UCI and your new I-20 or DS-2019 from UCI has your previous SEVIS record number.
- 3. If you are traveling outside the U.S. during the summer,** you must use the I-20 or DS-2019 issued by UCI to re-enter the U.S. More information on traveling is here: [ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/travel.php](http://ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/travel.php)

## HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

### Study in the States

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/prepare/students-and-the-form-i-20](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/prepare/students-and-the-form-i-20)

### Paying Your SEVIS Fee

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee)

### Applying for a Visa to Travel to the United States

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/applying-for-a-visa-to-travel-to-the-united-states](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/applying-for-a-visa-to-travel-to-the-united-states)

### Applying for a Visa to Study in the United States

[studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states)



# IMMIGRATION PROCESS AT THE U.S. PORT OF ENTRY

Upon arrival to the U.S., a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Agent will review your visa documents.

## DOCUMENTS NEEDED AT THE PORT OF ENTRY

1. I-20 or DS-2019
2. Valid Passport
3. F-1 or J-1 student visa
4. Financial documents
5. Proof of Admission to UCI
6. I-901 receipt of SEVIS fee

## LAND BORDERS PORT OF ENTRY

If you enter the U.S. by land, travelers will be issued an I-94 during the admission process at the port of entry. If you are traveling via a land border or by ferry from selected ports, you may apply for an I-94 in advance. <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>

## AIR AND SEA PORT OF ENTRY

If you enter the U.S. by air or sea your arrival will be recorded electronically, and you can print your I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>.

Traveling without all immigration documents needed to enter the U.S. might be reason to be denied entry. Entry to the U.S. is up to the discretion of the immigration officer at the port of entry.

## I-515A FORM

If you are granted entry to the U.S. after coming with insufficient documentation, you may receive an I-515A Form at the time of entry; which allows you to stay in the U.S. for 30 days. If you receive an I-515A form, you MUST come to the International Center to meet with an advisor.

## BIOMETRIC PROCEDURE

At the Port of Entry you should expect to experience U.S. VISIT'S biometric procedure: a digital, inkless finger scan and digital photograph.

## FOR CANADIAN CITIZENS

Canadian citizens do not need to apply for a visa at a U.S. Consulate, but must enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status.

Canadian citizens will need the following to enter the U.S. as students:

- Canadian passport
- The original I-20 or DS-2019
- I-901 SEVIS fee payment
- Financial documents
- Proof of ties to Canada

After successful entry to the U.S., Canadian international students must complete the **International Center Visa Check-In, iNavigateUCI (Page 9)**

## VISA & SEVIS FEES

### NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME

[travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html)

### VISA ISSUANCE FEE

If the visa is issued, you may need to pay an additional visa issuance reciprocity fee. Please consult the visa reciprocity table at [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

Once you obtain your new I-20 or DS-2019 from UCI, consult the "Who pays – or does not pay – the I-901 SEVIS fee and when is it paid?" page: [www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq](https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq)

## TRAVEL TIP



Carry all of your documents with you because you will need to have access to these important documents at the port of entry. **Do not pack documents in checked baggage.**



Explore SoCal Fall 2023

# WHEN YOU ARRIVE

## AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION

There are 3 major airports near UCI:

- **Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)**  
44 miles (71 km) from UC Irvine
- **John Wayne Airport (SNA)**  
Less than 4 miles (6 km) from UC Irvine
- **San Diego Airport (SAN)**  
83 miles (132 km) from UC Irvine

All airports have ground transportation options such as shuttle service, public transportation, taxis, etc. We recommend you make arrangements to travel from the airport to UCI prior to arriving in the U.S.

- **LAX:**  
[www.lawa.org/welcome\\_lax.aspx?id=132](http://www.lawa.org/welcome_lax.aspx?id=132)
- **SNA:**  
[www.ocair.com/groundtransportation](http://www.ocair.com/groundtransportation)
- **SAN:**  
[www.san.org/Parking-Transportation](http://www.san.org/Parking-Transportation)

## LAND TRANSPORTATION

If you are traveling by land from other parts of the U.S.:

- **Amtrak (train):** [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)  
Drop-off in City of Irvine  
Need to take a taxi to UC Irvine
- **Greyhound (bus):** [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)  
Drop-off in City of Santa Ana  
Need to take a taxi to UC Irvine

## YOUR NEW ADDRESS

Carry your new address information with your immigration documents when you travel because you will need the specific address of your destination.



International Center Student Staff at Celebrate UCI

## HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN IRVINE & NEARBY CITIES

The UC Irvine vicinity has numerous accommodation options. The following rates are subject to change without notice. Contact the hotel in advance to confirm rates, availability and amenities. When making the reservation let the hotel know that you are coming to UCI. Make your reservation early.

**AirBnB** has many options throughout Orange County and the Los Angeles area for short-term rentals.  
[airbnb.com](http://airbnb.com)

**Atrium Hotel**  
18700 MacArthur Blvd.  
Irvine, CA 92612

Tel: 949-833-2770 Fax: 949-757-0330

UCI Rate: \$119-\$159 (Rates may vary)  
Complimentary shuttle from SNA and there is a shuttle to UCI campus.

Complimentary internet and breakfast.  
[atriumhotel.com](http://atriumhotel.com)

**Ayres Hotels and Suites**  
325 Bristol St.  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Tel: 714-429-9372 Fax: 714-549-3741

UCI Rate: \$119 (Rates may vary)  
Complimentary shuttle from SNA and there is a shuttle to UCI campus.

Complimentary internet and breakfast.  
[ayreshotels.com](http://ayreshotels.com)

**Holiday Inn Express – Costa Mesa**  
2070 Newport Blvd.  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Tel: 949-631-6000

\$125 (Rates may vary)  
Complimentary internet and breakfast.  
[www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/costa-mesa/jwacm/hoteldetail](http://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/costa-mesa/jwacm/hoteldetail)

**Travelodge – Orange County Airport**  
1400 Bristol St.  
Costa Mesa, 92626

Tel: 714-557-8700 Fax: 714-557-9164

\$99- \$130 (Rates may vary)  
Complimentary shuttle from SNA and there is a shuttle to UCI campus.

Complimentary internet and breakfast.  
[travelodge.com](http://travelodge.com)



# iNavigateUCI: REQUIRED International Center Visa Check-In

## iNAVIGATEUCI

[ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/i-navigate-uci.php](http://ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/i-navigate-uci.php)

You are required to comply with the immigration laws and regulations of the United States. As a student in F-1 or J-1 status, you are responsible for learning, understanding, and complying with the U.S. laws and regulations that apply to you. Your failure to be aware of and comply with these requirements could jeopardize your academic plans.

Soon after arrival to the U.S. you must complete the required **iNavigateUCI: International Center Visa Check-In**. This is part of your requirements to maintain legal visa status in the U.S.

iNavigateUCI will provide you with required information to help you understand your visa status requirements and responsibilities to maintain legal student visa status. You will also be introduced to resources and services available to you from the International Center.

As part of iNavigateUCI you will provide information required by SEVIS (the U.S. government) to keep your F-1/J-1 visa status valid and maintain compliance with U.S. visa regulations.

After reviewing the informational part of iNavigateUCI you are required to provide the following:

1. Your address of where you live in the U.S.
2. A copy of your I-94 document (arrival document)

You can start iNavigateUCI while still in your home country. Reporting your address and providing a copy of your I-94 must be done AFTER you arrive to the U.S.

## iNavigateUCI DEADLINES:

**If you do not complete iNavigateUCI your SEVIS record (I-20/DS-2019) will be terminated** and you will not have visa status in the U.S. You must complete iNavigateUCI by the deadline listed below:

Academic Term	Visa Document Start Date	iNavigateUCI Deadline
Summer Session I/10-Week	June 24, 2024	June 28, 2024
Summer Session II	August 5, 2024	August 9, 2024
Fall Semester (Law Only)	August 19, 2024	August 23, 2024
Fall Quarter	September 25, 2024	September 29, 2024
Winter Quarter	January 4, 2025	January 8, 2025
Spring Quarter	March 27, 2025	March 31, 2025



International Center Staff

**THE UCI INTERNATIONAL CENTER IS YOUR ONLY SOURCE FOR VISA INFORMATION.**

For questions about the International Center Visa Check-In process, contact the IC at 949-824-7249 or [internationalcenter@uci.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@uci.edu).

# MAINTAINING VISA STATUS

## 1. International Center Visa Check-In

- Complete iNavigateUCI to activate your SEVIS record.
- The visa check-in process is mandatory for all new and transfer international students.

## 2. Academics

- Enroll in 12 units each quarter.
- Enrolling in less than 12 units is permitted ONLY with authorization from the International Center
- Medical exception: if you experience medical problems, meet with an IC advisor.
- Attend classes.

## 3. Pay tuition/fees by UCI deadline

## 4. Report address changes to the International Center within 10 days

## 5. Inform the IC if you change your major or change your degree level

## 6. Keep your I-20/DS-2019 and passport valid

## 7. Travel

- Get a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 before traveling outside of the U.S.

## 8. Employment

- Get employment authorization BEFORE you start working.
- Employment off campus must ALWAYS be authorized, including volunteer work.
- Employment hours per week are limited to 20 during the school year (fall, winter, spring quarters), and full-time (over 20 hours) during the summer.

## 9. Timely departure, transfer or change of status

- F-1 students have 60 days and J-1 students have 30 days from program completion to depart from the U.S., transfer their SEVIS record to another school, or change their immigration status.

## 10. Enrollment

- Be sure you are enrolled full time and ALL tuition and fees are paid.

## TRAVEL & RE-ENTRY TO THE U.S.

### TRAVEL SIGNATURES

Each time you travel out of the U.S., you need to have a valid travel signature. You can request a valid travel signature by completing a Travel Form (available on the International Center website: [ic.uci.edu](http://ic.uci.edu)).

To request a travel signature on your I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1) you will need to drop-off a Travel Form and your I-20/DS-2019 at the International Center. You can submit your documents any time during International Center office hours Monday through Friday 8 am to 5pm (except holidays). You will then wait 5 business days, and pick-up your signed I-20/DS-2019 with a Photo ID at the IC.



## COMMUNICATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER

The International Center sends important updates related to immigration status and requirements to your UCI email account. It is important to keep up with these communications regularly and respond when requested.

If you have questions about your immigration status, you can email [internationalcenter@uci.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@uci.edu) for assistance.

The International Center website has specific instructions on these processes, required forms and business hours: [ic.uci.edu](http://ic.uci.edu)

# INTERNATIONAL CENTER PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

## **I-STEPS (International Students Transitioning to Educational and Personal Success)**

Fall and Winter Quarters

A 10 week class for new international students. Includes workshops and discussions about resources to succeed academically and socially at UCI. I-STEPS assists students in transitioning to a new campus and new country with the support of staff members and their international peers. Topics include: understanding U.S. classrooms, American slang, time management, getting involved in campus organizations and more. In the Winter quarter, topics related to Career Development and Preparation will be offered.

## **English Conversation Program (ECP)**

Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters

A course offered throughout the year that provides international students the opportunity to practice and improve their conversational English with the assistance of English-speaking facilitators.

English facilitators assist international students by improving their English conversation skills through one-on-one pairings, group activities and more. ECP is an opportunity for both international students and English facilitators to further their cultural insight, build relationships, and recognize the value of our diverse campus community.

## **International Coffee Hour**

*In collaboration with Counseling Center and Center for Excellence in Writing & Communication  
Science Library Terrace*

A weekly event where students and scholars from all over the world engage in casual conversations, share cultural experiences, and create friendships while enjoying coffee, tea and snacks.

## **Cultural Connections**

*In collaboration with Counseling Center*

A drop-in discussion group that provides a safe and private space for students to share their cross-cultural experiences, to discuss their concerns and to support each other throughout the adjustment process.



## **Across the Bridge: A Diversity Dialogue Between International and Domestic Students**

*In collaboration with the Cross-Cultural Center and Study Abroad Center*

International and domestic students engage in open conversations about diversity in America, as well as discuss personal identities that include cultural backgrounds and experiences. Past discussion topics include: Cultural Festivals, Education Around the World, and Breaking Down Stereotypes.

## **Life in the U.S.**

This is an interactive and educational series that help international students learn about various areas of U.S. culture, including a Halloween festival, board games, American English Slang, outdoor games, scavenger hunts, and more!

## **Immigration Workshops**

These workshops provide international students with helpful job search information, advice on how to be successful in the U.S. workplace and important considerations that affect their visas.

## **Explore Southern California Trips**

The International Center hosts various trips throughout the year to local points of interest around Southern California. Trips include the Griffith Observatory, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Santa Monica, Venice Beach, and more!!

## **IC Involvement Opportunities**

The International Center offers employment, internship, and volunteer opportunities to all students. Gain professional and leadership experience with the International Center!



Helping Hands Beach Clean Up

# LIFE AT UC IRVINE

## HOUSING

### STUDENT HOUSING ON CAMPUS

UCI offers housing options for all new incoming international freshmen, transfer and graduate students. There is an online application process and you must meet the deadlines. The Student Housing website has detailed information about what to do and when to apply for housing on campus.

[housing.uci.edu](https://housing.uci.edu)

The International Center encourages you to review the Student Housing information as soon as possible to be able to meet their deadlines should you decide to live on campus.

**Graduate students:** [housing.uci.edu/grad](https://housing.uci.edu/grad)

**Undergraduate students:**  
[housing.uci.edu/first-year](https://housing.uci.edu/first-year)

### OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

If you decide to live off campus, the Student Housing office can assist you: [housing.uci.edu/och](https://housing.uci.edu/och)

## CHILDCARE SERVICES

For childcare services information in Irvine, contact UCI Childcare Services at [childcare.uci.edu](https://childcare.uci.edu) prior to your arrival to UCI to make arrangements.

## TRANSPORTATION

### ON AND NEAR CAMPUS

**Anteater Express** provides transportation services from UCI to nearby locations. Visit their website for more information: [shuttle.uci.edu](https://shuttle.uci.edu)

**Additional UCI transportation resources:**  
[parking.uci.edu/AT](https://parking.uci.edu/AT)

**The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)**  
Visit [octa.net/default.aspx](https://octa.net/default.aspx), an online resource with up-to-date transportation information. The Plan My Bus or Rail Trip link makes your planning easy. This site will also recommend using Google Maps to plan your trip.

## CELL PHONES

### UC IRVINE IS A SMOKE-FREE & TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS

UCI is proud to be a smoke-free and tobacco-free campus. Marijuana, vape pens and e-cigs are not permitted. UCI abides by the policies of the University of California as well as federal law.  
[ehs.uci.edu/smoke-tobacco-free/index.php](https://ehs.uci.edu/smoke-tobacco-free/index.php)

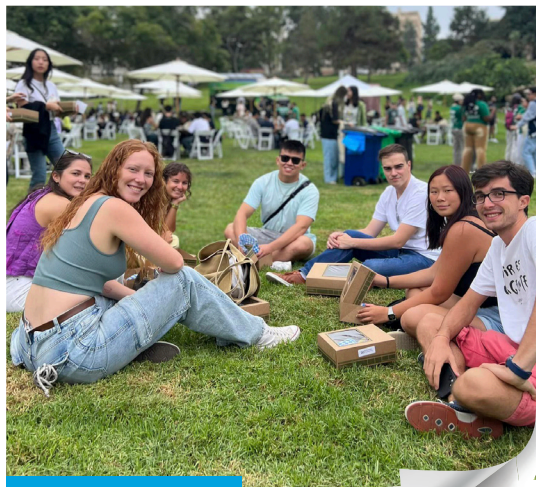
### OBTAINING A CELL PHONE

Obtaining a cell phone is a process that involves comparing costs between cell phone providers and deciding on a plan that includes the services you need.

Most cell phone providers will ask for a cash deposit for new clients who do not have credit history in the U.S. and a Social Security Number. Most cell phone contracts are for two years. However, some cell phone providers have month by month plans where you pay up-front each month. The best way to find a company that fits your cell phone needs is to compare cell phone companies' options and plans.

### Cell Phone Providers Near UCI:

- **AT&T:** 949-622-8240  
17675 Harvard Ave., Suite B, Irvine, CA 92614
- **T-Mobile:** 949-509-7413  
4237 Campus Dr., Suite B158, Irvine, CA 92612
- **Verizon:** 949-756-3515  
2981 Michelson Dr., Suite A, Irvine, CA 92612



Welcome Picnic 2023

# LIFE AT UC IRVINE (CONTINUED)

## BANKING

### OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

After you check in with the International Center you will be able to take care of other important matters such as opening a U.S. bank account. Generally students open a bank account at banks near UCI. However, you must look around and make sure that the bank you select meets your banking needs.

#### Banks Near UC Irvine:

- **Chase Bank:** 4249 Campus Dr., Ste B140, Irvine, CA 92612
- **U.S. Bank:** 4100 Newport Place Dr., Suite 100 Newport Beach, CA 92660. 949-863-2499
- **Bank of America:** 2600 San Miguel Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660. 949-760-4612

#### Documents Needed to Open a Bank Account

If you have a Social Security Number (SSN) or International Tax Identification Number (ITIN):

- Student F-1 or J-1 visa
- U.S. Driver's License or U.S. ID Card

If you DON'T have a Social Security Number (SSN) or International Tax Identification Number (ITIN):

- Student F-1 or J-1 Visa
- Passport

**Prior to opening a bank account**, it is recommended that you obtain your **All-Access Smart School ID for UC Irvine | ZotKey**. Having your UCI Student Identification card may facilitate the process. You can obtain your UCI Student ID on campus at The Hill. [zotkey.uci.edu/download](http://zotkey.uci.edu/download)

Talk to a bank representative about your banking needs and they will assist you in selecting the best bank account option for you. Always read the documents you are signing and ask for clarification for anything that you don't understand. If needed, ask the bank representative if they have information printed in your language.

## DRIVING IN THE U.S.

If you plan on driving in California, you must obtain a California Driver License from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You must complete iNavigateUCI (International Center Check-In process) before you apply. You will need to present your passport, I-20, DS-2019 visa document, and I-94 document. You will be required to take a driving and written test. It is highly encouraged that you schedule an appointment in advance by visiting [dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv](http://dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv)

#### HELPFUL HINTS

- Wait 10 days after checking in with the International Center to apply for a driver license
- Review the Driver License Handbook (available in various languages) [dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/pubs/pubs](http://dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/pubs/pubs)

#### Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) near UC Irvine:

- **Costa Mesa**, 650 W. 19th Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
- **Santa Ana**, 1330 East First Street  
Santa Ana, CA 92701
- **Laguna Hills**, 23535 Moulton Parkway  
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

For more information, visit the Department of Motor Vehicles website: [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov)

#### Car Registration

Cars driven in California must be registered through the Department of Motor Vehicles. Evidence of financial responsibility must be carried at all times in the vehicle. Most Californians maintain financial responsibility through insurance companies, which provide the policy holder (you) with an identification card as evidence of coverage. The card must state the insurance company's name, address, period of coverage and policy number.



International Center Staff

# WORKING & VOLUNTEERING

## EMPLOYMENT ON CAMPUS

Employment on campus is permitted for all international students in valid F-1 or J-1 status. This work is limited to 20 hours per week during the quarter. Full time (anything more than 20 hours per week) is permitted during vacation periods.

For information for on-campus jobs visit the UCI Division of Career Pathways at [career.uci.edu](https://career.uci.edu). You will need to have your UCI net ID activated in order to look for jobs on campus through the Division of Career Pathways.

## OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT FOR F-1

Off-campus employment may be permitted for students who have been in valid F-1 status for at least 9 months before obtaining authorization to work off-campus. Work authorization must be recommended by the International Student Advisor, and in some cases must be approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

## OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT FOR J-1

Employment for J-1 students is called Academic Training. Students interested in Academic Training must schedule an appointment with an International Center advisor for information.

F-1 and J-1 students interested in working off campus must have approval before starting their work off campus.

Working off campus without authorization from the International Center or the USCIS is a violation of your student status.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH EMPLOYMENT ON CAMPUS

New graduate students expected to be employed by their academic departments as Graduate Student Researcher (GSR), Teaching Assistant (TA), Teaching Associate, Reader, Tutor or other acceptable title who need to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)

should plan to visit the hiring department to obtain a Social Security Student Verification Letter. [grad.uci.edu/funding/employment](https://grad.uci.edu/funding/employment).

## VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteer work must be authorized. Schedule an appointment with an International Center Advisor to explore employment options for volunteer work.

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

A Social Security Number is assigned to individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. All UCI employees must have a Social Security Number (SSN) to be employed. A receipt of application will be given to you when you apply for the SSN. You will need this for your hiring department. The issuance of the actual SSN card is about 30-45 days. You will receive your Social Security card in the mail.

The nearest Social Security Administration Office to UCI is located in Mission Viejo:

26051 Acero Road  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

Please check website for office hours before visiting: [www.ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).

## ATTEND ANTEATER INVOLVEMENT FAIR WELCOME WEEK 2024

Welcome Week is **September 23-27, 2024.**

Several events that showcase student clubs and organizations and student talent will create opportunities for new students to meet and interact. Learn how you can get involved on campus during the **Anteater Involvement Fair**, held on **September 23, 2024!**



Across the Bridge

# SETTLING IN

## ADJUSTMENT TO UCI AND THE U.S.

Once you settle in your new place in Irvine, you will find commonalities between your culture and the new culture you are living in. You might find food choices in Irvine interesting, you might also find familiar music, and may enjoy the weather. These are good indications that you are getting settled into your new environment. However, you may also discover differences.

If you are living in another culture different from your own, there may be times when you experience periods of frustration, anger, alienation, depression, or other reactions that come to be labeled as “culture shock.” Even students who come from other states in the U.S. might experience culture shock. Some degree of “shock” is inevitable and, some would argue, necessary for better adjustment. Each student reacts differently upon being in a new place with new food, music, customs, and culture.

Culture shock affects people in various degrees. Experiencing the above mentioned emotions is a normal adjustment process, and you should not feel bad, guilty, or inadequate as you adjust to your life at UCI.

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Many experts agree that at first you may find your new situation a bit confusing. You may also find it to be exhilarating: a time of new experiences, sights, sounds and activities. The initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure with so much to learn and absorb in the new culture.

During this time, you may tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and U.S. culture. You may find that people seem really friendly and helpful. You may classify aspects of the culture that seem different or even unattractive as curious, interesting or “unusual.” As you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences rather than similarities may become increasingly apparent to you.

As these differences emerge, they may be troubling and sometimes shocking. Culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows slowly as you interact with other students, faculty and people in the community.

## COMMON SIGNS OF CULTURE SHOCK

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility toward the host culture

## You can also try the following:

- Learn about and experience the new culture.
- Meet people and make new friends, both from your culture and other cultures, including Americans to help you better understand and exchange cultural similarities and differences.
- Expect that there will be similarities and differences.
- Stay in contact with family and friends at home. You can call, email, FaceTime or watch videos from your home country.
- Talk about what you are feeling with friends who are sympathetic of your situation, or contact an advisor at the International Center.
- Talking about these feelings will assist in overcoming negative feelings about your new environment.
- Take care of yourself: get plenty of rest, eat well, and maintain good hygiene.
- Exercise regularly. UCI's Anteater Recreation Center (ARC) offers sports, gym, exercise, and leisure activities. You do not have to pay extra to use this facility, it is already included in your tuition and fees.

## SIGN UP FOR ZOTALERT



zotALERT is an emergency alert system that uses cell phone text messaging to quickly notify the UCI community with safety information. Students are strongly encouraged to sign-up for zotALERT messages (standard text messaging rates may apply).

**To sign-up for zotALERT, login to StudentAccess and update your cell phone number.**

# CAMPUS SAFETY

## BIKE SAFETY

[bike.uci.edu](http://bike.uci.edu)

If you plan to use a bicycle for transportation, you must be aware of rules and regulations related to bike safety.

## BLUE LIGHT PHONES

Blue light telephones are emergency telephones located throughout campus and provide direct communication to the UCI Police Department. Use the phones to report crime, fire or medical emergencies 24 hours a day. There are over 185 blue light phones on campus that can be easily identified on a UCI campus map by a diamond shaped symbol.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In cases of an emergency, it is important to be aware of a building's secure-in-place or evacuation plan. Secure-in-Place notifications will be issued to the campus in cases of a potential threat to the campus that require you to remain indoors. In a situation where building evacuation is required, become familiar with your surroundings and available exits from your location.

Learn How to be Prepared: [Emergency Preparedness »](#)  
[Emergency Management »](#) UCI

## EMERGENCY RESOURCES

In a health or safety emergency, dial 9-1-1.

911 is the phone number you call to contact an emergency operator. This person will help you get the emergency assistance you need. This emergency number can be used from any phone in the United States. If you are on campus and need to contact the UCI Police Department for a non-emergency call 949-824-5223.

We recommend you program the UCI Police Department phone number into your cell phone.

## FREE SPEECH

[freespeech.uci.edu](http://freespeech.uci.edu)

UC Irvine recognizes the rights of individuals to engage in constitutionally protected free speech and maintaining public safety. The UCI Police Department supports and enforces the UCI codes and regulations governing the time, place, and manner for the exercise of free speech and public assembly.

## THEFT

Always keep your personal property safe. It is possible that theft of personal property may occur in different areas of campus. It is important to lock the door to your residence at all times, even when sleeping. Many students choose to purchase locks for items of value, such as computers.

## FIRE SAFETY

Make note of the closest exit wherever you are located. If you experience a fire-related emergency, such as:

cooking accidents, overloaded power strips or exposure to open flames, stay safe and call 9-1-1 for help. Use a fire extinguisher if one is available and you know how to use it, and only if it is safe to do so.

## SAFETY ESCORT SERVICES

[police.uci.edu/how-do-i/safety-escort.php](http://police.uci.edu/how-do-i/safety-escort.php)

The **Community Service Officer (CSO) Safety Escort program** is a free service provided to members of the UCI community as a safe alternative to walking alone at night. For a free safety escort, call: **949-824-7233 (SAFE)**. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is physical sexual activity which occurs without consent of the other person. UCI CARE (Campus Assault Resources & Education) Office provides free and confidential support services to members of the UCI community impacted by sexual assault, relationship abuse, family violence, and/or stalking.

**CARE Office:** [care.uci.edu](http://care.uci.edu)

**Sexual Violence & Prevention:** [soinfo.uci.edu](http://soinfo.uci.edu)

**Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity:** [oeod.uci.edu](http://oeod.uci.edu)

# SCAMS & FRAUD

We hope that you will not encounter any scams or fraudulent schemes during your time at UCI. The International Center provides **Scam Alert** resources to use caution and avoid scams. It is important to be cautious about whom you provide your personal information to. It is important to note that in general, no government agency or reputable company will contact you unexpectedly to request your personal information or request fees or services in the form of wire transfers or gift cards. If you feel that you may be a victim of a scam or are unsure if something is a scam, please reach out to us at the International Center.

## UCI POLICE DEPARTMENT

The UCI Police Department provides the UCI community with the highest level of public safety and police services. The campus Community Safety Ambassadors (CSAs) are committed to respecting human dignity and to understanding the needs and values of the UCI community. They maintain an environment that supports the well-being of students, faculty, staff and visitors at UCI.

**949-824-5223**

410 E. Peltason Drive, Irvine, CA 92697

[police.uci.edu](http://police.uci.edu)

Resource guide: [police.uci.edu/how-do-i/\\_brochures/resource-guide.pdf](http://police.uci.edu/how-do-i/_brochures/resource-guide.pdf)



# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## UCI CARE: CAMPUS ASSAULT RESOURCES & EDUCATION [care.uci.edu](http://care.uci.edu)

UCI CARE provides free and confidential support services to the UCI community impacted by sexual assault, relationship abuse, family violence and/or stalking. You can call to schedule an appointment at 949-824-7273.

## CAMPUS RECREATION [campusrec.uci.edu](http://campusrec.uci.edu)

Offers diverse sports, recreational and fitness activities that are fun, vigorous, healthy and conducive to personal wellness. Facilities include the Anteater Recreation Center and programs include intramural sports, club sports, and many other classes and activities.

## COUNSELING CENTER [counseling.uci.edu](http://counseling.uci.edu)

The primary counseling and mental health agency for students. The Counseling Center provides short term limited individual, couples, group and family counseling. Additionally, they provide a wide range of workshops and courses related to interpersonal and developmental issues. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 949-824-6457.

## CENTER FOR STUDENT WELLNESS & HEALTH PROMOTION [studentwellness.uci.edu](http://studentwellness.uci.edu)

Provides education and empowers students to make informed decisions that support individual health. The staff present workshops, trainings and classes, and consult with students on their health needs and concerns. Services include anonymous HIV testing, distribution of free condoms, consultations and Health and Wellness Workshops.

## DISABILITY SERVICES CENTER [dsc.uci.edu](http://dsc.uci.edu)

At UCI providing a culture of inclusion and equal opportunity for students with disabilities is a campus wide responsibility and commitment. Incoming new students with disabilities, should notify the Disability Services Center of their need for academic or housing accommodations as soon as possible. Accommodations registration/intake form is available on the website.

## STUDENT HEALTH CENTER [shc.uci.edu](http://shc.uci.edu)

This is a comprehensive outpatient clinic that provides medical, mental health and preventive care to all registered students. If you are not feeling well or just have a feeling that something may be wrong with your health, make an appointment to see one of our clinicians.

We recommend making an appointment by calling **949-824-5304**. Appointments can also be scheduled through the **Student Health Patient Portal** or by visiting the Student Health Center.

Information for new students is available on the website and provides specific information for new students, including TB Screening and Immunization Requirements and Health Insurance Requirements [shc.uci.edu/new-student-information](http://shc.uci.edu/new-student-information).



Halloween Party

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT UCI

[aisc.uci.edu](https://aisc.uci.edu)

The Office of Academic Integrity & Student Conduct (OAISC) is responsible for ensuring that students comply with and understand university policies regarding academic integrity and student conduct. OAISC hosts Integrity Week, which is a week full of events and programs that focus on making good, ethical choices as a college student, what it means to have academic integrity, and informing the campus of commonly violated policies.

## WHAT IS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

Academic misconduct, in its most basic form, is gaining or attempting to gain a grade, degree, or other academic accomplishment by any means other than through your own work. For example, did you know that plagiarism is the most commonly violated academic integrity policy at UCI!? To prevent academic integrity and student conduct violations from happening the office presents to various campus partners, hosts workshops, and has two Peer Advisors to help inform the campus of what it means to have integrity as a UCI student.

# OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

[housing.uci.edu/och](https://housing.uci.edu/och)

If you are looking to rent a room or an apartment near the university, we recommend that you search through the Anteater Housing Network (AHN) through the [UCI Off-Campus Housing](#) website. This is a reliable resource provided to students through UCI Housing.

# TAXES IN THE U.S.

[ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/international-taxpayer-information.php](https://ic.uci.edu/resource-pages/international-taxpayer-information.php)

As an international student in the U.S., you have the responsibility to report any income earned in the U.S. during the duration of your academic program. Even if you did not earn income, if you are a non-resident for tax purposes you must file Form 8843.

UCI employees cannot advise on the completion of your individual tax forms. The International Center provides information for reporting taxes to the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) and hosts an information session annually during Winter Quarter to provide direct advice to you on how to report U.S. taxes.

# TUITION/FEE PAYMENTS

[fs.uci.edu/payments/international-payments.php](https://fs.uci.edu/payments/international-payments.php)



UCI has partnered with **Convera**, **GlobalPay** and **Flywire** to help you make payments in the currency of your choice without extra fees or delays.

The benefits of using these services to make your tuition/fee payments are:

- Paying in your local currency
- Avoid fees and costly international foreign exchange charges from your bank
- Learn precisely what you owe so payments are made in full to UCI
- Get payment options up front with a price comparison tool.



Welcome Picnic 2023



International Friending Mixer

# GROCERIES & STORES

## INTERNATIONAL GROCERY STORES

- **99 Ranch Market**  
15333 Culver Dr., Irvine  
Asian grocery, fresh produce, bakery
- **Albertson's**  
4541 Campus Drive  
Irvine, CA 92614  
Fresh produce, groceries, bakery, ethnic foods section
- **H Mart**  
2600 Alton Pkwy., Irvine  
Korean market, food court inside
- **Mitsuwa Marketplace**  
14230 Culver Dr.  
Irvine CA 92604  
Japanese grocery
- **Super Irvine**  
27771 Center Dr.  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
Persian grocery store, fresh produce
- **Wholesome Choice**  
18040 Culver Dr., Irvine  
Fresh produce, bakery, meat and deli sections.
- **Zion Market**  
4800 Irvine Blvd., Irvine  
Produce really fresh and affordable, great place to get ingredients for Korean food.

## HOUSEHOLD ITEMS & RETAIL

- **Daiso**  
14280 Culver Drive, Suite A, Irvine, CA 92604  
Discount Store, Basic Household Items and Snacks
- **Target**  
4255 Campus Dr., Irvine, CA 92612  
Household items, fresh grocery, pharmacy, clothing, linens, photo printing
- **Walmart**  
16555 VonKarman Ave., Irvine CA 92606  
Large department discount store offering food, household items and clothing.

## SHOPPING CENTERS

- **Diamond Jamboree**  
Corner of Jamboree Rd. and Alton Pkwy.  
Large selection of places to eat.
- **Irvine Spectrum**  
71 Fortune Dr. Irvine, CA 92618  
A large outdoor shopping mall with a movie theater, ferris wheel and comedy club.
- **South Coast Plaza**  
3333 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Defines the luxury shopping experience with boutiques, personal service and upscale amenities.
- **The District**  
2437 Park Ave., Tustin, CA 92782  
Outdoor shopping mall with a good mixture of stores and places to eat.



# UCI International Center

G302 Student Center • Irvine, CA 92697-5255

Phone: 949-824-7249

Fax: 949-824-3090

[internationalcenter@uci.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@uci.edu)

[www.ic.uci.edu](http://www.ic.uci.edu)



THE DIVISION OF  
 **Student Affairs**