CULTURAL HANDBOOK

for International Students 2018-2019

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Welcome To CINCINNATI

Dear International Students,

Thank you for choosing to enroll at the University of Cincinnati!

It is our pleasure to welcome you into the UC and the Cincinnati community. This booklet is intended to help you make a smooth transition into campus life and will provide information on many of the university’s policies and services.

We hope you will agree that you have made a smart choice for your education because UC offers an academic experience that is not only rigorous but also relevant. Our programs make a point of tying classroom theory into real-world experiences. UC also ranks among in the Top Tier for universities in the nation, as well as in the top 100 public universities. UC ranks in the nation’s top 20 co-op and internship programs with top-ranking programs in business, medical sciences, criminal justice, and more. Our academic excellence is also defined by world-class faculty and state-of-the-art campus facilities.

Your presence in the life of our university helps to make UC a truly multicultural and global university. International students like you come to us from over 110 countries around the world.

While your academic experience is the highest priority, we encourage you to take part in activities outside of the classroom. UC offers a diverse mix of over 400 student-run organizations as well as over 1,000 performing arts and sporting events each year so that you can learn more about life outside of books.

We look forward to seeing you on campus in the months ahead. Once again, welcome to the UC family!

Best Wishes,

UC International Services Staff

University of Cincinnati Cultural Handbook

UC International Services Staff
UC International Services

UC International Services assists international visitors in understanding the rules, regulations, and procedures that must be followed during your stay in the United States. We help students and scholars navigate their new life in America, maintain their visa status, find opportunities for work, pay their taxes, and have fun along the way!

You will meet with our advisors when you check in at the university, and you should contact us if you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your immigration status.

Stop by our office during office hours, send us an email, or give us a call:

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**UC International**
7148 Edwards Center One

Hours of operation:
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m

Phone: (513) 556-4278
Email: international.students@uc.edu
Website: uc.edu/international
Facebook: UC International

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The University of Cincinnati (UC) is a diverse campus in an urban setting. Our students, faculty, and staff come from more than 110 countries. We are truly a diverse community!

As a UC student, you are now a “Bearcat.” The Bearcat is our University Mascot. Adopting a mascot is a university tradition in the USA. A real-life bearcat is an animal from South Asia.

Cincinnati is the home of many multi-national corporations, including Procter & Gamble. Its metropolitan area is home to more than two million people. The small-town aspects of the city include beautiful parks, easy commuting, and an accessible downtown. Our international airport makes Cincinnati an easy commute from your home country. We have professional sports teams like the Cincinnati Reds baseball team, the Cincinnati Bengals (American football team), and FC Cincinnati (American soccer), as well as world-class museums, art galleries, and a vigorous, diverse economy with opportunities for co-op employment (Cooperative Education that allows students to work various semesters and receive experience and competitive wages), internships and careers after graduation. Our downtown is easy to navigate on foot, and its charming neighborhoods date back to the 19th century.

Because of all that we have to offer, Cincinnati has been rated one of the most livable metro areas in America. The New York Times also ranks Cincinnati in the Top 10 places to visit in the world.

Cincinnati's riverfront has parks with places for strolling and sunbathing, watching a ballgame or dining in a riverfront café. Downtown contains architectural gems like the art-deco Carew Tower and majestic Music Hall. Cincinnati’s art deco train station has been converted into a stunning museum center with an Omnimax theater and the fascinating Cincinnati History Museum. The Cincinnati Zoo is internationally known for its collection of endangered species (and, social media superstar Fiona the hippo), and the Krohn Conservatory's rainforest and floral exhibits bring some of the tropics to the city.

Welcome to UC and to Cincinnati, Ohio, and we hope you enjoy our city and take advantage of all this community has to offer.
PREPARING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

What to Pack

Linens, Bedding and Room Furnishings
Blankets, towels, and room furnishings are things you might bring with you if you have space for them in your luggage. However, remember that you can buy anything you need in the U.S., and that University housing offers furnished apartments and rooms. You should not attempt to bring food, plants, or anything that can be interpreted as being drug paraphernalia, such as pipes or tobacco rolling papers. These will most likely be confiscated from you at the port of entry.

Clothing
The climate in Cincinnati changes with the seasons. In the spring, temperatures are moderate, although it can still be quite cool, particularly in March and April.

Temperatures in the summer can get rather high. Summer is hot and humid. Temperatures of 90°F (32.2°C) and above are not unusual. You are advised to bring some light clothing for this season.

Fall (beginning of the school year) is pleasant with its bright colors and moderate temperatures.

Winter can get very cold, icy and snowy. Temperatures are often as cold as 10°F (-12°C). It is recommended that you bring warm clothing with you, such as a hat, scarf, gloves, snow or rain boots, sweaters, and a warm winter coat. However, winter clothing is available in Cincinnati at reasonable prices.

In short, Cincinnati has a wide range of weather. It is important to bring cool clothes for the summer (August arrival) and warm clothes for winter (January arrival). Getting supplies your first week in Cincinnati will be challenging, since you will be very busy. Please plan ahead!

Winter Weather Health Tips
Coping with the extreme winter weather conditions can be challenging. Here are some tips that will help you make the weather conditions more tolerable.

Wear layers of clothing. You will be much warmer if you wear several layers of clothing rather than one heavy shirt and a coat. Benefits to wearing layers are that you can remove some of them if you get too warm indoors, or you can add more if you are still too cold.

Wear a hat! Between 35-50 percent of body heat is eliminated through the head. If you want to use that heat to stay warm, cover your head!

Keep your socks dry. If you have had your socks on all day, your feet will have perspired some. If you’ve walked a lot, they will have perspired more. In rain and snow seasons, it’s a good idea to change into a clean, dry pair of socks before you go back outside, especially if you have to be out for very long.

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Benefits to wearing layers are that you can remove some of them if you get too warm indoors, or you can add more if you are still too cold.

On-Campus Housing
At UC, students have the option to live either off-campus or, if available, on or near campus in UC-owned and leased residence communities. All freshmen are required to live on campus their first year.

All on-campus rooms are fully-furnished for each person. Some buildings have dormitory-style rooms with a shared bathroom for all residents on one floor; other buildings have private bathrooms. All rooms include air conditioning, heat, high-speed Internet access, one micro-fridge unit and cable TV service. All halls feature a laundry room, study lounge, snack vending machine, full fire protection system and 24-hour security. All on-campus communities are non-smoking environments. No alcohol is permitted.

Residence hall community options include Calhoun Hall, Campus Recreation Center Housing, Dabney Hall, Daniels Hall, Marian Spencer Hall, Morgens Hall, Schneider Hall, Scioto Hall, Siddall Hall, Stratford Heights, Turner Hall and University Park Apartments. Additional housing is available in off-campus apartment communities.

Housing

Off-Campus Housing
The Off-Campus Graduate and Family Housing Office has a comprehensive list of off-campus apartment buildings and homes in the neighborhoods surrounding campus. This office is located on the lower level of Stratford Heights Pavilion (2634 Stratford Avenue, Building 16).

For more information about off-campus housing options, pricing, and availability, visit: https://offcampushousing.uc.edu.

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For more information about pricing and availability, visit: www.uc.edu/housing.

For more information about off-campus, UC-owned graduate student housing, look under the “Campus Life Resources” tab at www.grad.uc.edu.

Lease Agreements
When you rent a room or an apartment off campus, you will be required to sign a lease. A lease is a written contract between you and the landlord (the owner of the rental property). When you sign a lease, you agree to pay a certain amount of money each month and to follow certain rules in exchange for the right to occupy the rental property for a set period of time. Most lease agreements require that you pay a security deposit which is usually equal to one month’s rent. This security deposit will be returned to you if you fulfill all the terms of the lease. Read the lease carefully and be sure you understand it before signing it.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Housing Services
2911 Scioto Lane
Phone: (513) 556-6461
Fax: 513-861-6816
Email: uchousing@uc.edu
Website: www.uc.edu/housing

Website: www.uc.edu/housing
Email: uchousing@uc.edu
Phone: (513) 556-6461
Fax: 513-861-6816

University of Cincinnati Cultural Handbook
Housing, Continued

Key questions to ask any landlord when considering an apartment:

- How many minutes does it take to get to UC walking and driving?
- Is there a bus line close by?
- What type of housing is it? A house? An apartment complex?
- How many bedrooms does it have?
- How much is the rent per month?
- Is a security deposit required?
- What type of lease is offered (monthly, 6 month, 9 month, yearly)? Most leases near campus are 12 months.
- Are subleases permitted? Is internet access available?
- Are children allowed?
- Are pets allowed? Is an extra security deposit required for pets?
- What kind of heat is used (gas, electric, oil, etc.)?
- Who pays for utilities (heat, electric, water, Internet, etc.)?
- Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished?
- What type of flooring is there (carpet, hardwood, tile)?
- Is there a stove? Refrigerator? Air conditioning? Laundry facilities?
- What type of parking is available (garage, off-street parking, on-street parking)?
- How soon will the apartment be available?

Utilities

When you rent an apartment off campus, you will be expected to call Duke Energy to turn on the electric/gas and Greater Cincinnati Water Works to turn on the water. This is not something a landlord will do for you. Resources for the specific steps for obtaining utilities are included on the grad and family housing Web page: http://www.uc.edu/housing/graduate-family.html#resources.

Once you have moved in, your main responsibilities are to pay rent on time and keep the property in a clean and safe condition. Landlords may expect tenants to pay rent by check or online with a credit card or e-check; do not pay with cash. Determine the expected method of payment before signing a lease. Although you have responsibilities to pay rent and keep the property in good condition, your landlord has responsibilities too. If you believe the landlord is treating you differently than he would treat an American, or if the landlord is not keeping the property in working condition, be assertive. Do not accept negligence from your landlord. Demand that the apartment is in a safe, clean, livable condition. Otherwise, you may be inviting the landlord to take advantage of you.

If you have problems with your landlord, it is a good idea to photograph the contested areas of the apartment which are in disrepair. In addition, put all of your complaints in writing, send your landlord a copy, and keep a copy of your complaints for your own files. If the problems are not resolved, consider taking legal action.

UC International Services maintains a list of trusted apartments and landlords off campus. If you have any questions, please ask us in person or at international.students@uc.edu.

Finances (Money)

Before beginning your travel to the University of Cincinnati, please remember that your initial expenses here will be considerably higher than those you will incur later. Therefore, it is necessary for you to bring at least $2,000 in United States currency or travelers' checks to cover these expenses.

Even if you are going to receive financial support from UC, your first check will not be immediately available upon your arrival. Before you can expect any money from UC, you may need to pay for health insurance, make a security deposit on your apartment, pay the first month's rent, or buy food and other necessities! You must figure your finances carefully and plan on these expenses without help from UC.

To prepare to meet your financial needs for the entire year, you should make the necessary arrangements with your government, your sponsor, and any banks in your country to ensure that these funds will be available to you. Remember that checks drawn on foreign banks will require several weeks to clear, and therefore, you will not have access to those funds right away. In order to have money available upon arrival, many students find it easier and safer to load funds to a foreign travel card and withdraw cash using a PNC ATM or branch Cash Advance machine to fund their bank account. This is safer than carrying cash and quicker than waiting for an international wire transfer to arrive.

Banking in the U.S.

Managing your finances is one of the most important and challenging aspects of an enjoyable academic experience. This section introduces you to a few of the basic banking options available. When selecting a bank, you should compare services, service charges and bank locations before making your decision.

When you open an account with a bank, you will need two pieces of identification, such as your passport and UC ID.

There are several banks near the campus. PNC offers the convenience of banking on UC's campus with a full service branch, offering individualized service in Tangeman University Center, Level 3, with language translation services, and 7 ATMs on campus.

PNC Bank also offers an option to link your Bearcat Card/UCID (which you will receive upon your arrival) to your PNC account, so you can use your ID to get cash with no fee at any PNC ATM. PNC also offers Virtual Wallet Student which features the benefit of one free incoming international wire transfer per statement period.

Banking Tips

1. Always ask questions.
2. When traveling, limit the amount of cash you carry.
3. Avoid sharing account numbers, PINs or passwords with anyone.
4. Be cautious about doing business with people you do not know.
5. Keep the bank updated on changes to your contact information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

PNC Bank
Tangeman University Center, Level 3
Phone: (513) 569-4190
Website: pnc.com/uc

Campus ATM Locations:
- TUC Food Court, Level 2
- TUC Level 3 near Mick & Mack’s Edwards Three
- University Pavilion
- Steger Student Life Center
- Stratford Heights lobby
- CARE/Crawley Building
Preparation for Your Arrival

Finances (Money), Continued

Banking Terms & Definitions

Bank Cards: Many banks issue cards that enable you to deposit and withdraw money 24 hours a day by use of an Automated Teller Machine (ATM). These machines, which are frequently located outside the bank, are very convenient. By using a bank card, customers avoid waiting in line at the bank and have access to cash after the bank closes. Banks that are members of a national ATM network allow you to access your funds with your bank card at selected ATM's throughout the country. There are many ATM's located on campus. In some instances, there may be small fees associated with ATM use.

Savings Accounts: A savings account enables you to save money and accumulate interest on your savings. Interest is paid monthly or quarterly. The difference between a savings and a checking account is that you cannot write checks from a savings account.

Checking Accounts: Banks offer different types of checking accounts designed to fit individual needs. The cost of checking varies from bank to bank. Some banks charge per transaction, some have a basic monthly fee, and others offer free services if you maintain a certain minimum balance in your account at all times. A list of all the account activity for the preceding month, and in some cases your cancelled checks, will be mailed to you in a monthly statement or will be available to you online. Be careful to keep an accurate record of every check you write in order to avoid having checks returned due to insufficient funds and incurring additional charges. “Bouncing” a check (writing a check for more money than you actually have in the account) is illegal and can cost you time and money. Through some banks, you can apply for a line of credit attached to your checking account that provides overdraft protection.

Cashing checks: To cash a check, you will need to endorse it by signing your name on the back. In addition, you will be asked for personal identification in the form of a driver’s license, a State of Ohio ID card, or a UC ID card.

Credit Cards: Credit cards may be useful to help you establish and build a credit history in the U.S. Building a credit history is important for many reasons, but mostly if you intend to take out loans in the future for schooling, purchasing a car or purchasing a home. It’s important to understand how to responsibly use a credit card, to avoid paying high interest rates and potential fees. The purchases that you make with your credit card should fit within your monthly budget and you should pay them back as soon as possible. Additionally, there are usually basic requirements when applying for a credit card such as having a Social Security Number, proof of income and in some cases an established history of banking and/or paying bills in the U.S. It’s best to consult with a bank representative to fully understand the terms, risks, rewards and obligations of using a credit card and discuss how to use the card responsibly.

Debit Card: A debit card, also known as a check card, allows you to withdraw or deposit money to your bank account using an automatic teller machine (ATM) and to make purchases at stores that accept the card. Some debit cards carry a credit-card logo (such as MasterCard or Visa), and can be used in place of a check or credit card. Debit cards are not credit cards, however, and they can be used only to the extent that you have funds in the account to which they are linked.

Foreign Currency: If you deposit a check drawn on a foreign bank in your U.S. checking account, it may have to go through a collection process. This means that the money is not available to you until the U.S. bank has collected it from the foreign bank. It may take several weeks before the money is credited to your account.

In countries with restrictions on foreign exchange, you may need to provide your sponsor or your family with certification of enrollment in order to receive money from your home country. The certification letter eForm is available in iBearcatsGlobal. Please allow five working days for processing.

Flywire: This allows you to pay securely from any bank, typically in your home currency. You can pay by international bank transfer or international credit and debit cards. To set up an account and learn more visit: UC.Flywire.com

Tips on Travel

Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you prepare for your flight to the U.S. and Cincinnati:

1. Travel with your passport, visa, and original I-20 or DS-2019 in your carry-on luggage. Your documentation will be inspected at the port of entry before you claim your checked baggage.

2. Arrange transportation from the airport to your destination ahead of time.

3. Take some of the things that are important to you such as prescription eyeglasses, a bilingual dictionary, medication etc., and keep them in your carry-on luggage.

4. To avoid unnecessary delays, make sure your ticket is confirmed at least one month before the day you are required to arrive.

5. Government-sponsored students and those sponsored by private organizations should work together with their sponsors every step of the way.

6. Shop around for airfare and check for baggage regulations before deciding which airline to take to the U.S.

7. Arrive at the airport about three hours before the intended flight.

8. Make sure your schedule allows sufficient time for connecting flights.

9. Carry sufficient money for unexpected expenses or events, such as missing your flight. You may also want to carry an extra change of clothing in your carry-on luggage in case of unexpected delays.

Arriving in Cincinnati

You will most likely be arriving in Cincinnati via the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). The airport is about a half an hour’s drive from UC’s campus.

It’s always a good idea to arrange with a family member, friend, or colleague to give you a ride from the airport. But there are other easy ways to catch a ride from the airport to UC as well:

Executive Airport Shuttle. There are official airport shuttle vans that can take you from the airport to UC. Log onto http://www.executivetransportation.org/airport.aspx for more information or to make a reservation ahead of time. They make regular stops at UC’s campus and at other locations around the city.

Taxi. There are always taxis waiting outside the airport.

Uber/Lyft. If you have a ride sharing app like Uber or Lyft, there are always plenty of drivers near the airport who can ride you to campus.

Go to page 20 for more information on transportation in and around Cincinnati.
You can purchase hardware and software at educational discounts at the UC Bookstores, too. The Microsoft Office suite is a free download to students via their Office 365 student email account. As long as you are a student at UC, you will be able to use the software free of charge.

In addition to books and software, the Bookstore features a wide array of UC clothing and gifts, supplies, greeting cards, and a Tech Center that services Apple computers.

The Medical Bookstore on Level 3, of CARE/Crawley on the medical campus, features textbooks, lab gowns, white coats, various instruments, and supplies.

Bearcat Card
The Bearcat Card is the debit feature of the UC ID and features flex dollars that can be used on campus at 60+ locations including all food locations and off-campus at more than 80 locations. Deposit funds online to your Bearcat Card at uc.edu/bearcatcard or at the MainStreet Connection Center (information desk on Level 3 of Tangeman University Center), or you can manage your account online. The dollars on your account will transfer from semester to semester or you can get a refund of the balance at the end of the school year. Students get a 10% discount in beverage vending machines throughout campus when they use their Bearcat Card. uc.edu/bearcatcard. You will have a chance to get your Bearcat Card at International Student Check-in.

Mail
The nearest U.S. Post Office is located on Vine Street. Its hours of operation are weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The telephone number is (513) 751-4384.

The U.S. Postal Service will ship packages both within the U.S. and overseas. However, there are private companies which can ship packages; some will provide overnight guarantees. United Parcel Service (UPS) and Federal Express (FedEx) are two examples.

On-Campus Dining, Attractions and Services

Meal Plans
Residential Meal Plans are designed for students living in campus residence communities, although students who live off-campus are also eligible to purchase these plans. Campus Dining Passes have been created for non-residential students, upper-class residents, and faculty and staff to take advantage of the dining centers at a cost savings. For more information about meal plan pricing, visit http://www.uc.edu/food.html

On-Campus Dining
Students may choose from a number of quick and full-service dining facilities housed on campus. Visitors are also welcome in the CenterCourt and MarketPointe@Siddall dining centers.

Tangeman University Center (TUC): TUC has a food court which includes Chick-fil-A, Papa Johns Pizza, Taco Bell, Greens to Go with KumaNeko Sushi and Burger King. Mick & Mack’s is a full-service restaurant located in TUC on level 3. Quick Micks’ and CatSkatler have food items that can be purchased quickly.

Student Life Center: Adjacent to Tangeman University Center, the Student Life Center houses Starbucks Coffee and Subway sandwiches.

Starbucks: Located in Emery Hall (CCM), Steger Student Life Center and Langsam Library on the main campus and in CARE/Crawley on the medical campus. Offers Starbucks coffee, pastries, bagels, soups and sandwiches.

MainStreet Cinema: Located in TUC. Showing recently-released, independent and international films. Tickets cost only a few dollars with your UC ID.

Catskeller: Located on the first floor of TUC, the Catskeller Campus Pub features pool tables and HD televisions.

Nearby Food Options
There are lots of restaurants within walking distance of campus, as well, in a variety of cuisines.

There is also a Kroger grocery store within walking distance where you can purchase produce, other food items, and toiletries.

A nearby Target department store sells food as well as clothing items, pots and pans, and bedding materials you may need when you arrive in Cincinnati.

You can find international ingredients and spices are international grocery stores like Jade Deep Indian Grocery on nearby Ludlow Avenue and Jungle Jim’s (about a 20-minute drive from campus).
University Health Services & Insurance

University Health Services

If you have a health question or problem, you should go to University Health Service (UHS). The doctors at University Health Services are the same faculty who teach and train doctors at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. From sore throats to sprained ankles, University physicians are here for you.

You can receive personalized attention at University Health Services. Services provided include:

- Primary care services
- Women's health
- Dermatology
- Mental health services
- Preventative health care
- Health education
- Wellness promotion

Additional specialty services include a pharmacy, x-ray and laboratory services. University Health Services is open daily during the week for your convenience. Appointments are required. There is also a doctor “on call” 24 hours a day to advise you, should you have an emergency.

For more information, go to the UC Student Health Insurance Office and enroll to get it. If at any time while registered for classes, international students change their F or J Visa status, register for classes from outside the United States, or transfer to another institution, they must contact the UC Student Health Insurance Office immediately. Failure to do so will result in their responsibility to reimburse the University for the student health insurance premium. Student health insurance fees are subject to change without notice.

For more information on Student Health Insurance please visit the website: [http://www.uc.edu/uhs](http://www.uc.edu/uhs).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is a professional counseling office within Student Affairs. They provide counseling, outreach programs, and related services for UC students. They help students address and resolve personal issues related to mental health, stress, family or friend situations, and more so that you can make the most of your educational opportunities at UC.

For more information, go to [https://www.uc.edu/counseling.html](https://www.uc.edu/counseling.html).

University Health Insurance

All international students are required to carry the University Student Health Insurance policy unless they prove coverage equal to or greater than the University policy. Foreign-based policies WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Insurance fees will be included on your tuition bill as soon as you are registered. Students are responsible for paying the fees each semester they are registered.

Students who qualify for a waiver of the policy must follow the guidelines established by the Student Health Insurance Office for obtaining a waiver. Unless you register for 6 credit hours or more you will not be charged for the University Student Health Insurance policy. However, you MUST go to the Student Health Insurance office and enroll to get it. If at any time while registered for classes, international students change their F or J Visa status, register for classes from outside the United States, or transfer to another institution, they must contact the UC Student Health Insurance Office immediately. Failure to do so will result in their responsibility to reimburse the University for the student health insurance premium. Student health insurance fees are subject to change without notice.

For more information on Student Health Insurance please visit the website: [http://www.uc.edu/uhs](http://www.uc.edu/uhs).

Security

Security at the University of Cincinnati is provided by the Department of Public Safety, which includes the West Campus Division and the East Campus complex. Each division employs full-time, trained, state-commissioned officers who carry full arrest powers. Their jurisdiction extends to all state-owned University property, which includes all University facilities and parking areas. They work with the city police to provide service to the University and surrounding communities.

On the West campus, students should report all emergencies and crimes to the dispatcher at (513) 556-1111 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency only). Officers will be dispatched immediately to assist.

For the East Campus complex, which consists of University Hospital, Medical Sciences Building, Barrett Center, Medical Arts Building and all Outpatient Clinics, Holmes Hospital, College of Pharmacy, College of Nursing, Healthcare Professionals and Kettering Laboratory, students should contact the East Campus Police Division at (513) 558-1111 or (513) 558-4900 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency only).

In an effort to make the students’ environment as safe as possible, the police need all the assistance that students can provide. Therefore, reporting crimes and unusual activities immediately to the dispatcher is essential to ensure a safe campus.

The Department of Public Safety also provides a Crime Prevention Information Center. This center disseminates information on methods of resisting threats of crime in the home and on the street.
Ways to Get Involved on Campus

UC is unlike any other University in the region in that there is so much to do and so many ways to get involved on campus! Explore your options, make new friends, and try new hobbies. An active and balanced social life will help you to be successful in the classroom!

Stay Connected with UC International

In addition to providing assistance to you, in regard to visas and other important documents, UC International has a team dedicated to making sure that you enjoy your time here at UC. We encourage you to be successful inside and outside of the classroom.

UC International will host a variety of events for students, scholars and their families. These events will be little cost to you. We want to make sure that you see what Cincinnati has to offer both on and off campus. We will encourage you to participate in all events that we host. Our events are fun, you will meet fellow international students as well as domestic students, and they are of little cost to you!

Some example of these events include:

• Groups of students attending baseball, football and other sports games (both college and professional level)
• Cultural dinners and conversations about any experiences you are having on campus
• Social gatherings: coffee hours and social hours (we love a good pizza party!)
• Traditional holiday meals (American style!)
• Halloween and other holiday celebrations (very popular!)
• Religious celebrations

We encourage students to become as active as possible while they are on campus. A strong, stable social network will help you inside the classroom, so prepare to make many new friends here at UC!

UC International Events and IPALs

There are many ways you can stay connected to UC International so that you can keep up-to-date with all of these events:

Facebook: “Like” our page at “UC International” https://www.facebook.com/ucinternational/
Join our listserv! A listserv is a way that we communicate with a group of people about a particular topic. For example, you can sign up to receive emails about our office events, and only those that sign up will receive notifications about these events.

Go to https://listserv.uc.edu, search “UCIS” and click “Join Listserv.” It’s very easy!

UC International Event Staff

Expect to receive weekly emails from the UC International’s event and programming team. A team of six people work to plan events for international students and scholars to aid in their transition into UC and Cincinnati. Most of these events are free or of little cost to you.

You will first meet the event staff at International Student Check-in, which is when you have your documents checked by our Immigration Advisors. Please introduce yourself to all of our staff. We are excited to help you and answer any questions that you have!

Alternatively, if you have any questions or if you need any guidance, we encourage you to email us at international.students@uc.edu. This account is monitored during business hours, M-F from 8am-5pm.

International Partners and Leaders (IPALs)

IPALs are students interested in helping our international population feel welcome at UC. They are here to answer your questions, connect you to campus, learn about Cincinnati, or make friends.

The IPALs Lounge is open each semester and is a place where international students can come to ask questions, play games, or simply talk in English.

Follow IPALs on Facebook to keep up with their events and IPALs Lounge dates: International Partners and Leaders (UC)

IPALs also host small events for international students throughout the semester, so be on the lookout for those. We have a lot of fun!

CONTACT INFORMATION

UC International Facebook: UC International
UC International Instagram: @ucinternational
UC International Twitter: @UC_Global
UC International Snapchat: @ucinternational
IPALs Facebook: International Partners and Leaders (IPALs) UC
Getting Around Campus

Parking
Parking for a fee is available in the following locations:
- Calhoun Garage
- Campus Green Garage
- CCM Garage
- Clifton Court Garage
- Corry Garage
- Eden Garage
- Kingsgate Garage
- Stratford Garage
- Stratford Lots
- University Garage
- Woodside Garage

There is also metered parking available around campus. For more information, please visit: http://www.uc.edu/parking/

Shuttle Bus Service
During the academic year, UC provides campus regular shuttle buses Monday through Friday for various routes around campus and to nearby housing areas. There are limited shuttles available on weekends, breaks, and to places like downtown and Newport on the Levee. Schedules and routes are posted on their website at http://www.uc.edu/af/facilities/services/shuttle. Download the Doublemap app or go to https://uc.doublemap.com/map/.

University of Cincinnati Bearcat Bike Share
The Bearcat Bike Share provides free bicycles to anyone with a valid UC ID. The bike share works like a library; riders can check out the bikes to use on or off campus. Free bike at UC work to increase health, wellness and community, while decreasing carbon emissions, traffic and parking issues.

The Bearcat Bike Share is located on UC's Uptown Campus, at the Campus Recreation Center (West Campus) and the Fitness Center at CARE/Crawley (East Campus).

Go to page 15 of this handbook for information about NightRide, a campus rideshare service during evening hours.

UC Sports: Department of Athletics
Sports that participate in UC Athletics include: baseball, men's basketball, women's basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming and diving, track and field and volleyball.

Recreation/Exercise
There are two recreation/exercise facilities on campus. One is available at CARE/Crawley on the medical campus. The Campus Recreation Center (CRC), located in the heart of main campus, is a state-of-the-art fitness and recreation facility. With over 200,000 square feet of recreation space, the CRC offers UC students, employees, and friends of UC a wide range of exercise and fitness opportunities, including:
- Free group fitness and climbing wall access
- Three pools
- 6 gymnasium courts and 7 racquet courts
- Suspended indoor track
- 40-ft climbing and bouldering wall
- Over 200 cardio and weight machines
- Intramural sports including soccer, football, softball and more
- Discounted rates on swim lessons, personal training and nutrition coaching

Students enrolled full time (12+ credit hours as an undergraduate student or 10+ credit hours as a graduate student) on the Uptown Campus are assessed the full Campus Life Fee, which includes Campus Recreation Membership. Part-time students, scholars and family members can use the facilities by paying a membership fee. Visit http://www.uc.edu/campusrec to learn more.

UC Students are encouraged to come out to UC Athletics events and support your fellow Bearcats! UC Students are admitted FREE with a valid Student ID to all BEARCATS Athletics home games. Scholars and family members can purchase tickets for these games and events.

*Tickets are required for Football and Men’s Basketball.

FOR TICKETS:
1. gobearcats.com/students
2. Ticket Office: Richard E. Linder Center Suite 480 Open Monday-Friday, 9-5pm
3. 1-877-CATS-TIX

For information regarding Cincinnati Athletics, visit http://www.gobearcats.com/ for all 19 sports in the American Athletic Conference.
GETTING AROUND CINCINNATI & BEYOND

TRANSPORTATION

Getting Around Cincinnati & Beyond

Metro
Greater Cincinnati’s public transportation system, Metro, offers discounted bus service in Hamilton County and portions of Butler County and Clermont County for UC students and scholars every day of the year. For complete route, schedule and fare information, visit the website at http://www.go-metro.com/riding-metro. For the most current schedule, check the website at http://www.go-metro.com/metro. Metro provides on-time service, clean and safe transportation, and provides access to businesses, entertainment, and groceries directly from the UC campus. The Greyhound bus station is located at 1005 Gilbert Avenue, downtown Cincinnati. Call 1-800-231-2222 (out of town) or 352-6012 (local) for schedule and fare information. Metro is now offering an online directory of services for the needs of Cincinnati’s visiting international students. The International Student Connections is a program designed to help our guests get around town while experiencing familiar tastes of home. A listing of off-campus transportation services can be found at http://www.go-metro.com/riding-metro/international-student-connections.

Out-of-Town Bus Service
The Greyhound bus station is located at 1005 Gilbert Avenue, downtown Cincinnati. Call 1-800-231-2222 (out of town) or 352-6012 (local) for schedule and fare information. Bus fares are reasonable and riding the bus is a great way to see the United States. Megabus tickets are available to and from Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus and Pittsburgh. Megabus also has a bus stop on campus at West University Avenue and Commons Way. The Greyhound bus station is located at 1005 Gilbert Avenue, downtown Cincinnati. Call 1-800-231-2222 (out of town) or 352-6012 (local) for schedule and fare information. Bus fares are reasonable and riding the bus is a great way to see the United States. Megabus tickets are available to and from Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus and Pittsburgh. Megabus also has a bus stop on campus at West University Avenue and Commons Way. Megabus tickets are available to and from Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus and Pittsburgh. Megabus also has a bus stop on campus at West University Avenue and Commons Way. Megabus tickets are available to and from Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus and Pittsburgh. Megabus also has a bus stop on campus at West University Avenue and Commons Way.

Taxicabs
There are many taxicab companies in Cincinnati. The Yellow Cab Company (241-2100) is reliable and experienced, but there are also many other taxicab companies. You must call to be picked up; taxis do not cruise around town like in many other big cities.

Uber & Lyft
These are transportation services whose apps connect you with a reliable ride. Payment is automatic through the app, and fares are typically cheaper than a taxi.

Train Services
The Amtrak train station is located at 1301 Western Avenue, Queensgate. Routes may be limited. For more information call 1-800-872-7245, 651-3337 (local), or a travel agent. http://www.amtrak.com

Zipcar
Members can reserve Zipcars online or by phone at any time, immediately or up to a year in advance. Zipcar members have access to Zipcars using an access card, which works with the car’s technology to unlock the door, where the keys are already located inside. Zipcar also offer an iPhone or Android application that allows members to honk the horn to locate a Zipcar and unlock doors. Zipcar charges a one-time application fee, an annual fee, and a reservation charge. Fuel, parking, insurance, and maintenance are included in the price. Cars are available on campus. https://www.zipcar.com/universities/how

The City of Cincinnati’s Red Bike Share Program
Cincinnati is making bicycling an integral part of daily life. The Red Bike Share Program allows members to rent and ride bikes throughout the city, connecting campus to the downtown area. There are many conveniently located bike rental stations on UC’s campus. https://www.cincyredbike.org/how-it-works/

Obtaining an Ohio Driver’s License

Driver’s License Exam Stations and Deputy Registrar’s Offices:

- 10940 Hamilton Avenue, Seven Hills, OH 45240 (513) 769-3047
- 11177 Reading Road, Sharonville, OH 45240 (513) 674-7830

TRANSPORTATION

Obtaining an Ohio Driver’s License

If you have a valid International Driver’s License or a valid driver’s license from another U.S. state, you may drive a car in Ohio for up to one year from the date of your arrival in the U.S. Your DS-2019 must have been issued for a duration of time that exceeds one year in order to obtain an Ohio Driver’s license. However, if you purchase a car and register it in your name, or if you do not have a valid driver’s license from Ohio, the procedure for obtaining an Ohio Driver’s license is as follows:

2. Visit the nearest Deputy Registrar Office to get a temporary permit application packet. There is a small fee for this. You will need to bring identification with you.
3. Go to the nearest Bureau of Motor Vehicles license exam station to take a vision test and a written test on Ohio motor vehicle regulations and traffic signs. After you pass the written test, you will be issued a temporary instruction permit which authorizes you to practice for your road test only when there is a licensed driver seated in the front seat.
4. When you have developed your driving skills well enough, contact the nearest exam station to schedule a road test.
5. In order to be issued a license, you must present:
   a. Valid passport
   b. U.S. visa
   c. I-94 card
   d. One of the following: An I-20, or a DS-2019, along with an original letter from UC International Services stating that you are affiliated with UC.
   e. You must show that you will reside or have resided in Ohio for 12 months, which can normally be proved using the above documentation; and
   f. Each applicant must state whether a permanent Social Security number has been assigned. However, a permanent Social Security number is not required to be issued a driver’s license.

More information about getting an Ohio driver’s license and license plates can be found at http://www.dmv.org/oh-ohio/department-motor-vehicles.php.

Auto Insurance

AAA 1-855-729-3931
http://www.AAA.com

Allstate Insurance 1-800-255-7828
http://www.allstate.com

Geico Direct 1-800-861-8380
http://www.geico.com

Great American 1-800-545-4269
http://www.greatamericaninsurancegroup.com/

Progressive Insurance 1-800-669-6877
http://www.progressive.com

State Farm Insurance 1-513-531-7063
http://www.statelife.com

Obtaining an Ohio Driver’s License

If you have a valid International Driver’s License or a valid driver’s license from another U.S. state, you may drive a car in Ohio for up to one year from the date of your arrival in the U.S. Your DS-2019 must have been issued for a duration of time that exceeds one year in order to obtain an Ohio Driver’s license. However, if you purchase a car and register it in your name, or if you do not have a valid driver’s license from Ohio, the procedure for obtaining an Ohio Driver’s license is as follows:

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   f. Each applicant must state whether a permanent Social Security number has been assigned. However, a permanent Social Security number is not required to be issued a driver’s license.

More information about getting an Ohio driver’s license and license plates can be found at http://www.dmv.org/oh-ohio/department-motor-vehicles.php.

Auto Insurance

If you choose to get your own means of transportation, you will need automobile insurance as required by federal law:

In order to obtain license plates for a car, you will be required to show proof that you have auto insurance. It is illegal to drive without car insurance. Many companies offer a variety of auto insurance policies, so you should “shop around”. When you have selected a policy, read it carefully before signing any documents. The following companies offer auto insurance:

AAA 1-855-729-3931
http://www.AAA.com

Allstate Insurance 1-800-255-7828
http://www.allstate.com

Geico Direct 1-800-861-8380
http://www.geico.com

Great American 1-800-545-4269
http://www.greatamericaninsurancegroup.com/

Progressive Insurance 1-800-669-6877
http://www.progressive.com

State Farm Insurance 1-513-531-7063
http://www.statelife.com
Social Culture in the USA

Greetings

In the U.S., common greetings include: “Hi” and “Hello.” Someone else may also ask a question as a greeting, such as “How are you?” or, more informal, “What’s up?” These questions do not always require a response; or, a short response like “Fine, how are you?” may be appropriate.

Interacting With Your Peers and Colleagues

The ability to successfully interact with your peers and colleagues can greatly impact your stay at UC and enhance your professional and social networks. It is acceptable and even desirable in American culture to be proactive and introduce yourself in new social situations. Even with people of higher rank (e.g. deans), it is perfectly acceptable to introduce yourself to him or her before he or she comes to you.

In some cultures, it is common to give a small gift when meeting new colleagues. This is generally not part of American academic culture, although it is not a culture “mistake” if you do decide to give a small gift. Please do not interpret it negatively; it is simply a cultural difference.

Professional Social Events

When invited to an academic or business social event, please consider what would be appropriate for you to wear. Oftentimes, social events will be “business casual,” meaning that you do not wear old sneakers, jeans, or athletic clothing. We recommend that male guests wear dress pants and a nice shirt; a jacket and tie are optional. Females should wear a nice dress or pants and a blouse.

Luncheons

If you are invited to a luncheon, it means that food will be provided. The main point of a luncheon is to discuss a particular topic. Some people also refer to this as a “working lunch.”

Social Invitations

While you are here, we hope that you will meet and spend time with Americans and their families. These experiences may help you feel more comfortable when you are invited out. Typically, when you are invited somewhere, the invitation is for you only, unless your hosts specifically invite your family or friends. Bringing guests of your own without asking your host’s permission is usually considered impolite. You should always answer a written invitation, especially if it says R.S.V.P. (Répondez s’il vous plaît; French for “please respond”). Prompt notice is appreciated.

Never accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. If you must decline an invitation, it is enough to say, “Thank you for the invitation, but I am unable to attend.” If an unavoidable problem makes it necessary for you to change plans, be certain to tell the host as soon as possible.

When accepting an invitation for a meal, be sure to explain to your host if there is anything you are not supposed to eat. This courtesy will help the host to plan for food and beverages for everyone. If you must refuse something after it has been prepared, refuse politely.

Being on time is very important in American culture. Make sure you get directions to the place where the event will be held.

Pot Lucks

At these events, everyone attending is expected to bring a food item (“dish”) to share with everyone. Oftentimes, there will be a list on which people will write down what they will bring (to avoid two people bringing the same dish).

Understanding and Handling Culture Shock

Culture shock is part of cultural adjustment: the process of understanding and learning how to function in a new cultural environment. This process is common to most international employees, scholars and students coming to the U.S., as well as to U.S. employees, scholars and students going abroad. Cultural adjustment often occurs in several stages. Below are suggestions for how you can handle culture shock:

• Introduce yourself to people in your academic department, residence, etc. Churches, social clubs and organizations are also often an excellent way to meet people and learn more about the culture.

• Understand that “culture shock” is a normal stage—consider what differences an American might encounter in adjusting to your culture. Ask questions about things you don’t understand. Talk to people from your home country who have been here for awhile for their insight. Personal counseling services are available for those experiencing difficulty with the transition abroad. Please see page 14 for more information.

Hygiene Standards in the USA

Americans tend to put a lot of emphasis on personal cleanliness. Most Americans are very sensitive to the smells and odors of the human body, especially someone else’s. For this reason, most Americans bathe once a day, sometimes more during hot weather or after strenuous exercise. They use deodorants and antiperspirants, and they wash their clothes frequently. Most Americans are also concerned about having clean hair and fresh breath.

Individualism and Privacy

It is important to understand American individualism. From childhood, most Americans have been trained to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies. Americans also value privacy and personal space; standing too close or touching someone you do not know very well is often seen as inappropriate. Americans typically assume that people need some time to themselves or time alone to think about things or to recover spent psychological energy.

Directness and Assertiveness

Americans generally consider themselves to be honest, open and direct in their dealings with other people. They will try to do so in a manner which the other person will not find offensive or unacceptable. If they do not speak openly about what is on their minds, they will often convey their reactions in nonverbal ways (without words), through facial expressions, body positions, and gestures. Americans are not taught that they should mask their emotional responses. They are much less concerned with avoiding embarrassment to themselves or others than most cultures.

Friendship and Dating

While many Americans are fairly open and warm people who are quick to make new acquaintances, their mobility and sense of individualism mean that their friendships and dating relationships are often casual and informal. Americans often have many casual acquaintances and a few close friends. In the U.S., dating can often be casual and Americans tend to have relationships with multiple people over time before committing to an individual. Same-sex relationships generally accepted and occur openly across the U.S.

Women’s Rights

Comparatively, women in the U.S. are generally less inhibited than women from other countries. They are not usually shy with Americans or international visitors. Their relaxed and more independent attitude may be misunderstood by people whose native culture is more restrictive of women’s activities. It is not unusual, for example, for unmarried women to live by themselves, to share living space with other single women, or to go to public places unescorted.
Academic Culture in the USA

Additional Notes on the Classroom

- Students are expected to participate in class (e.g. ask the instructor questions, even during a lecture). Often a student’s grade is partially dependent on class participation. When a student speaks in class, he/she typically does not need to stand up while speaking.
- Instructors are expected to hold office hours during which students may come to them to discuss assignments, ask questions on course material, etc. Some instructors invite the students to address them by their first name.
- At the first class session, instructors should provide a syllabus which outlines course policies (e.g. number of absences allowed), schedule of assignments, instructor office hours and contact information, and how the final grade is calculated (e.g. 25% participation, 25% tests, 20% oral presentation, 30% final project).
- Instructors should not publicly criticize students or their work. This is not common in American academic culture.
- Romantic relationships between students and instructors who have influence over their grades are in violation of the Code of Academic Conduct.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive to class on-time. Some instructors take attendance and will allow a certain number (e.g. 3 per semester) of absences without a grade penalty. This is particularly true for undergraduate courses. Such policies should be clearly explained in the beginning of the semester and outlined in the course syllabus.
- Smoking is never permitted in the classroom; however, instructors may allow food and/or drink.
- Traditionally, student dress is casual. Shorts, t-shirts, jeans, even pajama-like clothes (especially for undergraduates) are common and not meant as an insult to the instructor.
- Students will expect clear instructions for their assignments, as well as feedback (comments, etc.) on the quality of their assignments.
- Undergraduates particularly may ask for opportunities to improve their grade by revising and correcting their assignment (this is often the case with papers and essays) or asking for extra-credit opportunities. Extra-credit assignments are additional assignments that students can do to improve their grades.

The Student Code of Conduct and Academic Dishonesty

When students come to UC, they are given a copy of the Student Code of Conduct, Rights, Responsibilities. The Code clearly states that academic dishonesty is a violation punishable by the University. Penalties may range from a warning to expulsion from UC.

The Code is available online at http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating on a test or assignment, assisting another student cheat on a test or assignment, committing plagiarism (claiming another's work as one's own), and trying to use one assignment for credit in two courses.

Specifically, the definition of plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing (expressing in different words) another's words, ideas, statistics, or illustrations (graphs, charts, etc.) without giving credit to the original source. Just as with print 2-D material, information gained from speeches and electronic sources, as well as the Internet must cite its original source.

University of Cincinnati Cultural Handbook 24

University of Cincinnati Cultural Handbook 25
Definitions of Important Terms

**Academic Year**: The academic year at the University of Cincinnati is divided into two semesters (fall and spring) of approximately 16 weeks each. Typically, awards such as scholarships and assistantships cover two semesters (fall and spring). At the end of each semester, there is a final exam period. There is a short break between each semester.

**Audit**: By auditing a course, the student receives no course credit or grade, but attends the course to learn the subject. The instructor determines the extent to which the student may participate.

**Assignment**: Out-of-class work required by a professor; for example, reading books, writing papers, or doing a lab report. Your professor will expect the assignment to be finished by a certain date.

**Credit Hours**: The quantity of work a student does at UC is measured in credit hours. The number of credit hours a course is worth is usually based on the number of hours it meets each week. To complete your degree, you must have a specific number of credit hours. See your departmental handbook for details.

**Drop**: If a student decides not to take a class, but has already officially registered for it through the Registrar’s Office, he/she must officially drop the class.

**Final**: An exam given at the end of a semester, usually on all the academic material covered in class. The final exam schedule is published in the Learning Opportunities Bulletin each semester.

**Grades**: The quality of a student’s academic work is measured by letter grades; A (excellent), B (above average), C (average), D (lowest acceptable), F (failing). Under certain circumstances, letters such as IP (in-progress), N (no grade), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory) may appear in grade reports. These letters are not grades and are not included in the calculation of a grade point average.

**Major**: The field in which you are trying to get your degree. In addition to the courses required by the major, students can take other classes, known as electives.

**Mid-Term**: A test given around the middle of each semester.

**Quiz**: A short test given during the semester, sometimes unannounced.

**Transcript**: A University document, outlining a student's dates of study, courses taken, and grades received.

American Holidays

Below provides an overview of American holidays. UC will be closed on all federal holidays. This means that a holiday is recognized by the US Government. Most businesses, including schools, banks, etc., are closed on federal holidays. The following units never close under any circumstances: College of Medicine, Hoxworth Blood Center, University Police, Office of Residence Life/Housing units, utility plants, emergency maintenance operations, any research unit where the integrity of the research must be preserved, and service units that routinely operate on a seven day per week, twenty-four hour per day schedule.

**New Year’s Day**: January 1: Federal holiday for schools, offices and banks. Stores are open. New Year’s Eve, December 31, usually is more important to Americans than New Year’s Day. Everyone gathers with family and friends to celebrate the new year at midnight.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday**: Third Monday in January: Federal holiday that began in 1863. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized and led the civil rights movement in America during the 1960s.

**Valentine’s Day**: February 14: Not a federal holiday. Celebrated by sending cards and giving candy or flowers to loved ones.

**Easter**: Date varies: Not a federal holiday (March/April). A religious holiday for Christians who believe that on this day Christ rose from the dead. Many folk traditions are now connected with Easter, including the decoration of brightly colored eggs.

**April Fool’s Day**: April 1: Not a federal holiday. As in many other countries, this day is marked by the custom of playing practical jokes on friends and colleagues.

**Mother’s Day**: Second Sunday of May: Not a federal holiday. On this day Americans honor their mothers by sending flowers and buying small gifts.

**Memorial Day**: Last Monday in May: Federal holiday. Memorial Day is the day on which Americans remember those who died in military service to their country. Many families visit graves and decorate them with flowers.

**Father’s Day**: Third Sunday in June: Not a federal holiday. Americans honor their fathers with cards and gifts.

**Independence Day**: July 4: Federal holiday. Independence Day commemorates the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The country celebrates with picnics and fireworks.

**Labor Day**: First Monday in September: Federal holiday. This holiday was established in recognition of the labor movement’s contribution to the productivity of the country. This day is the last holiday of the summer.

**Rosh Hashanah**: Date varies (September): Not a federal holiday. Rosh Hashanah, which commemorates the beginning of the Jewish New Year, is the first of the Ten Days of Penitence, which ends with Yom Kippur, the most solemn of Jewish holidays.

**Halloween**: October 31: Not a federal holiday. This was originally a religious holiday, but its religious character has been lost in the United States, and it is now celebrated mostly as a children’s holiday. Traditions include carving pumpkins, dressing up in costumes and going around the neighborhood to receive treats. When people come to the door, children say “trick or treat,” meaning, “If you don’t give me a treat, I will trick you.”

**Thanksgiving Day**: Fourth Thursday of November: Federal holiday. The first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1621 to give thanks for the bountiful harvest and their triumph over the wilderness. Now it is a time when Americans give thanks for the good life they enjoy. They celebrate by getting together with family and friends to enjoy foods like turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie.

**Hanukkah**: Date varies (December): One of the less solemn of the Jewish holidays, but one widely observed even by nonreligious Jews. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of Jewish Maccabees over their Syrian rulers in 167 B.C. Hanukkah is marked with parties, games, gifts for children, and the lighting of the eight candles of the menorah.

**Christmas**: December 25: Full year’s holiday. Many people regard Christmas as the most important holiday of the year, with the holiday season extending from a few days before Christmas to New Year’s Day. Although its origins are religious in nature, it is a holiday celebrated by almost everyone in the country. Families gather together to exchange gifts and share a traditional dinner. They also typically decorate a Christmas tree.

**Kwanzaa**: December 26-January 1: This week-long celebration honors African American heritage, culminating in a feast and gift giving.
General Legal Counseling

If you are having trouble with anything on or off-campus and need general legal counseling, contact Legal Aid at (513) 241-9400. Call this number for any legal concerns you may have. This service is provided free of charge to low-income individuals in Cincinnati. If Legal Aid is unable to help you, they will advise you and refer you to other services.

For all immigration and tax issues, contact UC International Services at (513) 556-4278 or international.students@uc.edu. Advisors also can offer referrals to other legal assistance.

University-Related Conflict or Issue

If you are having a university related conflict or issues, contact the Office of University Ombuds, located in 607 Swift Hall. Call (513) 556-5956 to set up an appointment with the UC Ombuds to discuss your problem. The Ombuds is available to all members of the University community for CONFIDENTIAL discussion of your problem. This is not legal advice, but you will be presented with University policies and your options. The Ombuds may serve as an informal mediator and will also refer you to other services, if needed. You can also visit their website at http://www.uc.edu/ombuds/.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Legal Aid
Phone: (513) 241-9400

UC International Services
7148 Edwards One
Phone: (513) 556-4278
Email: international.students@uc.edu

UC Ombuds
607 Swift Hall
Phone: (513) 556-5956
Website: http://www.uc.edu/ombuds/

Thank you for choosing to study abroad at the University of Cincinnati! We know that living abroad is an adjustment. UC and Cincinnati are likely very different from your home country; however, living and studying in the U.S. is an amazing experience that you are very fortunate to have. We hope you enjoy your time in the United States.

If you have any issues or questions, you can contact us at any time at international.students@uc.edu. We can always direct you to where you need to go on campus, or otherwise. You can also contact our International Partners and Leaders (IPALs) group to talk to other students and make friends. You can meet the IPALs in person at the IPALs Lounge during the academic year or connect on Facebook or Wechat.

Welcome to UC, Cincinnati, and the US!

-UC International.

Useful Websites

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UC International Services</th>
<th><a href="http://www.uc.edu/international/services.html">http://www.uc.edu/international/services.html</a></th>
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<td>Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cvgairport.com/">https://www.cvgairport.com/</a></td>
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<td>Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>Cincinnati’s Local News Guide</td>
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