Congratulations on your admission to the University of California and welcome to the Riverside campus!

**Attention: All Ph.D. Students**

Please plan to arrive in Riverside by Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

The **Mandatory** Graduate International Student Orientation (PHD) will take place on Friday, September 9, 2016 in the Highlander Union Building, Room 302. Check-in at 8:30 AM.

Register via the [Highlander Orientation Database](#)!

Continue to check your email account for further updates.
The UCR International Students and Scholars Office and the University of California, Riverside campus will be closed on Monday, September 5, 2016 in observance of Labor Day. No one will be here to assist you during this period.

Please read **everything** in this letter carefully so that you can arrive better prepared for life at UCR as an international student. Any further questions that you have can be directed to our office by email. Please send your message to [InternationalCenter@ucr.edu](mailto:InternationalCenter@ucr.edu).
You should arrive in Riverside by Wednesday, September 07, 2016.

If you are in F or J status and entering from outside the United States, regulations allow you to arrive up to 30 days in advance of the program start date on your initial attendance I-20 or DS-2019 form. Please do not try to arrive earlier as you will be refused entry.

Caution! Plan your arrival carefully! Public transportation from the airports and bus terminals can be limited, especially at night and on weekends. Please refer to the Transportation pages for more information on how to get to Riverside from LAX International Airport or from Ontario International Airport. Also, please note that we will not accept any packages delivered due to space limitations.
Table of Contents

- Important Dates for Graduate International Students
- Pre-departure Orientations
- Applying for a Visa & Entering the U.S. – Important Facts
- SEVIS Fee Information
- SEVIS Transfer for F-1 and J-1 Students
- Housing in the U.S.
- On Campus Housing
- Temporary Housing
- Health Insurance
- Immunization Information
- Expenses
- Entering the U.S.
- Shuttle Transportation to Riverside
- Required International Student Online Check-In (all non-immigrants except J-1)
- Required J-1 International Student Check-In
- Mandatory International Student Orientation
- Mandatory Graduate Division Orientation
- SPEAK Test for New Teaching Assistants
- Class Registration
- Climate in Riverside
- Taxes
- Tobacco Free Policy
- Child Care
- School –Aged Children
- International Peer Advisors (IPAs)
- Programs for International Students
- Student Organizations
- Useful Links
## Important Dates for Graduate International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wednesday, September 7| Apartment Move-In Day  
                          Medical insurance begins  |
| September 7-25         | Graduate Student Activities and Welcome Events |
| Friday, September 9   | **Mandatory International Student Orientation for:**  
                          **All PHD students 9:00 AM; Check-In at 8:30 AM**  
                          **Highlander Union Building (HUB) Room 302** |
| Saturday, September 10| Shuttles to area stores for groceries, sheets and other necessities |
| September 13 & 14     | SPEAK Test (New Teaching Assistants)  
                          University Extension Center |
| Friday, September 16  | **Required Check-in for all new J-1 students**  
                          **Report between 8:30 and 10:30 AM; Surge 308** |
| September 11-22       | Settling-in Trips and Activities with the International Peer Advisors |
| Monday, September 19  | Fall 2016 Quarter begins  
                          **Graduate Division Orientation** |
| Thursday, September 23| Instruction begins – First day of classes |
Pre-Departure Orientations

EducationUSA is an organization sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

The International Students and Scholars Office suggests attending a Pre-Departure Orientation Program to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have about the departure from your home country to the United States.

Find out when and where Pre-Departure Orientations will be held in your home country!
Applying for a Visa & Entering the U.S. – Important Facts

- You must use the appropriate forms (I-20 for F-1 visa or DS-2019 for J-1 visa) from UC Riverside to obtain your visa and to enter the United States.

- If you have an initial attendance I-20 or DS-2019 Form, you must enter the United States in the 30-day period before the program start date on your Form. **You will not be allowed to enter if you arrive earlier.**

- If you are entering the United States with an initial attendance I-20 or DS-2019 Form, you will be required to pay the SEVIS Fee before you apply for your visa. F-1 applicants pay $200 and J-1 visa applicants pay a $180 SEVIS fee. Please see the next page for further information.

- Do not enter the U.S. using a B-1/ B-2 (tourist) visa or visa waiver. You will not be able to change your status to F-1 or J-1 in the U.S.

- F-2 students are not able to pursue full time degree programs in the United States. Do not enter in F-2 status if you plan to be a full time degree-seeking student. **If you are currently in the United States in F-2 status, you must file and be approved for a change of status to F-1 before the quarter begins in order to pursue a full time degree program.** Please contact the International Students and Scholars Office at internationalcenter@ucr.edu or (951) 827-4113 for further information.

- Consulates require an in-person interview for most visa applicants. We recommend that you apply for a visa as far in advance as possible since visa issuance can sometimes take up to 3 months depending on the required security clearances. Please review the following information designed to assist you with the visa application process.
You will need to apply for a visa at the United States Consulate in your home country.

Please review the information about visa applications and fees at the Department of State’s website.

You will be required to present your Admissions Letter, your I-20 or DS-2019 Form, proof of financial support and a receipt for the SEVIS Fee (if applicable) when applying for a visa. Other items may also be requested. Be prepared to show that you have significant ties to your home country and that you will return there after completing your studies in the United States.

If you are preparing to study in a field that the consular officer may consider sensitive to the national security of the United States, please plan to apply for a visa well in advance and be prepared for potential delays. Students in fields such as biochemistry, cell & molecular biology and electrical engineering, for example, are sometimes subject to these security clearances. In our experience, students from the People’s Republic of China, India, and Iran are often subject to such clearances.
For students in F or J status and those changing to F or J:

*Who has to pay the SEVIS fee?*

If you are entering the United States with an initial attendance I-20 or DS-2019 Form, you will be required to pay the SEVIS Fee ($200 for F-1 students; $180 for J-1 students) before you apply for your visa or before you enter the United States (if a visa is not required).

If you are a non-immigrant transfer student with a transfer pending I-20 or DS-2019 Form, you do not have to pay the SEVIS Fee.

If you are changing levels from one-degree to another at UCR, you do not have to pay the SEVIS Fee.

If you are changing status to F or J, you will be required to pay the SEVIS Fee.

If you are out-of-status and reentering the United States with an initial attendance I-20 Form, you will be required to pay the SEVIS fee.

*How do I pay the SEVIS Fee?*

You must complete and submit Form I-901 with the appropriate payment.

The easiest way to pay the SEVIS Fee is online with a credit card at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). You must print out and keep your receipt. This proves that you have paid the SEVIS Fee.

You can also pay the SEVIS Fee by mail with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. dollars.

In some locations, you may be able to pay the fee through Western Union in local currency. You may find instructions here.

Questions? Ask us or review the frequently asked questions online.

Take your receipt with you when you apply for a visa and when you enter the United States. You cannot pay the SEVIS fee at the border or at the airport when you arrive.
SEVIS Transfer: F-1 & J-1 Students

Are you currently in the United States?
Do you need to transfer your SEVIS Record to UC Riverside?

If you are currently in the United States at another institution (high school, college, language program, etc.), and coming to UCR as a visa student in F or J immigration status, you must complete a SEVIS transfer. In order to start this process, the international student advisor at your current school must verify your immigration status. This verification can be completed by following the steps outlined below.

**F-1 Students:**
Ask your international student advisor to "release" your SEVIS record to the University of California, Riverside. Please notify the Graduate Admissions Office (grdadmis@ucr.edu) of your SEVIS record "release date". Once your record is released and you have met all other admissions requirements, the Graduate Admissions Office will issue you a "transfer pending" SEVIS I-20. If you will be traveling over the break, make sure to communicate with your academic department regarding the pick up or mailing of your transfer pending I-20.

**J-1 Students:**
Ask your international student advisor to "release" your SEVIS record to the University of California, Riverside. Please notify the International Students and Scholars Office of your SEVIS record "release date". Once your record is released and you have met all other admissions requirements, the International Students and Scholars Office will issue you a SEVIS DS-2019. If you plan to travel internationally before classes begin, please consult with an international student advisor at the International Students and Scholars Office. You may contact our office at internationalcenter@ucr.edu.
Contracts and leases are **binding documents**. It is important to read and understand the details of a contract or lease prior to **signing it**. There may be strict penalties associated with cancelling a contract or lease.

We encourage you to review the [International Student Handbook](#) and review the “What You Need to Know Before Renting an Apartment” article (Chapter 8) for further information and guidance.
On-Campus Housing

Living in student housing provides you easy access to campus and allows you to take advantage of special programming and the opportunity to meet many other students. UCR offers many on-campus housing options, including family housing.

You may access further information, as well as take a virtual tour of the residence halls by visiting the Housing Services website. Housing contracts may be submitted online. Log on to the Housing contract page and use your NetID and password to access the online Housing contract.

If you have any questions regarding housing or the application process, you may contact Housing Services at housing@ucr.edu.
If you have not made housing arrangements and need a temporary arrangement, the following are some options:

**UCR Extension Residence Center**
1200 University Avenue, Riverside, CA 92507
Single $65 per night per person including breakfast
Double $35 per night per person including breakfast
Contact: Riko Toyoda at (951) 827-1708 or rtoyoda@ucx.ucr.edu

**Dynasty Suites**
3735 Iowa Avenue, Riverside, CA  92507
1-800-842-7899 (free call within the U.S.)
(951) 369-8200
FAX: (951) 341-6486
*When you submit your reservation, please identify yourself as a UCR student to receive UCR discounts.*
Rooms have a microwave oven and a small refrigerator.

**Comfort Inn**
1590 University Avenue, Riverside, CA  92507
1-800-228-5150 (free call within the U.S.)
(951) 683-6000
FAX: (951) 782-8052
*When you submit your reservation, please identify yourself as a UCR student to receive UCR discounts.*
A 15-minute walk from campus.
All international students are required to have medical insurance. You will be enrolled in a UCR policy and the fee for the insurance is included in your quarterly fee statement.

**Medical Insurance coverage for incoming international students in F & J status will begin on September 7, 2016.**

If you are arriving before September 7, 2016, we recommend that you purchase short-term temporary insurance to cover the period of time before September 7th.

UCR may accept medical insurance coverage from an outside agency if the coverage meets UCR requirements. However, you must apply for a waiver immediately. **Do not purchase health insurance in your home country without first contacting the Student Health Office.**

**NOTE: J-1 students and their dependents must carry health insurance that meets the U.S. Department of State requirements at all times.**

Waivers will be available online in June. You may review [waiver policy information](http://www.campushealth.ucr.edu/) on the Insurance website.

For any questions regarding the waiver policy, contact the Student Insurance Office at (951) 827-5683 or send your email message to: marsha.tolson@ucr.edu, or visit the website at [http://www.campushealth.ucr.edu/](http://www.campushealth.ucr.edu/). The Student Insurance Office is located on the 2nd floor of the Student Services Building, in room 2221.
You may be required to have certain Health Immunizations either prior to your arrival or upon arrival.

Please review the [Immunizations page](#) of the Student Health Services website for details.

Contact the Campus Health Insurance Office.  
Tel: 951-827-5683  
Email: [health@ucr.edu](mailto:health@ucr.edu)
You must bring enough money to pay University fees (tuition, fees, and health insurance) move-in costs for housing and other expenses. You can find more information on university fees here.

You may pay your University fees online with a credit card, but keep in mind that the University only accepts certain types of credit cards. For online payment with Growl, Visa cards are NOT accepted. Growl only accepts Discover, MasterCard, and American Express.

Please see the UCR website for more information. We recommend bringing travelers checks in U.S. dollars. For other expenses credit cards will be very useful. Do not bring a check or draft in foreign currency, even from a non-California bank, since access to your money will be restricted for up to one month until the check is cleared. This is also true for any wire transfers as you will not have immediate access to the money.

“Late” fees are not charged for your first quarter of enrollment, however, if you continue your studies at UCR for more than 1 term, make sure that you note payment deadlines on the UCR Calendar in order to avoid late fees and/or having your classes being dropped.

**Your first quarter fees must be paid in full by the end of the third week (10/14) or your student status will lapse and you will be dropped from all of your courses. Do not wait until the deadline to pay your fees; make sure to pay your fees as soon as possible to avoid lapsing.**
All incoming international students should arrive by Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

If you have an initial attendance I-20 or DS-2019, please check the start date on your I-20/DS-2019 before making any travel plans. The earliest you may apply for entry to the U.S. is 30 days prior to your start date.

If you have a transfer pending I-20 or DS-2019, you are not restricted to the 30 day rule.

Make sure to have the following documents with you upon entry:

1. Your original form I-20 or DS-2019
2. Your passport with valid F-1 or J-1 visa
3. Your original admission letter to UCR
4. A copy of your paid SEVIS fee receipt
5. A copy of your financial eligibility documentation

After arriving at UC Riverside, make sure to visit the Custom and Border Patrol website at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov to verify and print your I-94 record of arrival.
Shuttle Transportation to Riverside

There are a variety of options you may use for transportation from the airport to Riverside. We recommend that new students use Super Shuttle, as it is a convenient, easy and safe method of transportation.

Super Shuttle: Toll Free: 800-258-3826
www.supershuttle.com

From Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

- Super Shuttle provides a 24-hour service directly from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to UCR at a cost of approximately $77 for one person (shared ride van service at $9 each additional person). A reservation must be made 2-3 days before arrival. Super Shuttle requires payments with credit cards or cash.
- To call for your van, after claiming your baggage, go to the center island towards the orange sign that reads “Share Ride” and give your confirmation number to the Shuttle Representative wearing a blue cap and jacket.

From Ontario International Airport (ONT)

- Super Shuttle provides a 24-hour service directly from Ontario Airport to the Riverside’s Campus at a cost of approximately $39 ($9 each additional person). A reservation must be made 2-3 days before arrival. Super Shuttle requires payment with credit card or cash.
- To call for your van, after claiming your baggage, you can use the courtesy phone to call #2897 to speak to a Super Shuttle agent or you can go directly to the right end of the center island. Look for the sign that reads “Transport Service” and give your confirmation number to the Shuttle Representative wearing a blue cap and jacket.
All new international students are required to complete a check-in **AFTER arriving in the U.S.**

**Transfer Students: You should complete this process AFTER returning from any summer travel.**

The online check-in must be completed prior to 09/19/2016.

**To Check-In:**
- Once in My Forms, select the **International Student Personal Record Form** and click “fill out form.”
- Fill out all applicable information.
- Upload copies of your documents.
- Required: I-94 arrival record (Your I-94 arrival record may be found at [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov) **AFTER** you’ve arrived.)
- Required: Copy of visa stamp.
- Required: Copy of passport photo page.
- Required: Copy of passport entry stamp.
- Required: Copy of your UCR I-20.
- Required: Copy of your most recent I-20 prior to UCR (if you’ve transferred your record in active status)
- If applicable: Copy of I-797 approval notice for change of status in the U.S.
- Submit form.

**Students with dependents must also complete the Dependent Record Form via My Forms.**

**Documents may be scanned at:**
Rivera Library or Science Library
Computer Labs: Arts 311, Sproul 2225, Watkins 2111 or Watkins 2117

*J-1 students must complete an in-person check-in. Please refer to the next page for details.*
Required J-1 International Student Check-In

J-1 STUDENT CHECK-IN

Date: Friday, SEPTEMBER 16  
Time: 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM  
Location: SURGE, Room 308

- A completed International Student Personal Record Form.

- Original documents and legible copies of:
  - your passport picture page with validity dates
  - Your J-1 visa
  - Your DS-2019
  - Your I-94 print-out (After entering the U.S., visit https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/ to print your I-94 record.)
  - Your passport page stamp that shows your most recent date of entry into the United States

- Your local contact information and emergency contact information
  One emergency contact should be a family member or legal guardian.

- If you have a J-2 dependent, you will also need to bring copies of their pertinent information (DS-2019, passport, J-2 visa, and I-94 card print-out) and a completed dependent record form.
**Mandatory International Student Orientation**

**Date:** Friday, September 9  
**Place:** Highlander Union Building (HUB) Room 302.  
Please arrive at 8:30 AM for check-in.  
(Mandatory for all F and J students)

The International Students and Scholars Office hosts this mandatory orientation program. The orientation will inform you about the academic system, student services, and organizations at UCR. We will cover immigration regulations, health insurance and services, registration and enrollment procedures, and cross-cultural adjustment. We will also provide special assistance for personal needs such as finding permanent housing, opening a bank account, going shopping, etc.

The cost of Orientation is $40 and will be charged to your GROWL student account. Lunch will be provided.

**Visa status other than F or J (E, H, L, etc.)**

You are encouraged to attend our orientation program; however, you are not required to do so. Please make sure to follow the instructions regarding the International Student Check-In; we ask you to complete this process. We will maintain a confidential file and will assist you in the event that you have to change your non-immigrant visa status. If you are currently a dependent (H-4, E-2, L-2, etc.) and are interested in changing your status to F-1 before you begin your studies at UCR, please contact us at internationalcenter@ucr.edu or 951.827.4113.

**PARKING:**

Check in with the parking kiosk on W. Campus Drive, off of University Avenue. The kiosk will provide you with a parking permit and parking instructions.

A parking attendant will be available starting at 7:00 AM. (Check-in for orientation begins at 8:30 AM.)
Graduate students must attend the mandatory Graduate Division Orientation Program.

You will receive more information regarding the orientation program from the Graduate Division.
If you have been nominated to be a Teaching Assistant in your academic department or are interested in becoming one, and your native language is not English, you must take a spoken English test (SPEAK).

**SPEAK TEST**
- **Date:** Sept. 13-14
- **Times:** 9:00AM, 12:00PM, 3:00PM
- **Room:** University Extension, 205

**What is the SPEAK Test?**
The SPEAK Test is a standardized assessment designed by the Educational Testing Service to rate English fluency. The test is delivered by computer at the UC Riverside Extension Center.

The test will be evaluated by two trained raters, and given a score between 20 and 60. The test takes about 30 minutes to complete.

**Registration**
Register here by completing this form.

Practice tests are optional and can be taken more than once.
Students may only register for one official test per quarter.

**Questions?**
Valerie Ramos
vramos@ucx.ucr.edu
951-827-1718
Room 244
UCR Extension Center
• Please contact the graduate program assistant in your department about registering. You will be able to enroll after you attend the International Graduate Student Orientation Program, unless there are additional holds on your student account.

• You will be able to register for classes when you arrive and will not have to pay the $50.00 late fee.

• Make sure your fees are paid by the end of the 3rd week of the quarter. If your fees are not paid in full by the end of the 3rd week, you will be dropped from your courses.
Fall temperatures range from 24-29 C in the daytime to 7-13 C at night. In the winter we have occasional rain showers, and temperatures range from 10-21 C in the daytime to 0-5 C at night. Spring temperatures range from 16-27 C in the daytime to 10-16 C at night. Summer temperatures can be hot, ranging from 32-38 C in the daytime to 16-21 C at night. Bring a variety of clothing, mostly for warm weather, but bring sweaters or jackets. You may want to visit nearby mountains which have snow in the winter.
If you have been nominated for a Teaching Assistantship or a Research Assistantship, be aware that the salary indicated is the gross income. Unless a tax treaty for your country applies, federal and state tax will be deducted out of your gross income. That amount can be 10-15% of your monthly income.
The University of California is Tobacco-Free.

**Smoking, the use of smokeless tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and unregulated nicotine products are strictly prohibited on the UCR campus.**

**Non-permitted Items and Activities:**
**All forms of tobacco**, including but not limited to:
- cigarettes
- cigars
- pipes
- hookahs
- electronic cigarettes
- all forms of smokeless tobacco

**Tobacco use** includes smoking, chewing, dipping or any other use of tobacco products.

**Smoking** refers to inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying of any lighted or heated tobacco product, as well as non-tobacco smoking substances and smoking instruments.
The Child Development Center at UC Riverside accepts children from age 2 months through five years of age (Kindergarten).

Immunization records are required. Please see the information under school-age children. The waiting list can be one year or longer so contact them as soon as possible if you need child care.
School-Age Children

For families with school-age children, ages 5-18, bring all previous academic records, original and English translation, and any records of immunization issued through the World Health Organization (WHO), or you can get records from your private physician.

Children in Day Care Centers and preschool must also show records of immunization. Before your child can be enrolled in an American school, records of immunization have to be shown, or the child will have to get the required inoculations again.
Every year we have a group of dedicated students volunteering to help you. One of the members of our IPA Team will be contacting you soon to say hello.
Friendship Family Program connects students with a UC Riverside Faculty or Staff family for an exchange of culture. Students are not expected to live with their friendship family; unlike a homestay program, the Friendship Family Program is designed for both parties to meet once each month for an activity of their choice, based on mutual interest and need (e.g. dinner, Thanksgiving Day, exploring Riverside).

Global Connections Partner Program pairs international students with a trained peer in order to facilitate international friendships and foster a mutual exchange of culture and language. GCP partners are selected based upon mutual hobbies or areas of interest; new partners are matched each term.

International Discussion Group is a weekly program of informal discussion that covers a wide range of topics. Discussion topics stem from relevant local and world news stories, hot university issues, and the personal inquiries and interests of the group. Examples of previous topics include cultural adjustment, the impact of stereotypes, holiday traditions across the globe, second language acquisition and study preparation techniques.

International Spouses & Partners Program is a free program designed to provide spouses and partners of all nationalities an opportunity to exchange friendships, culture and ideas. Students, spouses and children are welcome to participate.

Information regarding further activities will be provided at Orientation and in weekly emails!
There are a number of student organizations on campus, many of them international. Visit **Highlander Link** to learn about the different organizations here at UCR!

- Academic/Professional/Honor Organizations
- Associated Students Board
- Arts and Expressions
- Cultural
- Fraternity/Sorority
- Graduate Student Associations
- Political/Action
- Recreational
- Service
- Spiritual/Religious/Atheist
In case of an emergency, when the International Students and Scholars Office is closed you may call:

Campus Police at (951) 827-5222 or 9-1-1