

Southern California Campuses:

Living Guide for International Students



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

International Programs and Services:

For general inquiries:

international@thechicagoschool.edu

Serving International Students:

Michelle Ajemian

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213.615.7297
majemian@thechicagoschool.edu

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Coordinator, Educational Support Services
213.283.4268
desquivel@thechicagoschool.edu

Office of Student Affairs

CAstudentservices@thechicagoschool.edu

Administrative Offices/Centers:

International Programs and Services

international@thechicagoschool.edu

Office of Admissions

Toll Free: 800.721.8072. ext. 6666
admissions@thechicagoschool.edu
CAadmission@thechicagoschool.edu

Study Abroad

studyabroad@thechicagoschool.edu

Office of Student Accounts

Toll Free: 800.684.2890
studentaccounts@thechicagoschool.edu

Libraries:

LA campus: 213.615.7225

la-library@thechicagoschool.edu

Westwood campus: 310.208.4240 ext.111

westwoodlibrary@thechicagoschool.edu

Information Technology Help Desk

312.467.8600

helpdesk@thechicagoschool.edu

Student Organizations:

California Graduate Student Association

www.ego.thechicagoschool.edu/cgsa

Campus Safety:

Campus Advisories

<http://911.thechicagoschool.edu>

312.467.2100

Text Message Alerts

<http://www.getrave.com/login/tcsedsystem>

Campus Addresses and Phone Numbers:

Los Angeles Campus:

617 West 7th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Tel#: 213.615.7200

Westwood Campus

1145 Gayley Avenue, Suite 322
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Tel#: 310.481.5200

Irvine Campus

4199 Campus Drive
Irvine, CA 92612
Tel#: 949.769.7700

For more information regarding these services, please visit www.thechicagoschool.edu

HOUSING

As The Chicago School has urban campuses and does not offer on-campus housing, students must find their own housing within Los Angeles or Orange County.

Generally, Westwood, West Los Angeles, and Irvine are popular neighborhoods for young professionals. Glendale and Pasadena are safer residential areas for people who are looking for a family oriented neighborhood. If you would like to live in vibrant and trendy areas by the water, Santa Monica, Venice Beach, Huntington Beach, or Newport Beach may be for you! Previous international students have lived in cities surrounding Irvine, such as Costa Mesa, Orange, and Tustin.

Housing Tips:

- LA County is very large and students may choose to live in many different areas apart from Downtown LA. Each area has its own advantages and distinct culture, choose a neighborhood that you will feel comfortable in with convenient transportation options.

Major areas to Consider for LA Downtown campus:

- Downtown
 - Pros: Close to school, no car purchase necessary
 - Cons: High prices, little greenery, safety after dark
- Little Tokyo
 - Pros: Close to downtown campus, walking distance to shops and restaurants, dense Japanese culture
 - Cons: High prices, highly centralized and relatively small area, nearby neighborhoods not as safe
- Koreatown/ Mid-Wilshire
 - Pros: Affordable, close to downtown campus, Korean culture
 - Cons: Neighborhoods within the area vary in terms of safety, shops and restaurants are mostly Korean
- Silver Lake/ Los Feliz/ Echo Park/ East Hollywood
 - Pros: Hipster area, many cafes, close to downtown LA campus
 - Cons: Difficult parking, some areas are expensive
- San Gabriel Valley
 - Pros: Asian community living area with mostly Chinese and Vietnamese, accessible Asian markets, cheaper rent
 - Cons: Shops and restaurants are mostly Asian oriented, congested traffic during

- rush hours towards downtown
- Pasadena
 - Pros: Clean neighborhood, good shopping and restaurants, accessible by foot to major areas, direct train to downtown
 - Cons: Expensive, difficult parking
- Burbank/ Glendale
 - Pros: Relatively close to downtown campus, less expensive, close to mountains and other areas of LA County
 - Cons: Neighborhoods within this area is diverse, including pricing and safety
- West Hollywood
 - Pros: Central to star-gazing, shops, food, art museums, cafes
 - Cons: Highly congested traffic, difficult parking, difficult public transportation to school
- Santa Monica
 - Pros: Close to beach, great shopping and restaurants by foot, arts and culture readily available
 - Cons: High traffic congestion, difficult parking, high prices, touristy area
- Long Beach
 - Pros: Low rent, direct bus to downtown, close to beach
 - Cons: Longer commute, neighborhoods within the area vary in terms of safety

Major areas to Consider for Westwood campus:

- Westwood Village/ UCLA
 - Pros: University village, ample student housing, safe
 - Cons: Mainly college students in this area, noise level
- Brentwood
 - Pros: Safe, walkable, young neighborhood
 - Cons: Expensive, congested traffic within the city
- Century City
 - Pros: High end shopping, good restaurants, business district
 - Cons: Business community, places are not particularly walkable, expensive

Major areas to Consider for OC campus:

- Irvine
 - Pros: Safe, clean, scenic, many bicycle trails, close to campus
 - Cons: Expensive, though affordable compared to neighboring areas
- Newport Beach
 - Pros: Near the coastline, excellent restaurants, high-end shopping
 - Cons: Very expensive, further from campus, touristy
- Santa Ana
 - Pros: Most populous city in OC, young and diverse neighborhood, large Mexican-American culture
 - Cons: Many tourists, expensive

For a detailed description of the neighborhoods in the Los Angeles and Orange County areas, please see the *Guide to Living in Los Angeles/ Orange County*, available online at

<http://start.thechicagoschool.edu/california-living-in-california/>

For Tenant's Rights visit

http://tenant.net/Other_Areas/Calif/

WHERE DO I START LOOKING?

There are several ways to search for apartments.

Online

The internet is a great source for previewing and searching for apartments

- Rent.com (rent.com) is a free apartment search engine to do your initial apartment hunting.
- Los Angeles Apartments (losangeles.apartments.com) is a free apartment search site to do your initial apartment hunting.
- L.A. Craigslist (losangeles.craigslist.org) is a centralized online community where people post apartment availabilities as well as other classified ads.
- EZRentList (ezrentlist.com) is an apartment search site that can help you fill your apartment needs.
- Rental-Living (<http://www.rental-living.com/>) is an apartment search site for apartment complexes in Orange County.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

Temporary housing is plentiful in Southern California. One option you may want to consider is a homestay. A homestay can provide an opportunity for students to live in an American household for a determined period of time. Alternatively, you could stay in a hostel, which are inexpensive lodging places, or a hotel.

- Homestay in L.A. (homestayinla.com)
- Homestay Services International (<http://homestayservices.com/>)
- Universal Student housing (usaish.com/hmst.htm)
- Global Student Services (global-student-service.com/homestayforstudents.html)
- Hostels in L.A. (www.hostelz.com/hostels/USA/California/Los-Angeles) (<http://www.hostelworld.com/>)

Websites can also provide hotel information and great rates:

Priceline.com
Hotwire.com

This hotel provides Chicago School prospective students a discounted rate and is just one block from the Los Angeles campus:

Sheraton Los Angeles Downtown Hotel
711 South Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017
1.800.325.3535
1.213.488.3500



MONEY MATTERS

UTILITIES

It is your responsibility to contact the respective providers that your landlord or apartment management recommends and uses to set up utilities, such as gas, water, and electricity. Below are potential companies you might come into contact with:

Gas, Water, & Electricity

Connect Utilities

1.866.298.1514

www.connectutilities.com

Electricity in Orange County

Southern California Edison

1.800.655.4555

<http://www.sce.com/>

Gas in Orange County

Southern California Gas Company

1.877.238.0092

<http://www.socalgas.com/>

Internet & Cable

Time Warner Cable

www.timewarnercable.com

Internet & Cable

AT&T

<http://www.att.com/>

Be aware of different cable and internet plans as some may incur hidden fees.

GROCERIES

The major grocery stores in L.A. and Orange County are *Ralphs*, *Trader Joes*, *Albertsons*, and *Vons*. It is generally a good idea to obtain a member's club card if they are available, so you can receive discounts.

L.A. is a very diverse city where there are many places to purchase ethnic or native food products. Whether it is Chinese, Hispanic, German, South Korean, Indonesian, Indian, African, Vietnamese, there is no shortage of quality foods. Many native food markets are family owned; therefore, you may have to venture out into the ethnic neighborhoods. You can also visit www.specialtygrocery.net. This site offers information on ethnic grocers and marketplaces from Asian to Latin to kosher foods in Southern California.

SALES TAX

The breakdown of the taxes as of July 2012:

- 8.75% - 9% on items in LA
- 7.75% - 8% on items in Orange County
- Some items are exempt from tax, such as medical drugs and supplies and some groceries

BANKS near L.A. campus:

Bank of America

600 Wilshire Blvd.

213.312.90000

www.bofa.com

Bank of America 

City National Bank

606 S Olive St. #100

213.347.2200

www.cnb.com

**CITY NATIONAL
BANK**
The way up.™ 

Wells Fargo Bank

707 Wilshire Blvd.

213.614.2707

www.wellsfargo.com



BANKS near Irvine campus:

Wells Fargo Bank

18044 Culver Dr.

949.857.1762

www.wellsfargo.com



Chase Bank

4543 Campus Dr.

949.854.8122

<https://www.chase.com/>

CHASE 

SHOPPING

Neighborhoods have been created for shopping, each with their own unique style. They offer designer fashions, vintage shops, boutiques, and much more! The following are some of the famous shopping streets in LA: Abbot Kinney Boulevard, La Brea Avenue, Montana Avenue, Roberson Boulevard, Ventura Boulevard, and West Third Street.

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is still developing; therefore, it is *highly recommended* to have a car. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) operates the trains and buses in the area. For more information about the Metro, including fares, news, maps, and trip planning, you can visit www.metro.net.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is a multi-modal transportation agency serving Orange County with countywide bus and paratransit service, and Metrolink rail service. For more information visit <http://www.octa.net/>.

The MetroLink is Southern California's premier regional passenger rail system. For more information visit <http://www.metrolinktrains.com/>.

DRIVING

If you are interested in obtaining a driver's license, please visit the California's Department of Motor Vehicle's site at www.dmv.ca.gov. All information regarding new driving laws, fees, driving tests, and application processes can be found on the website.

As an international student, you must have the following when obtaining a driver's license:

- Social Security Number (SSN) OR a SSN Refusal Letter 676-SSAL
- I-94
- I-20
- Passport

Note: The state of California does **NOT** recognize an International Driving Permit as a valid Driver's License.

Visitors in California with a valid driver's license from their home country may drive without getting a California driver license as long as the home country license remains valid, but this is *strongly discouraged* since many officials are not aware of this rule and you may have your driver's license revoked.

You must have a valid California driver license to purchase any vehicles and to obtain auto insurance.

Responsibilities of Owning a Vehicle

The law requires that you *must* have auto insurance in order to drive a vehicle. Additional responsibilities include:

- Paying all car fees: property tax, title, tags
- Paying city parking fees
- Providing general preventive maintenance for your car
- Following all traffic laws
- Financing your car

PURCHASING A CAR

Make sure to research before attempting to buy a car. There are sites such as **CarBuyingTips.com** that can provide guidance when making a purchase. Have all of your facts before comparing and negotiating prices with dealers.

Remember to research your car of interest by using the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) which includes the car's history. **Carfax.com** is a website that can help you with a vehicle history search.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

FAITH & SPIRITUALITY

Staying connected to your spiritual community may help you feel more at home. There are many religious and cultural centers which can help you connect with other members who share your faith. For a list of churches, temples, religious affiliations, and organizations in the Southern California area, look in the Yellow Pages of your phone book or visit the following sampling of websites:



Churches

www.losangeleschurches.com

Synagogues

www.jewishguide.com

Temples

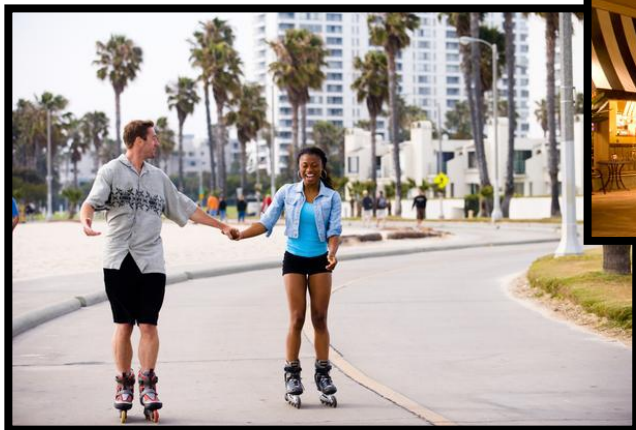
www.losangeleshindusociety.org

Mosques

www.muslim.com/losangeles

RECREATION & ACTIVITIES

There are plenty of things to do in the Los Angeles and Orange County areas. You can find a list of activities that interest you in [Los Angeles](#) or [Orange County](#) online.



SAFETY



In case of a crisis you can call a specific hotline such as:

L.A. Rape Crisis Hotline : 1.800..585.6231

Orange County Rape Crisis Hotline: 1.866.935.4783

L.A. Co. Mental Health/Crisis Line : 1.800-854-7771

Check the following website for a **list of national and California specific crisis hotline numbers**

<http://www.psychotherapist.net/crisis-hotlines.htm>

****Call 911** if you have an emergency or have been the victim of a crime. If you call 911 from a cell phone, you need to let the operator know your location by giving them the address of the nearest building.



SAFETY

EARTHQUAKES

Los Angeles is located near the San Andreas Fault, which makes the city subject to earthquakes.

Here are some tips on how to handle Earthquakes:

Preparation

- Stock up on emergency supplies such as batteries, flashlights, and a first aid kit.
- Arrange your furniture and belongings at home: store heavier objects on the bottom and fragile items in cabinets with latched doors.
- Do not hang anything where people frequently sit or sleep.
- Learn where the main switches are for your water, gas, and electricity.

Earthquake

- If you are indoors, stay inside away from windows and hanging objects. Move to a safer location such as under a table. Make sure to turn off the stove if you are cooking to avoid fire.
- If you are outdoors, move to an open area away from buildings and trees to avoid falling objects.
- If you are driving, slow down and stop on the side of the road. Do not park under bridges, power lines, road signs, or trees. Remain in the car.

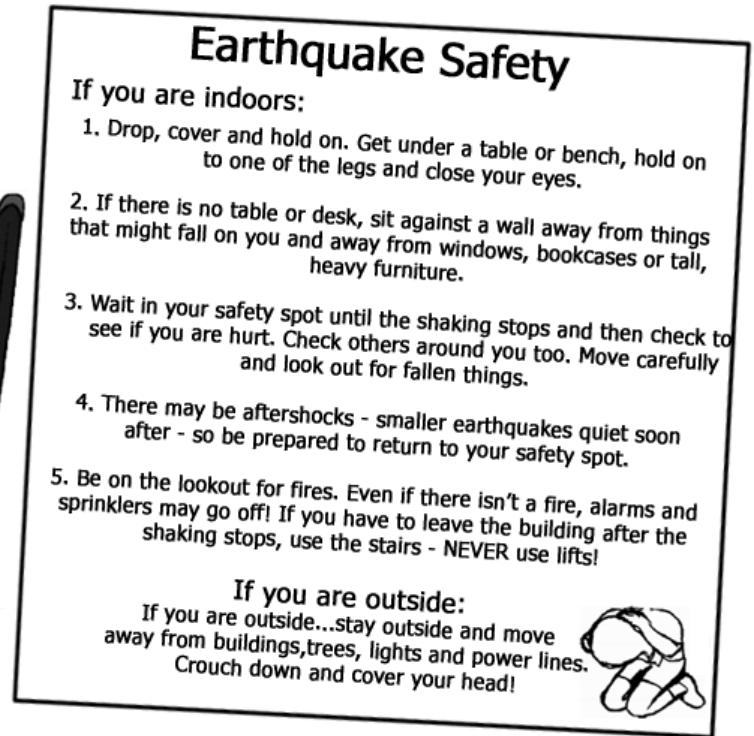
After an Earthquake

- Check for injuries and ensure safety.
- Check for property damage – if your building is damaged, vacate and move to safety.
- If you smell a gas leak, go outside and open all windows and doors. If possible, turn off the gas at the meter.
- If the power is out, unplug all major appliances.
- Follow up with renter's insurance

Small earthquakes are common around the Los Angeles area, so it is important to know the safety tips in order to act quickly and instinctively.

For more information on earthquake safety, see:

<http://geology.com/articles/earthquake-safety.shtml>



INTERESTING FACTS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Founded in 1781, Los Angeles was originally named "El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de la Porciuncula" which means "Town of Our Lady the Queen of the Angeles of the Small Portion". As the population grew, the name got shorter, and is now known as Los Angeles. Apart from condensing Los Angeles to L.A., the city has several nicknames:

City of Angels: Los Angeles means, "The Angels"

Lalaland: Refers to a dreamland where anything is possible.

The Southland: Typically used by local media

WEATHER

Both Los Angeles and Orange County are known for their year-round sunshine. Annually, L.A. averages 15 inches of precipitation which occurs during the winter and spring seasons. The summer months are hot and dry with an average high temperature of 78°F (27°C) and an average low temperature of 62°F (16°C).

There are habitats aside from the beaches, and a venture out to the wetlands and mountains which can be enjoyed at any time of the year is recommended. Snowfall is extremely rare inside the city, but the mountains on the outskirts see some snow every year. For more accurate daily forecasts, visit www.weather.com and search by your zip code.

FAME

Los Angeles is known for its sun, surf, and celebrities. The city has more than 300 museums and 90 stage theatres around the city to provide continuous entertainment to residents and visitors. Hollywood especially is known for its production of movies and television shows— it is not uncommon to see celebrities around the city and is even possible to see a premiere of movies with them!

FAMOUS POINTS OF INTEREST

Disneyland -

<http://disneyland.disney.go.com/>
1313 North Harbor Boulevard
Anaheim, CA 92803
(714) 781-4000



Hollywood and Highland Center –
<http://www.hollywoodandhighland.com/>
6801 Hollywood Blvd # 433
Los Angeles, CA 90028
(323) 817-0200



Santa Monica Pier –

<http://www.santamonicapier.org/>
200 Santa Monica Pier
Santa Monica, CA 90401
(310) 458-8901



Universal Studios –
<http://www.universalstudioshollywood.com/>
100 California, Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608
(818) 622-3801

