INCOMING EXCHANGE GUIDEBOOK
UVIC Law
Welcome

Welcome to the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law Exchange Program.

This handbook will provide you with important information about the faculty, UVic, Victoria, and your exchange experience. Please read this guide carefully especially if you are coming from overseas.

We have done our best to provide you with updated information, but some of the information here may be subject to change. Please use the following information to help you plan your stay at UVic, but do follow up on any and all pressing issues.

UVic is one of Canada’s leading research-based institutions that offers innovative programs, real-life and creative learning, and a diverse but inclusive community in our breathtaking West Coast campus.

UVic is located in Victoria on Vancouver Island, overlooking the Pacific Ocean on one side and the snow-capped Olympic Mountain Range on the other. Residents enjoy a mild climate all year round and participate in a wide variety of outdoor activities any time of year. Downtown Victoria boasts of distinctive architecture, a vibrant culture, and excellent cuisine. Our campus features the beautiful First Peoples House, the Finnerty Gardens, and a number of walking and jogging trails through serene woods, and is only a short distance away from beaches and quaint villages. All these make UVic an ideal place for study, personal and social growth, and recreation.

UVic Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law is known for its wide variety of experiential learning options and for its commitment to social justice and Indigenous law. It is a supportive, collaborative and creative community of students, faculty and staff. Our focus on small class sizes facilitates interaction among students and fosters lifelong friendships and a collegial learning experience.

“I started my exchange with fun orientation activities such as whale watching, the amazing race downtown and a gala. I loved... the animals in the Fraser Building as part of the health and wellness event. I was challenged to use different learning skills than I was used to at my home university... but nevertheless it was an enriching experience. [It] was challenging, unforgettable, and worth repeating!”

-Kétricha, Vrije University

“UVic was an amazing experience. ...my time here turned out to be more than I could have hoped for. I expected a term where I had to work hard, figure things out by myself, and hang out in Victoria only. I was wrong. I travelled the Island with the friends I made. Yes, I had to work hard, but considering all the wonderful things I got to do it was more than worth it. The people were kind, and taught me how to work with the Canadian law. Everyone was very helpful, it would have been a lot harder without the given support. I joined the UVic Quidditch club and it was awesome. We got to travel to the main land and play quidditch in tournaments. I would most definitely recommend trying to live on campus. You really become part of a community...All I can say is that UVic gave me the friends and the experience that I will never forget, and I am very thankful that I got to experience UVic the way I did.”

- Nanda, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
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Before Your Arrival

Immigration
The documentation you must obtain from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) depends on your country of origin, the nature and length of your studies and whether or not you plan to look for work. It is your responsibility to make sure you have the relevant documents. You may require one or more the following documents.

Study Permit
If you intend to study and live in Canada for more than six months, you must obtain a study permit. If you are attending for one term only (four months), you do not require a permit. It is recommended that you get one anyway, in case you want to extend your stay. Visit the CIC website to apply for a study permit. If you are approved to study in Canada, you will get a letter of introduction confirming the approval. Bring the letter with you to show to immigration officials at the Canadian port of entry in order for them to issue your study permit.

Temporary Resident Visa
If you are from a country for which Canada requires a visa, a temporary resident visa (TRV) will be issued to you in your passport when you receive your letter of introduction. It will either be single entry or multiple entry. You are not required to apply separately for the TRV if you apply for a study permit.

Work Permit
Please visit www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp to learn more about international student employment. Read these regulations carefully. If you work without proper authorization, you may be asked to leave Canada.

It is your responsibility to obtain the correct documents. Find the nearest visa office here http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/apply-where.asp.

Tips:

- As it may take a while to process your application for travel documents, it is strongly encouraged that you apply as soon as you receive your admission letter from us.
- If you are planning on visiting other countries before arriving in Canada or during your stay in Canada, it is recommended that you obtain the necessary immigration documents before you leave your home country.
- Make sure your travel documents are handy and not packed away in your luggage.
- Check all travel documents to make sure your personal information is accurate.

Health Insurance
If staying in BC for fewer than six months: You will not be eligible for the BC Medical Services Plan. You must get comparable coverage through an alternate health insurance provider for the entire duration of your studies at UVic. It is recommended that you arrange this before leaving home. You can make arrangements through a provider in your home country or through AON, UVic’s designated private insurance company offering a special plan for short-term international students. For more information on AON please visit http://extranet.aon.ca/uvic/inbound/.

If staying in BC for more than six months: You must enroll in the BC Medical Services Plan when you arrive in BC. Please see the UVic International Office guidelines on accessing basic health coverage. Please note there
is a waiting period of approximately 3 months before your BS MSP coverage begins, during which you must have coverage through an alternate provider. It is recommended that you arrange this before leaving home. You can make arrangements through a provider in your home country or through AON, UVic’s designated private insurance company offering a special plan for short-term international students. For more information on AON please visit http://extranet.aon.ca/uvic/inbound/.

Personal Insurance
It is strongly recommended that you have insurance for your personal belongings (computers, cellphones, cameras, jewelry, clothes, etc.). Be sure your insurance policy covers damage or theft of belongings as well as personal liability (in case you damage another person’s property by accident).

Accommodation
On-campus: Accommodation for upper year undergraduate students will be determined by a lottery. Please visit the Residence Services website for more information: http://www.housing.uvic.ca/winter/index.php.

Off-campus: Residence Services also provides a listing of off-campus accommodations for students. You are responsible for the search process and making arrangements with landlords and/or roommates. Standards of accommodation vary so it is strongly encouraged that you view the accommodation in person before making a commitment. You must familiarize yourself with the legal rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in BC on the Residential Tenancy Branch website. Please visit http://housing.uvic.ca/offcampus/index.php for more information and resources. You may also check other resources such as newspaper ads at http://classifieds.timescolonist.com/victoria/real-estate-rentals/search, online accommodation postings at Kijiji Real Estate at http://www.kijiji.ca/h-victoria-bc/1700173 or Craigs List at https://victoria.craigslist.ca/. Please exercise caution when viewing or considering housing options via online ad sites. These are only suggestions and we do not endorse any of the postings.

Homestay: If your first language is not English, you may qualify for UVic Homestay through the UVic English Language Centre. For more information, please visit their website.

Temporary housing: You might need temporary accommodation upon arrival in Victoria, especially if you are still looking for off-campus housing. Please find a list of hotels, hostels and B&B’s on the Tourism Victoria website.

What to Pack
- Canadian electricity is 110 volts, 60 Hz. Bring a voltage converter and plug adapter if your appliances and electronic devices are not compatible.
- Sufficient supply of any medication in original packaging and accompanied by a prescription from your physician
- Enough Canadian currency to cover your immediate expenses in Canada such as airport fees, food and transportation. Major credit cards are also widely accepted. Please note that if you arrive in Canada with more than CAD$10000 in cash, stocks, bonds, banker’s drafts, cheques or money orders, you must declare this to the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officer.
- Check the section on Climate and Clothing for tips on what to pack from your closet.

Please check the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) website for regulations on items you are allowed to bring into Canada.
Financial matters
It is recommended that you open a bank account at a financial institution in Victoria. You will typically need a photo ID (e.g. passport), one other piece of ID, and your UVic ONECard (student card) to open an account.

There are two Automated Banking Machines (ABM) on campus: RBC and Scotiabank. Please note that if your account is with another institution, there may be a service fee to use these machines.

BC has sales tax of 7% PST (Provincial Sales Tax) and 5% GST (Goods and Services Tax).

As an exchange student, you don’t pay tuition fees to UVic. However, there will be miscellaneous fees that you will have to pay. At the Faculty of Law, you will be invoiced for $81.00 for photocopy and exam fees. As well, you are responsible for purchasing textbooks and coursepacks. Please check section below on Transportation for more information on the Universal Bus Pass and the cost to opting into this service.

Financial assistance: Check with your home institution and your government for scholarships and/or bursaries available to students studying abroad.

Entering Canada
You will be asked to present the following documents at your Canadian port of entry:

• Valid passport or travel document (with a valid visa, if required)
• Valid study permit or letter of introduction from a Canadian visa office (if applicable)
• Admission letter from UVic
• Copy of all documents in your study permit application (if applicable)
• Proof of sufficient finances to support yourself during your stay in Canada
• Typed list of items you are bringing into Canada, including all items sent separately

Please allow plenty of time between your arrival at your first port of entry and any travel connections thereafter.

It is also a good idea to bring any of the following documents that apply to your situation.

• birth certificate or baptismal certificate
• driver’s license
• immunization, vaccination, dental and health records
• health insurance documents
• marriage certificate or proof of common-law status
• separation or divorce papers
• adoption papers
• language proficiency scores
• official school records or academic transcripts
• medical or psychological documents if you plan to access services for students with a disability
• letters of reference from former employers
• documents required for entry into other countries you plan to visit

If necessary, you should have them translated to English by a qualified translator.
**Travelling to Victoria**

*Victoria is located on Vancouver Island*, across the Juan de Fuca Sound from Canada’s mainland. *It is NOT in Vancouver.* If your international flight is arriving at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR), you will need to take a plane or a ferry to Victoria. The flight is only 20 minutes but if traveling by ferry and transit, it could take more than four hours. If flying all the way to Victoria (YYJ), you should book your YVR-YYJ flight before coming to Canada.

Please consult the “What are my travel options” tab on the UVic International Office webpage prior to making travel plans.

Additional notes:

**From Victoria International Airport (YYJ)**

a. Take the [airport shuttle bus](#) to downtown or to UVic. Look for the kiosk to buy a ticket. OR
b. You can also take a taxi for approximately $60.00; this option is better if traveling with others.

*If staying at UVic Residence*, tell the shuttle or taxi driver to drop you off at the UVic Housing Office in Parking Lot #5 off Sinclair Road.

*If going downtown*, the shuttle or taxi can drop you off at major downtown hotels.

**From Vancouver Airport (YVR)**

From the Vancouver Airport you can take a taxi, bus or [skytrain](#) to the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal. The bus fare is ~$2.50. Ask the driver for a transfer ticket and to direct you to the transfer point for buses to the ferry. Once you are on the ferry you can purchase a ticket to take the Pacific Coach Line bus to downtown Victoria (preferable if you have a lot of luggage) or once you have arrived at the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal on Vancouver Island you can either take a bus or taxi to your destination.

You can also take a [Pacific Coach Lines](#) bus from YVR to downtown Victoria. This is a good option if you are traveling with lots of luggage.

It is recommended that you arrive in Victoria at least one week before the start of term so you have time to settle in and participate in orientation activities. Please visit [http://www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/new-students/orientation/](http://www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/new-students/orientation/) for a list of all events. Note that you may be required to register for an orientation event.

If you are arriving for the spring term, please note that the university is closed between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. If you have confirmed accommodations on-campus, please check the Residence Services website for the official check-in date.

**Climate and Clothing**

Victoria might be in Canada but you don’t need to bring your heaviest winter outfit with you. We do, however, suggest bringing a trusty rain jacket, waterproof shoes or boots, and a colorful umbrella, as the west coast gets plenty of rain. In the winter (December to February), temperatures will range from -5C to 10C, so you will need a warm jacket, gloves, scarf and a hat from time to time. If you are from a warm climate and coming to Canada in the winter months, it may be easier and less expensive to purchase outerwear once you arrive in Canada. Spring (March to May) is very pleasant and in the summer (June to August)
temperatures can go up to 30°C. In the fall (September to November), it generally stays warm until mid-October and you can expect some rain showers.

Victorians dress in layers as the weather can change quickly, and we encourage you to do the same. At UVic, students dress casually: jeans and sweatshirt or shorts and t-shirt are typical outfits during school. You are encouraged to bring at least one formal or traditional outfit for special occasions, and/or business attire in case you need to make a presentation for a course.

You may also want to bring clothing for outdoor sports or activities, such as hiking, skiing, kayaking, etc, or plan to purchase them here.

Upon Arrival

Orientation

UVic Orientation lines up a wonderful array of events and activities in both fall and spring terms to welcome you to the university. Please visit their website and register in some or all events. The Law Students’ Society (LSS) organizes Orientation Week and will also connect you with a law buddy to help you feel at home in the Fraser Building.

Fall Term: The Faculty of Law hosts Opening Day at the law school the day after Labour Day. There will be an assembly where you will meet students, faculty and staff, and various events throughout the day to help you transition to UVic Law. Information on Opening Day will be posted on the faculty website.

Spring Term: A small informal session will be held in the main office over the lunch hour in the first week of classes.

ONECard

The UVic ONECard is the single official identification card for students. It is also your library card. Please make sure to obtain your ONECard as soon as you can. Their office is located in the lobby of the University Centre.

If you are staying in Canada for at least six months and qualify for BC MSP, you are also eligible to apply for a Photo BC Services Card instead of carrying your passport around with you.

You may also want to get an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) and enjoy discounts and offers on travel, shopping, and recreation worldwide.

Communication

Pay phones: There are courtesy phones around the campus that allow you to make local calls by dialing 9 and then the area code and telephone number.

Calling cards: Can be purchased at most convenience stores and groceries. It is usually cheaper to use these cards for international calls.

Cell phones: If you are bringing your cell phone from your home country, you must have a GSM tri-band phone. You will need to purchase a new SIM in Canada. You may also consider purchasing a cheap cell phone unit with prepaid service for use while you are in Canada. Major cell phone providers are Rogers, Bell, Fido, Koodo Mobile, Telus and Virgin Mobile.

The country code for Canada is 1 and the area code for Victoria is either 250 or 778.

To dial an international number: 011 + country code + city routing code + local number.
Emergency (fire, ambulance, police): 911

Directory assistance: 411 (cost $0.50 per number)

**Skype:** Skype and other internet phone providers are very popular among international students as a way of keeping in touch with their family and friends back home. It is free and only requires an internet connection.

**Internet:** The UVic Wireless Network (UVic AirNet) allows students, faculty, and staff to connect laptops and other wireless devices to the Internet at high speeds from most places on campus. There are multiple wireless networks on campus: UVic for secure connections and eduroam for faculty, staff, and students visiting from participating academic institutions.

You may use the computer lab in the Diana Priestly Law Library, the public computers in the Mears Centre or any of the computing facilities on campus.

Most public spaces in Victoria also offer free wireless internet.

**Mail:** There is a post office inside Campus Pharmacy in the Student Union Building. Canada Post provides delivery service for letters and parcels within Canada and internationally.

**Transportation**

**Bus:** Buses to most areas of the city leave frequently from UVic. It costs $2.50 to take the bus anywhere one way. You can also purchase a sheet of tickets or a monthly pass. Please visit the BC Transit website for ticket/pass vendors.

You may opt in to the Universal Bus Pass (U-Pass) and Athletics and Recreation services by signing up for membership with the University of Victoria Students’ Society and paying the fees. The two services must be opted in together. The opt-in fee is ~ $250 and by opting in you get unlimited access to the Victoria transit system and limited access to campus athletics and recreation facilities and programming. Please stop by the UVSS Info Booth at the Student Union Building for more information, and note that there is a deadline for opting in.

**Bicycle:** The size of and weather in Victoria are conducive to cycling, and many residents bike even through winter. UVic is a bike-friendly campus, with more than 2900 bike parking spaces, bike shelters and storage, shower and change room facilities, a self-service bike repair kiosk, and towel service at the gym. You can purchase new or used bicycles and register it with Campus Security Services for free engraving. For more resources on cycling and the SPOKES bike recycling program, please visit the UVic Sustainability website.

**Car:** You must have a valid driver’s license and insurance to drive a vehicle in BC. Please visit the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) website for information on licensing, driving rules, road safety and insurance.

**Academic Information**

**Academic terms**

“Winter session” consists of the fall and spring terms. Fall term runs from September to December, and spring term runs from January to April. Each term consists of 13 weeks of classes followed by a formal examination period of approximately two weeks. All examinations are approximately three hours in length. However, not all courses will be evaluated with a final examination. Check the faculty website for specific dates for each term and for the examination schedule.
**Course registration**
Exchange students are classified as non-degree. Due to system limits, non-degree students are unable to manage their registration online. All registration will be done by the Office of the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations. As part of the application process, you completed the Requested Course of Study form. Staff will register you in courses you are approved to take, and will assist you in making changes throughout the registration period up until the last day to add or drop courses. Please make sure that there are no timetable or examination conflicts of the courses you select.

**Course credits**
Courses are valued in terms of units and can vary between 1.0 and 2.0 units. A 1.0-unit course meets 2 hours per week, a 1.5-unit course meets 3 hours per week, and a 2.0-unit course meets 4 hours per week. One hour of class time requires approximately 1-2 hours of study or reading per week.

A full-time student at UVic Law must register in 7.0-8.5 units per term. The number of units you are required to take will be determined by your home institution. It is your responsibility to make sure that your home institution is aware of and approves your course of study at UVic.

**Academic accommodation**
If you receive academic and exam accommodation at your home university and can provide documentation, you should register with the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD). RCSD will send the law school a recommendation on appropriate accommodation for you. We also ask that you identify your needs to the Manager, Academic and Students at the law school (lawmaass@uvic.ca) as soon as possible.

If English is your second language, you may make a request for exam accommodation on the basis of language. Please complete this form and submit it to the Office of the Associate Dean at least three weeks before the exam period starts. Your request will be confidential and the type of accommodation granted will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please note that all courses are taught in English and incoming students require the ability to articulate their work both orally and in writing.

**Course location**
The duration of your time at law school will be spent in the Fraser Building. Occasionally a class may be scheduled to meet in another building on campus.

**Student Services**

**Amicus program**
The Amicus program is a student support initiative in the law school and one of its kind. The program provides academic, cultural, personal and accommodation support to help students navigate life while at law school.

**Centre for Academic Communication**
The Centre for Academic Communication (CAC) offers support to help students develop their academic communication skills. It is located in the Learning Commons of the Mearns Centre for Learning/McPherson Library. Please check their website for more information and for scheduling appointments or try their online writing tutorials.
International Commons
The International Commons (IC), located in the McPherson Library, is another place where international students can access programs and services to support their academic success at UVic. You may also be interested in signing up for one of the Conversation Cafés or in participating in the UVic Global Community program.

Counselling
As part of the Amicus program, a counsellor is available two days a week at the law school to offer support to students dealing with personal concerns. You may also wish to book an appointment with a counsellor at Counselling Services instead of at the law school. Counselling Services may be reached at 250-721-8341 or counsell@uvic.ca.

Multifaith Services
Multifaith Services provides religious support and spiritual care for students at UVic through pastoral counselling, prayer and meditation groups, and various events and activities that support the faith development of the campus community. Visit the Multifaith Centre next to the UVic Bookstore and ask the office about student groups that share your religious tradition or spiritual interests.

Health Services
The Jack Petersen Health Centre is a walk-in clinic located behind the student residences. The clinic offers appointments with doctors, nurses and other practitioners, limited urgent care and first aid, specialist referrals and a doctor-on-call for students for after-hours, weekends or holidays.

Athletics and Recreation
As an exchange student, you can sign up for membership with the University of Victoria Student Services and opt-in to the Athletics and Recreation service which grants you base membership with Vikes Recreation. Our facility, Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities (CARSA), opened in May 2015 and features a climbing wall, state-of-the-art fitness and weight-training space, racquet sports courts, dance and yoga space, a sports injury clinic, and an indoor field house.

After your exchange term

Final grades
Students will be notified when final grades are approved. There is a 21-day appeal period following the approval of grades. If you wish to view a final exam, please contact the Office of the Associate Dean. Assignments and papers are available from your instructors; please make sure to pick them up before you leave town.

Official transcript
The Office of the Associate Dean will request that two copies of your official transcript be sent to your home institution.

Testimonial
You are encouraged to submit a testimonial and photos of your experience at UVic Law and in Victoria. Your submission may be used on the faculty website or in promotional materials produced in print or digital form. The Office of the Associate Dean will be in contact with you to ask for feedback on your exchange experience.
Checklist for Exchange Students

Prior to arriving at UVic

- Carefully read your Offer of Admission (this letter will contain your UVic student number or “V-number”, which you will need to create your netlink ID)

- Check that your e-mail address is correct. We will communicate with you primarily by e-mail so please make sure the e-mail address you provided us is correct and that you check this account regularly.

- Obtain necessary immigration documents

- Make housing arrangements

- Make health insurance arrangements

- Make travel arrangements

For more information on the above items please see http://www.uvic.ca/international/students/incoming-exchange/after-selected/index.php

- Contact Cheryl Lawrence at lawada@uvic.ca if you require changes to your registration.

- Register for UVic orientation events that interest you. (Note: these events are for students in general. The Faculty of Law will host a mandatory Orientation and you will be automatically registered.)

Upon arriving at UVic

- Introduce yourself to Cheryl Lawrence, Assistant to Associate Dean Calder, in the Fraser Building Room 102. She will introduce you to the front office team who will support you during your law studies.

- Attend Law Orientation on Opening Day (mandatory) if coming in the fall term, or contact Cheryl Lawrence at lawada@uvic.ca for orientation information if coming in the spring term.

- Get your ONECard from the ONECard Office in the University Centre

- Visit the UVSS Info Centre in the Student Union Building to opt-in to the bus and athletics pass.

- Get in touch with your law buddy.

Questions/Contact Information

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