

**ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE  
CENTRE@UVIC**



**University  
of Victoria**




# Pre-Arrival Handbook

*Welcome to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada!*



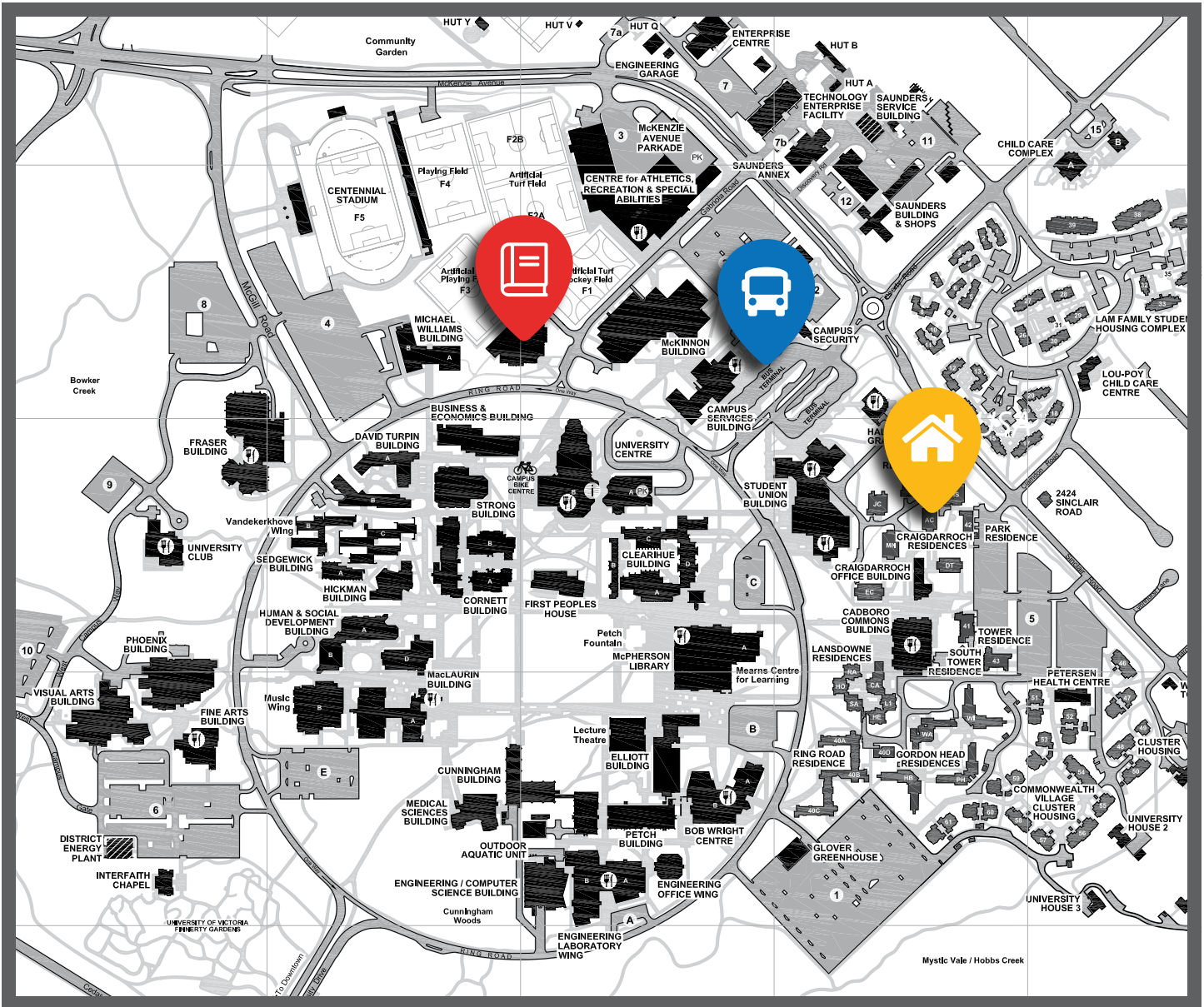


# UVIC CAMPUS MAP





 **English Language Centre  
Continuing Studies Building**




 **UVic Bus Loop  
Bookstore and Campus Services**

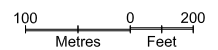
 **Housing Office  
Parking Lot #5**



-  Buildings
-  Residences
-  Buildings Under Construction

-  General Pay Parking
-  Reserved Parking
-  Parkade
-  Electric Vehicle Charging Station

-  Bus Stop
-  Food Service Outlet
-  Welcome Centre



# WELCOME



Dear Student,

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the UVic English Language Centre soon!

As an ELC student you can expect to:

- speak English in many situations every day
- gain confidence using your English skills
- meet friends from all over the world
- learn about Canadian culture
- explore the city of Victoria
- make memories that will last a lifetime!

We have created this “Pre-Arrival Handbook” to prepare you for an enjoyable, successful experience studying with us. We hope you find this information helpful.

Have a safe trip and we'll see you soon - in Victoria!

~ ELC Staff, Teachers and Cultural Assistants



**Program schedules:**  
[bit.ly/elc-current-students](https://bit.ly/elc-current-students)



**New Student Checklist:**  
[bit.ly/elc-checklist](https://bit.ly/elc-checklist)





# VISAS / DOCUMENTS



It is your responsibility to obtain the correct documents to enter and study in Canada. You can confirm which documents you will need and learn about the application process by visiting the "Citizenship and Immigration Canada" website.

## **At the Border**

When you arrive in Canada, a Canada Border Services Agency officer will ask to see the documents listed below. Please carry these items with you:

- Valid passport or travel document (with a valid temporary resident visa, if required)
- Valid study permit or Point of Entry (POE) Letter of Introduction from a Canadian visa office (if a study permit is required)
- Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA): required only for citizens of 'visa-exempt countries'
- Letter of Acceptance from UVic
- Copy of all documents in your visitor or study permit application



**Temporary Resident Visa and  
Study Permit information:**  
[bit.ly/study-permit](https://bit.ly/study-permit)



**Electronic Travel  
Authorization (eTA) for  
students from "visa-exempt"  
countries:**  
[bit.ly/immigration-eta](https://bit.ly/immigration-eta)



# MEDICAL INSURANCE



You must have medical insurance to study at the English Language Centre. The type of insurance that you need depends on how long you will stay in Victoria.

## 1) Medical Insurance for less than 6 months in British Columbia:

UVic and Aon Reed Stenhouse Inc (Aon) offer a health insurance plan designed for international students that includes emergency medical and dental coverage. The plan costs \$2.10 per day and can be purchased online.

## 2) Medical Insurance for more than 6 months in British Columbia:

If you are studying with us for more than 6 months you must apply for the British Columbia Medical Services Plan (MSP) upon arrival. The waiting time to receive "MSP" insurance is three months. During this time, you must have private medical insurance – most students buy the Aon plan listed above.



**Aon Health Insurance:**  
[bit.ly/uvic-aon](https://bit.ly/uvic-aon)



**MSP Application Information:**  
[bit.ly/bc-msp](https://bit.ly/bc-msp)



# WHAT TO PACK



## Clothing

**June – August:** Weather is generally sunny and dry. Bring lighter summer clothes and a warm jacket to wear in the evening

**September – May:** Bring warm shoes/boots, a warm jacket, a raincoat, gloves, a hat and a scarf

**All Year Optional:** Semi-formal clothing to wear to the farewell lunch or dinner at the end of your program. Many students wear a skirt, dress, dress shirt or a suit to this special event.

If you forget to pack any of these items, don't worry! You can buy them in Victoria. Cultural Assistants, teachers, your host family and/or classmates can give you tips on where to shop.

## Other Items

- A voltage converter and plug adaptor if needed. Canada's electricity is 110 volts, 60 Hz.
- A four-month supply of any medications you require (in the original packaging and with a prescription from your doctor).
- Cultural items (including traditional clothing if you want) to remind you of home, show to your host family and for cultural presentations that are part of many programs.
- Towels if you are living in the UVic dormitories
- An umbrella



**7-Day  
Victoria Weather forecast:**  
[bit.ly/elc-weather](http://bit.ly/elc-weather)



**Weather Network apps:**  
[bit.ly/weather-apps](http://bit.ly/weather-apps)



# MONEY + BUDGET



In Canada, we use “Canadian dollars” (CAD). You will find bank machines at the airport when you arrive in Canada, but we recommend exchanging enough money before your trip for expenses like airport taxes, food and transportation. Major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) are accepted almost everywhere. Most Canadians use their debit cards on a daily basis.

### Your Budget

Your program tuition includes many free activities, but for daily spending money and optional ELC activities, you’ll need some extra money. It’s a good idea to budget \$200 - \$400 for extra activities during your program.

POPULAR ‘OPTIONAL’ ELC ACTIVITIES:	OTHER COMMON COSTS:
Opera/theatre: \$15-20	Taxi (downtown to UVic): \$20 – \$25
Butchart Gardens: \$50	Bus pass (1 month): \$77
Kayaking: \$50	Fast food meal: \$5 – \$10
Whale Watching: \$70	Coffee (one cup): \$2 – \$5
2-Night Vancouver Trip: \$275	Bread (one loaf): \$2 – \$5
1-Night Vancouver Trip: \$200	Movie: \$8 – \$15



**Cost of Living in Victoria:**  
*bit.ly/bc-cost-of-living*



**Find today’s CAD  
exchange rate here:**  
*bit.ly/canada-currency*



# ARRIVING AT VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (YYJ)

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**We strongly recommend flying to Victoria International Airport (YYJ) when you arrive in Canada for the start of your program.**

After a long flight to Vancouver, you will be very happy to take another 20-minute flight to Victoria, instead of adding more hours to your trip by taking a bus and ferry to Vancouver Island. Save that experience for a weekend adventure during your program when you can really enjoy it!

Flights to Victoria should be reserved through your travel agent or online. Two of the main Canadian airlines that fly to Victoria are "Air Canada" and "West Jet." Some of their routes offer direct flights to Canada without stopping in the USA.

- **Airport pick-up information for UVic homestay students:** Go to page 10.
- **Airport pick-up information for students staying in UVic dormitories:** Go to page 11.



**YYJ Airport App**  
[bit.ly/yyj-mobile-app](https://bit.ly/yyj-mobile-app)



**Airport Pick-Up for  
Homestay & Dormitory**  
[bit.ly/before-you-arrive](https://bit.ly/before-you-arrive)



# ARRIVING AT VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (YVR)



**Remember:** Victoria is located on Vancouver Island, which is different from the city of Vancouver! If your final flight destination is Vancouver International Airport... you're not in Victoria yet! You will need to take a BC ferry to Vancouver Island in one of these ways:

- 1) The BC Ferries Connector bus is the best way to get from Vancouver Airport to Victoria. It leaves directly from the airport and offers bus-ferry-bus service to downtown Victoria. There is a BC Ferries Connector ticket counter in the International Arrivals Terminal. You can buy a ticket there before boarding the bus directly outside the terminal. Cost: about \$77.
- 2) You can take a taxi from Vancouver airport to the ferry terminal in Tsawwassen (30 minutes south of Vancouver). You will then buy a ferry ticket and board the ferry to Swartz Bay (Victoria). Outside the ferry terminal you can take a taxi downtown or to UVic. Cost: about \$160.
- 3) You can take the "Vancouver SkyTrain" from Vancouver Airport station to Bridgeport Station. You will then take the #620 bus to the Tsawwassen Terminal, where you will buy a ticket and board the ferry to Swartz Bay (Victoria). Outside the ferry terminal, board the #70 or #72 bus downtown. Ask your bus driver where to transfer to buses going to UVic. Cost: about \$35.



**YVR Passenger Guides:**  
[bit.ly/vancouver-airport-shuttle](https://bit.ly/vancouver-airport-shuttle)



**BC Ferries Connector  
bus service:**  
[bit.ly/connector-shuttle](https://bit.ly/connector-shuttle)



# AIRPORT PICK-UP: HOMESTAY

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Most students receive their host family's contact information 2 weeks before the program start date. As soon as you receive this information, contact your host to introduce yourself and to share your flight details. This is very important, so that you can arrange for pick-up in Victoria at the airport or at another location.

When your host family meets you at the airport / arrival location, they will generally hold up a sign with your name on it. If you have shared photos, you might recognize one another.

**If your flight is delayed, or if your host is not at the agreed upon arrival location when you arrive, you should:**

- Call their cellular phone numbers and leave a message to tell them where you are waiting for them. Victoria Airport has free Wifi if you need to contact your host family.
- Go to the Airport Information Booth (Red Coats Volunteers - located in the Arrivals area) and ask if your host family has left a message for you.



**Homestay flight details  
and arrival:**  
*bit.ly/elc-arrival*



**Homestay Student Manual**  
*bit.ly/elc-homestay*



# AIRPORT PICK-UP: DORMITORY



“Arrival day” is the day before your program begins if you are attending a “Summer Language and Culture” program in July or August. If you arrive at the Victoria airport on this day, our ELC Cultural Assistant staff will be there to greet you and help you to find “shuttle bus” transportation to UVic.

The shuttle takes 30-40 minutes to get to the UVic. Once you arrive at UVic, another team of Cultural Assistants will help you check in at the UVic Housing Office, where you will receive your UVic meal card and directions to your dormitory room.

If you are not arriving at UVic on “arrival day,” our Cultural Assistant staff will not be at the airport. Luckily, the Victoria airport is small and you will easily find your luggage and transportation to UVic, by **1) shuttle bus** or **2) taxi**:

1) The “YYJ Airport Shuttle” ticket counter is beside the luggage pick-up area and main ‘arrivals’ area exit. You should buy a ticket to the UVic Housing Office - at UVic Parking Lot #5.

2) Taxis in Victoria are safe and wait outside the “Arrivals” area of the airport. It takes about 20-25 minutes to get to UVic. Ask your driver to stop at the UVic Housing Office in Parking lot #5.



**Airport shuttle information:**  
[bit.ly/victoria-airport-shuttle](https://bit.ly/victoria-airport-shuttle)



**Google maps location of UVic  
Housing Office:**  
[bit.ly/uvic-maps](https://bit.ly/uvic-maps)






# ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE @UVIC





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## ELC on social media

-  /EnglishLanguageCentre
-  /UVicHomestayFamilies
-  @ELC\_UVic
-  @elc\_uvic
-  /EnglishLanguageUVic

## In Spanish

-  /VenyViveVictoria
-  @VenyViveVictori

## In Mandarin

-  /uvicpathway



UVic virtual tour