

ARRIVAL GUIDE 2022 – 2023

For International Students and Scholars

The information you need to get settled
into your new community at UC Berkeley



Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
internationaloffice@berkeley.edu

About This Guide

The Arrival Guide for New International Students and Scholars is designed to address some of the most frequently asked questions posed by international students and scholars about their arrival on campus and getting settled in the community.

The information is presented in a sequence beneficial to the needs of a new arrival: from locating housing to recreational activities.

We hope that you will find this guide helpful. We welcome your suggestions for new material to enhance the experience of future international students and scholars.

Please contact:

Berkeley International Office
(510) 642-2818
internationalOffice@berkeley.edu

Welcome from the Director

Dear International Students and Scholars:

Welcome to the Cal community! We are glad that you have joined or will be joining us and we hope that your sojourn here will be a successful one filled with exciting opportunities.

So that you will take full advantage of your experience in Berkeley we have compiled this guide book to compliment the many other resources that exist about this and the surrounding communities. I encourage you to read this guide book to help you ease into your new life here. The information presented in this guide book is a compilation of the most frequently asked questions international students and scholars have when they first arrive at the University of California, Berkeley. Internet links are conveniently included as a reference for each section. All the information in this Guide is current as of August 2022.

When you arrive on campus, we will also provide you with a comprehensive Orientation program that will prepare you for a successful stay at the University of California, Berkeley.

Visit [our website](#) for more information designed for international students and scholars. For assistance with any questions, contact us at internationaloffice@berkeley.edu.

The staff at Berkeley International Office takes great pride in supporting you during your program.

Cordially,



Ivor Emmanuel, Ph.D.
Director

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Berkeley International Office



Berkeley International Office's mission is to enhance the academic experiences of international students and scholars by providing the highest levels of knowledge and expertise in advising, immigration services, advocacy, and programming to the UC Berkeley campus community.

Services

- Advising support for nonimmigrant students, scholars, staff, and faculty seeking permanent resident status
- Visa document production for nonimmigrant students and scholars
- A wide variety of programs and workshops
- Training and support for campus department administrators working with visiting scholars
- Preparation of petitions for permanent resident status for international faculty

Advising Hours

Advisers are available to meet with you on a daily basis. Students can choose from daily virtual or in-person appointments and daily drop-in virtual advising hours for more urgent issues.

Drop-in advising for visiting scholars or faculty seeking permanent resident status is not available due to the complex nature of those cases. Please make a one-hour appointment by calling our main office at (510) 642-2818 or emailing us at jscholar@berkeley.edu.

Office Hours

Monday through Friday
9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm

Location

2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 500
Berkeley, CA 94704

Email

internationaloffice@berkeley.edu

Website

internationaloffice.berkeley.edu

Student Advising Hours:

Drop-In Virtual Advising
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday
10 a.m. – 12 p.m., 1 – 4 p.m.

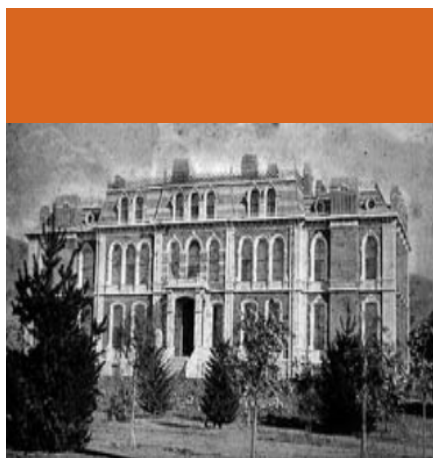
In-Person Advising Appointments
Monday-Tuesday 10 a.m.-12 p.m.,
Thursday-Friday 1-4 p.m.

Please see our [Student Services webpage](#) for more information.

Advising for Visiting Research Scholars, Professors or Lecturers:

To speak to an adviser, please make an appointment by calling our main office at (510) 642-2818 or emailing us at jscholar@berkeley.edu.

A Glimpse of UCB History and Traditions



South Hall

History

The University opened its doors initially in 1869 in Oakland with ten faculty members and forty students. Women were admitted for the first time the following year. In September 1873, the University moved to the city of Berkeley after the completion of South Hall. This historic building is still standing on campus and is the only building that remains from the original campus.

The Blue and Gold

Official colors of the University of California were established in 1868. “Yale blue” was chosen by the University’s founders, who were mostly Yale University men who had come West. They selected gold as a color representing the “Golden State” of California. UC Berkeley sports teams have worn blue and gold since the beginning of intercollegiate athletic competition in 1882.

Oski the Bear

Oski the Bear is the beloved, cartoonish school mascot. He was created in 1941 by a student named William Rockwell who disguised himself with a homemade bear head (made of molded clay), a baggy yellow sweater stuffed with padding, a giant pair of blue trousers, oversized football shoes painted gold and white cotton gloves. Oski became famous for showing up at football games, flirting with the girls and clowning near the playing field. Oski now appears at all home football games to the delight of many children. The true identity of the person wearing the Oski costume is never revealed.

The UC System

Today, the University of California system has grown to ten campuses across California. The shortened name for the school, “Cal,” is a reminder of Berkeley’s status as the first-established campus of the UC system. The other UC system campuses are located in San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Merced, Santa Barbara, San Diego, Davis, Irvine, Riverside, and Los Angeles.



Oski

The City of Berkeley Neighborhoods

Taken from UC Berkeley Cal Rentals Office:

http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/Berkeley_Neighborhoods.pdf

Southside:

A bustling, student-oriented area adjacent to south campus. Bookstores, record stores, cafes and restaurants abound. Telegraph Avenue is a main feature, with its colorful street vendors. Student housing is relatively plentiful in Southside.

Elmwood:

Just to the south of Southside is the Elmwood district, which can be found by following College Avenue away from campus. Elmwood is a charming mix of small apartment complexes and large homes. Gift shopping is a delight, and there are many restaurants featuring international cuisine. There is also a popular movie theater.

Claremont

A neighborhood consisting primarily of grand, expensive homes and few rentals. The typical Claremont rental might be an “in-law” apartment in someone’s house, or a room in a private home. The Claremont area is generally characterized as the area surrounding the Claremont Resort and Hotel.

South Berkeley:

West of the Southside, Elmwood and Claremont districts and south of Dwight Way is an area generally known as South Berkeley. This area, in addition to West Berkeley and the Westbrae neighborhoods, is where the most affordable housing is likely to be found. Small, single family bungalows, duplexes and fourplexes are featured on the tree-lined streets. Cute cafes, antique shops and the Ashby BART station with its weekend flea market in the parking lot are part of the South Berkeley scene.

Downtown Berkeley:

While “downtown” can be found just a block from the West Entrance of campus, continue a few more blocks westward and you will find tree-lined streets with a mix of apartments and houses. Many students live in this area and enjoy its convenience to downtown BART, movies, restaurants and the campus.

West Berkeley:

South of University Avenue and west of Sacramento Street is the area known as West Berkeley. Modest single family homes are interspersed with apartment buildings, and the neighborhood is dotted with Victorian farmhouses that were the original dwellings in the area.

Westbrae:

A quiet, residential neighborhood just north and west of the North Berkeley BART station, the Westbrae area consists of small homes, duplexes and fourplexes. A highlight is a specialty produce store that attracts shoppers from all over Berkeley called Monterey Market. Easy access to BART and the campus makes this a popular area. Tennis, jogging track, pool and playground are nearby at the local middle school and are open to the public.

Oceanview:

The outlet stores, specialty shops and restaurants along the popular 4th Street area make this formerly sleepy place of small homes and light industry into a bustling, lively street scene.

Northside:

This area directly north of campus is a contrast to the bustling Southside area. Quiet by comparison, Northside boasts several student Coops and charming apartment buildings interspersed with large, single family homes. The main street is Euclid Avenue, which features a small grocery store and shops and restaurants.

North Berkeley and Thousand Oak:

If you hear the term “gourmet ghetto,” it’s referring to this North Berkeley area of north Shattuck Avenue. Here you’ll find gourmet food shops and of course the famous restaurant, Chez Panisse, among others. Thousand Oaks continues the North Berkeley theme through the Solano Tunnel and down Solano Avenue with many restaurants, cafes and bookstores frequented by local residents. This is a popular area for young and old.

Map of Berkeley Neighborhoods



The Bay Area

The “Bay Area” is a term you will hear often when you move to Berkeley since it refers to the region immediately surrounding the San Francisco Bay. “The City” (San Francisco) is the central point of reference for understanding where you are in the Bay Area and is divided into four regions: 1) The North Bay, 2) The East Bay, 3) The South Bay and, 4) The (SF) Peninsula. Berkeley and Oakland are in the East Bay, San Jose is in the South Bay and Marin County makes up most of the North Bay.



Pre-Departure Planning

The Bay Area is a wonderfully diverse place where you will soon feel at home. In order to make your transition a smooth one, look at the following websites to start planning before your arrival:

- U.S. Department of State
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html>
Information on the visa application.
- Inside the Good Life
www.insidethegoodlife.com
- City of Berkeley
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/Home.aspx
- Move-a-roo
www.movearoo.com
Get help planning your move with the interactive moving checklist and resources.

Money for Your Arrival

When you arrive in Berkeley you will need enough money for immediate expenses including hotels, food, registration fees, and housing costs. If the University is paying you, it may take more than a month until you get your first paycheck. Do not bring large sums of cash! There are many safer options available. Contact your home country bank now for details about the following:

- Traveler's Checks. The money is immediately available if checks are in U.S. dollars, and they can be replaced if lost or stolen. However, checks in large sums can be difficult to use. Checks in a foreign currency may be subject to exchange fees.
- Electronic Banking: ATMs/Check Cards. Cash is available immediately from Automatic Teller Machines. Exchange rates are good, but there may be a daily limit (\$200-\$300) and fees for using the service.
- International Credit Cards. Money is available immediately and exchange rates are good. However, not all US stores and businesses accept international credit cards.

- Bank Checks/Drafts. These are useful for large sums of money, but funds are not available for three days to three weeks after deposit (depending on which bank is used).
- Wire transfers. This is the safest way to transfer money, but an account at a US bank must be opened first. There may be a fee for using the service.

Foreign Currency Exchange

Currency exchange facilities in the U.S. are less common than they are in many countries, and changing money at U.S. banks can be quite expensive. The use of a debit card is highly recommended, especially as debit cards often give the best rate of exchange available. Some banks do exchange foreign money, but only if the currency is in notes, not in coins. Some currency exchange locations include:

Travelex America
www.travelex.com/US/Home
443 Castro Street
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 552-3108

San Francisco Airport
www.flysfo.com
Travelex America has several currency exchange offices throughout the International Terminal. The main office is located in the International Terminal Main Hall, Departures Level, near the security checkpoint for Boarding Area G.

Reporting Your Arrival to UC Berkeley

U.S. immigration laws require that new students and scholars report to the University after their initial arrival in the country. Failure to do so may result in a termination of program and can lead to serious consequences for your legal status and ability to return to the U.S. in the future.

International Students

To report your arrival, you'll need to update your address and report your arrival. You can read more about how to do this here: <http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/new/arrival-confirmation>.

International Visiting Scholars

IF YOU HAVE ARRIVED IN THE U.S. complete these steps within 9 days of your DS-2019 start date to report your arrival to the Berkeley International Office. These steps are required to activate your J-1 scholar status in the U.S.

Step 1: Scholar Webinar

View the Scholar Information Webinar (<https://youtu.be/7JYSUFloLaw>), the mandatory orientation for all UC Berkeley J-1 scholars. It will take approximately 30 minutes to view the webinar. This resource guide also provides valuable information for newly arrived scholars: https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/resource_guide_2021.pdf

Step 2: Arrival Reporting

Follow instructions provided in your arrival reporting instructions email to create an account with the J Scholar Portal and use the Online Arrival Confirmation Form to report your arrival to the Berkeley International Office. You will need your Form DS-2019 and passport to complete this step and will use the link provided in the arrival reporting instructions email

Step 3: Travel Web Page

If you or your J-2 dependents will be traveling internationally after you arrive in the U.S., you must view our Travel Webpage (<https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/entry-us-travel-and-re-entry>) for current guidance and request a travel signature 2-4 weeks prior to your international travel.

Additionally, follow the instructions from your UC Berkeley host department or human resources representative to complete on-boarding shortly after your arrival.

Campus Resources

ASUC Student Union

The ASUC Student Union is the hub of student life on campus! Grab a bite to eat, unwind, socialize, study, or get involved. The ASUC Student Union is the campus “living room.” They offer everything from co-curricular opportunities to fun, creative activities. Located on Sproul Plaza, at the intersection of Bancroft Ave. & Telegraph Ave.

Career Center

The Career Counselor for International Students supports Cal international students* through career counseling, programming and resource development. The counselor assists in areas of career exploration, job/internship search and graduate school preparation.

Student Learning Center

The SLC International Student Program (ISP) co-facilitates new and existing academic support services to optimize the learning experiences of international students. In concert with the SLC team and in collaboration with other campus partners, our staff support and advocate for the specific and evolving needs of international students.

Student Organizations

A stroll down Sproul Plaza on a regular school day will help you get a taste of how diverse the UC campus is. With 5,913 international students from over 80 countries, Berkeley is truly a melting pot with distinctive cultures around the globe. Not surprisingly, there are many international student clubs on campus. Through social events, career development workshops, retreats and other events they aim to knit a closer community for international students, while at the same time welcome domestic students to experience their culture.

Tang Center

Our health care system may be very different from what you have experienced in your own country, and may be challenging to understand. The good news is that you have a wealth of resources here to help! University Health Services at the Tang Center is here to help you stay well at Cal, and help you get well if you become sick or injured. Physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, lab and radiology technologists, health educators, and counselors are here to help you take care of yourself and to get well.

Telephone Services

Making calls in the Bay Area can be confusing! There are many different “area codes” to remember, depending on where you live. If you live in Berkeley, the area code is 510 or 341. The area code in San Francisco is 415. Even though San Francisco is not that far from Berkeley, you must dial as if it’s a long distance call. Be careful about fees for making calls outside of your area code!

Type of Call	How to Call
Emergencies	Call 911. This is the national emergency number for police, ambulance services, and fire department. If you are on campus, you will get faster service if you call 510-642-3333 for emergencies (put this number in your cell phone).
Directory Assistance	Call 411. An operator will give you phone numbers for people and businesses. There is a \$1.25 fee.
Going outside the U.S.	Call 011 + country code + city code + phone number. See below for collect calls*
In the U.S. but going outside your local area code	Call 1 + three digit area code + seven digit phone number.
In your local area code	Call the three digit area code + seven digit phone number.
On-campus to another on-campus phone	Call only the last five digits of the phone number. For example, the number for Berkeley International office is (510) 642-2818, so you would dial 2-2818.
On-campus phone to an off-campus location	Call 9+ the phone number as described above. For example, if it’s outside the 510 area code, you will call 9 + 1 + area code + 7-digit phone number. (Some campus phones are already linked directly to off-campus locations, so it’s always best to ask).
Transit Information	Call 511. This is a FREE service to transportation information you need to get around the Bay Area.

*Collect calls: When you make a collect call, the person you are calling pays for the call. To do so, dial “o” and tell the operator you want to place a collect call. The operator will dial the number for you and ask the person who answers if they will accept the collect call. If they accept, you can begin talking immediately.

Telephone Services

Cell Phones

Since you may already have a cell / mobile phone in your home country, you will, of course, need to inquire about its use in the U.S.; many companies have international plans. However, it may be more economical to purchase a new phone after you arrive here. Do some research in advance by looking at web sites of the major cell phone companies such as AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, MetroPCS, and Sprint.

Some cell phone companies in the U.S. require that you have a Social Security Number (SSN) to purchase a service plan.

If you will not be eligible for a Social Security Number immediately, ask the cell phone companies about service plans that do not require it. In most cases, the cell phone companies can offer you a pre-paid plan that requires no credit check or identification numbers, or require a larger deposit in lieu of the Social Security Number.

International Calling Cards

You can call home by using an international calling card, using a credit card, or by placing an operator-assisted or collect call. International calling cards are by far the least expensive of the three and can be purchased on the internet at very low rates or at most grocery or convenience stores throughout the city. Different cards are better for different parts of the world in terms of connection, minutes and cost. Shop around and get the best deal for the country you are usually calling. The locations listed below are near the UC Berkeley campus:

International House
<http://ihouse.berkeley.edu>
2299 Piedmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94720-2320

Walgreen's Drugstores
www.walgreens.com
2310 Telegraph Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704

CampusSIMs and StudentSIMs

Berkeley International Office has partnered with [CampusSIMs](#) and [StudentSIMs](#), both third party cell phone service providers, to offer all new international students options for a free SIM card. To receive a free card from CampusSIMs, [click here](#). To receive a free card from StudentSIMs, [click here](#). Both companies are valued partners of Berkeley International Office, and provide affordable and reliable support for international students.

Since you may already have a cell / mobile phone in your home country, you will, of course, need to inquire about its use in the U.S.; many companies have international plans. However, it may be more economical to purchase a new phone after you arrive here. Do some research in advance by looking at web sites of the major cell phone companies such as AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, MetroPCS, and Sprint.

Some cell phone companies in the U.S. require that you have a Social Security Number (SSN) to purchase a service plan. If you will not be eligible for a Social Security Number immediately, ask the cell phone companies about service plans that do not require it. In most cases, the cell phone companies can offer you a pre-paid plan that requires no SSN.

Postal Services

Mail Delivery / Pick Up

Mail is delivered to your home once a day Monday through Saturday. There is no mail service on Sundays or federal holidays.

Mail Drop Boxes

If you want to send mail, you can either attach it to your mailbox for pick up by the postal worker, or drop it in one of the blue mail boxes located around the city. The mail is picked up at specific times each day—check the schedule posted inside the door of the mail box. Make sure the mail box says “U.S. P.S.” on the box before dropping it in.

UC Berkeley Campus Mail Service

<http://mailservices.berkeley.edu/>

Mail Services is a distribution hub for all incoming US mail, intra- and inter-campus mail, and outgoing mail between the UC Berkeley campus and outside postal and delivery systems. To find out how to send mail from your campus department or residence, visit their web site (specific addressing standards are required)

United States Post Office

www.usps.com

The postal service in the U.S. is efficient and reliable. If you need to buy stamps, postcards, and airmails, change your address, or send letters and packages by first class, priority, express, certified, or registered mail, visit the local US Post Office. For more information on locations and hours call 1-800-275-8777 or check the website. U.S. post offices near the UCB campus include:

Sather Gate Post Office
2515 ½ Durant Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704

Allston Way DPOBU (Main Post Office)
2000 Allston Way
Berkeley, CA 94704

North Berkeley
1521 Shattuck AVE
Berkeley, CA 94709

Mailing and Shipping Shops

There are many mailing service shops around town that function much like the post office, but are privately owned or retail chains and serve as a convenient alternative to the post office. Not only do they provide mailing and shipping, but they will also package your item. They offer photocopying and faxing services and other document production services as well. Some big retail chain stores are:

- The UPS Store www.theupsstore.com
- Postal Annex www.postalannex.com

Courier / Express Mail Services

If you need overnight or quick delivery of a package, contact the following express courier services:

- DHL Worldwide Express www.dhl.com
1-800-225-5345, (415) 644-0900
- Federal Express <http://www.fedex.com>
1-800-463-3339
- US Postal Service www.usps.com
1-800-275-8777
- United Parcel Service (UPS)
www.ups.com/
1-800-742-5877

Identification

Your Passport and Arrival Documents

Use your passport as your main proof of identity until you can get your UC Berkeley ID card or your California Driver's License or Identification card (if desired).

As soon as you are able to obtain other types of photo identification, put your passport in safe storage and carry a photocopy of it. Having photocopies of arrival documents will also help you considerably when replacing them in the case of loss or theft.

UC Berkeley's Photo Identification - The Cal 1 Card

The Cal 1 Card can be used as a debit card for many campus services. It is also a key that can be used to gain access to locked buildings in many campus departments. You should apply as soon as possible after your arrival on campus.

The Cal 1 Card office is located at 212 Sproul Hall, and is open Monday-Friday from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

To get your ID card, visit the ["Get a Cal 1 Card"](#) website and follow the instructions to apply.

Social Security Card/ Social Security Number (SSN)

What is it? A Social Security number (SSN) is required for everyone who works in the U.S., including non-immigrants. It is not a work permit, nor is it a health insurance benefit. The Social Security Number is used by the government to collect taxes from employees' paychecks to provide stipends to qualifying elderly and disabled people. Certain non-immigrants (such as F-1 and J-1) are not required to have Social Security taxes deducted from their pay.

If you are planning to work in the U.S., you must apply for a Social Security Number. The following people are eligible to apply:

- F-1 students with a job offer letter and work permission
- J-1 students with a job offer and a work permit from their DS-2019 sponsor
- J-1 visiting scholars
- J-2 dependents with work permission from the USCIS (EAD)
- Individuals with other types of immigration status allowing employment
- F-2 dependents are not eligible for Social Security Numbers

An SSN is issued once per lifetime. If you have previously had an SSN, but do not have the card or do not remember the number, you can apply for a duplicate card if you meet the eligibility requirements above.

Business Uses

Most businesses do not need an SSN from you unless it is for credit purposes (loans, credit cards, etc.) If a business requests an SSN solely for ID purposes, you can request that the business create an ID for you. You do not need an SSN to open bank accounts. If a bank clerk insists on an SSN, ask to speak to a manager.

When to Apply for Social Security

Applications made too early may be rejected or delayed much longer than the usual process. Students and visiting scholars must be physically present in the U.S. to apply for an SSN. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is required to verify your legal entry into the U.S. before issuing an SSN.

New F-1 and J-1 students must wait at least 10 days after being fully registered -and- after the first day of class (both must be true).

New J-1 visiting scholars must wait at least ten business days after entering the U.S. -and- the submission of the "Scholar Arrival Notification" form to Berkeley International Office (both must be true). This form is normally submitted by the academic department after you check in with them upon arrival.

Identification

Social Security Card / Social Security Number (SSN) (cont'd)

The Application Process

1. Collect required documentation (see table below).
2. Complete a Social Security application form SS-5 available from the Social Security web site at www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html (also available at the Social Security office).
3. Submit your application in person along with other required documents to the Social Security Administration's office. The office is located at 2045 Allston Way (near the downtown Berkeley BART station). Request a written verification receipt.
4. Wait approximately two weeks for your Social Security card to arrive in the mail

Required Application Documents

	F-1 Students	J-1 Students	J-1 Scholars
Passport	X	X	X
I-94	X	X	X
I-20	X		
DS-2019		X	X
Employer's Letter	X		
Work Permit		X	

F-1 Student Employer's Letter

F-1 students are required to present a job offer letter from the employer along with all other documents. The letter must include specific information and be signed by an Adviser in Berkeley International Office. A sample letter you can use as a template is shown on our web site at http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/social_security_application

J-1 Student Work Permits

J-1 students are required to obtain a work permit from their J sponsor (DS-2019 issuing entity) to apply for a Social Security Number. UC Berkeley-sponsored students can obtain their work permits from Berkeley International Office.

Social Security Number Safety

Although an SSN is only meant to be used for tax and government purposes, it is often used by financial institutions, businesses, and others as a unique identification number. Because the SSN is a unique ID, it is often the target of "identity theft". Therefore you should be very careful about where and to whom you give your SSN.

- Never carry your Social Security card or number with you.
- Be very careful with any forms, applications or other materials that may have your SSN on it.
- Never give your SSN to someone who phones you.
- Never reply to email or web sites that request an SSN.

Identification

California Driver's License

California law states that if you are a visitor in California and have a valid driver's license from your home state or country, you may drive here without getting a California driver's license as long as your home state/country license remains valid. However, if you take a job here, become a student or move here, you must get a California driver license if you want to drive. An International Driving Permit is not recognized in the State of California. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you apply for a California driver's license if you will be in California for an extended period of time to avoid any confusion about your documentation (not all police officers will recognize your home country license). To obtain a California driver's license you will need to visit a local Department of Motor Vehicles Office (DMV). Make an appointment online www.dmv.ca.gov to avoid standing in long lines. You will need to prove your identity and residency in the state of California.

Required Exams

If this is your first time to apply for a driver's license in the U.S., you will need to take both a written examination and a driving test. If you can show proof that you have a valid driver's license from another state in the U.S., you will only be required to take the written examination. To study for the required written examination, you can download copies of the California Driver's Manual along with sample tests from the DMV website listed above. The test is available in many different languages and if you do not pass it the first time, you can take it up to three times in one day! Once you have passed the written test, you can make an appointment to take the driving test (often scheduled several days later). You will need to bring your own car. The car you use must be insured and registered with the DMV. Once you pass the road test, you will be issued a temporary driving license until your permanent one arrives in the mail four to six weeks later.

Check the website for current hours of operation. Be aware that this office is very busy and notoriously slow. For faster service you can download the forms needed for a driver's license from the website and make an appointment online.

In an effort to assist DMV customers who may have reading/learning difficulties, or English is their second language, the California Driver's Handbook (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-handbooks/>) is available in English, Spanish, Armenian, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese. There is also MP3 audio format in English. This audio lesson is designed as a complement to the printed hand book.

Learning How to Drive

If you don't already know how to drive, you can take a driver's education course. There are many to choose from, and oftentimes, they provide training online. Whichever course you decide to follow, make sure it has been certified by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). See this web site to get started <https://www.dmvedu.org/california-drivers-ed/>

California State Identification Card

DMV issues ID cards to persons of any age. The ID card looks like a driver's license, but is used for identification purposes only. A regular ID card is valid for six years. You may find it helpful to use the identification card instead of carrying your passport with you everywhere.

To apply for an ID card you will need to make an appointment at the DMV: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/idinfo/idcard.htm>

Banking

Opening a Bank Account

Upon arrival, you will want to open a bank account as soon as possible to keep your money in a secure location. In the U.S., you may use a combination of check writing, Automated Teller Machine (ATM), check card or credit cards, and online banking to make purchases and pay bills.

If you are planning to have money transferred or wired from abroad, be aware that there may be a delay of a few days or weeks before you can access your money. Inquire with the bank on wait times depending on the type of deposit you will make.

There are several different banks within walking distance from campus. These banks have ATM machines located throughout the city and state.



BANK OF THE WEST
BNP PARIBAS

Official Bank of UC Berkeley

As the Official Bank of UC Berkeley, [Bank of the West](#) provides friendly local service backed by the global strength of BNP Paribas. They have designed an account specifically for Cal Students with access to exclusive deals. You will pay no monthly service charge for up to six years! Make life easier for yourself by having a branch and 16 ATMs right on campus. To learn more about banking in the U.S., check out our answers to these [frequently asked questions](#), and take a look at our [10 Helpful Financial Tips for International Students](#).

Checking and Savings Accounts

We recommend that all students and scholars open a checking account to pay bills such as rent or utilities. Most checking accounts include an ATM / Debit card so you can withdraw money from your account and use it for purchases. Checks are also commonly used at grocery stores or retail shops to pay for purchases, although you will need to show some form of photo I.D. such as a passport or driver's license for this purpose. If you are working, you can request that your salary be directly deposited into your checking account every month (a safe and convenient option).

Be aware that some debit cards have credit card logos on them (such as Visa, MasterCard etc.) and can function like a credit card for purchases. However, the payment is drawn from your checking account directly.

Credit Cards

If you have no credit history in the U.S., it may be difficult to obtain a credit card. You can establish a credit history by obtaining a "Secure Credit Card" which will require you to deposit money for its usage. Within a few months of using the Secure Credit Card, you may be eligible for other credit cards. However you may need a Social Security Number to be eligible to apply.

News Sources

Newspapers

There are many newspapers in the Bay Area. You can pick up newspapers on many street corners, BART Stations, or bookstores. You can also subscribe (for a fee) to a newspaper so that it is delivered to your residence daily. The most popular newspapers are:

San Francisco Chronicle www.sfgate.com/chronicle
 The Oakland Tribune www.insidebayarea.com
 New York Times www.nytimes.com
 Wall Street Journal www.wsj.com/home-page

Free Local News

The Berkeley Daily Planet

www.berkeleydailyplanet.com
 focuses on local news in Berkeley and Oakland.

The East Bay Express

www.eastbayexpress.com/ebx/Home focuses on the arts and dining in Berkeley and Oakland.

The Daily Californian

www.dailycal.org
 A campus student-run newspaper, available throughout the UC Berkeley campus.

UC Berkeley News Center

<http://newscenter.berkeley.edu/> campus faculty and staff newspaper

The Berkeley Public Library

www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/index.php
 Many foreign language resources are available, including international newspapers and magazines from your home country. You can search their online catalog or browse their magazine and newspaper collection on the 2nd floor of the library.

Radio Programs

National Public Radio (NPR) 88.5 FM is a non-profit radio station with award-winning international and local news programs. They have original programs as well as broadcasting programs from other radio stations such as the BBC. They also offer a wide range of talk shows and musical-variety entertainment. See their web site for program information at www.npr.org/

KPFA 94.1 FM, www.kpfa.org/ is a Berkeley-based radio station, and was the first community-supported radio station in the U.S. Their programs include news, interviews, review and an ongoing drama, literature and performance series. They play a lot of world music and a mix of eclectic sounds. The staff is unpaid community volunteers.

Television

Local Stations

There are three national network channels where you can get local as well as national and some international news: ABC, CBS, and NBC. These local stations usually broadcast their evening news between 5pm and 6pm, depending on the channel.

International

For international news, your best options are the public television stations (KQED) or the cable news stations such as CNN and MSNBC. If you have cable service on your television, you will also find international news programs in Spanish, Japanese, French, German and many other languages.

Finding Housing

Where to Start

You can start your search for housing from abroad, but be aware that rentals go quickly and are usually not available far in advance. Finding housing in Berkeley and the nearby areas can be done in a weekend if you are not too particular, but the better approach would be to allow yourself at least two weeks after arrival. The best time of the year to find vacancies is May-July. Here are two great sources for finding housing near the UCB campus:

UCB Residential and Student Services Program

www.housing.berkeley.edu

Help with on-campus and off-campus housing options, including Family Housing.

Craigslist

www.craigslist.org

A popular local website to help you with finding roommates, shared housing, rooms in private homes, or your own apartment, flat or house.

Housing Search Strategies

Here are some suggestions for starting your search:

1. Have a cell phone and a laptop computer to inquire about vacancies that become available. You will find that many apartment leasing offices don't answer calls and have voice mail or email only. You will need the phone to receive those returned messages at all hours of the day. You may want to prepare a script when leaving telephone messages for the landlord.
2. Rent or borrow a car; your search will go faster if you can drive. The city is bigger than you think!
3. Become familiar with housing vocabulary (see next page)
4. Prepare a Tenant Resume (optional, but recommended).
5. Get a recommendation letter. Most landlords require a record of credit history, rental history references, social security number, or driver's license number. Since you may not have some or all of these documents, you may want to request a recommendation letter from your faculty mentor or someone in your department to give to the landlord. It also helps to mention that you are an employee or student at UCB.

6. Become familiar with the names of neighborhoods. Look for housing in a neighborhood near campus where you will be working or studying, or along public transportation lines to make your commute more convenient since parking is difficult to find.

7. Drive or walk by to see the places you are interested in to find out what the exterior and the neighborhood look like before making an appointment for viewing. When you find something you like, do not hesitate to let the landlord know immediately that you are interested. Have a check or money order ready to pay the deposit.

8. Prepare a list of questions to ask your potential landlord such as, "What utilities are included in the rent (water, gas, electricity)? What is the cost of gas and electricity per month? When will the apartment be available? How much is the security deposit? What is the parking availability? Are there laundry facilities located on site?"

9. Meet potential roommates in person before making a commitment. You would not want to move in with someone that might not be suitable for you. In fact, because the cost of housing is so high in the Bay Area, it is common that people will live with several roommates. Do not be surprised if you are asked for an interview yourself from everyone in the house.

Local BIO Sponsor:

Get to know The Durant Apartments, where modern design meets tech-forward functionality. Located a block from UC Berkeley, our fully-furnished studio and two-bedroom apartments(link is external) all come with private kitchens and private bathrooms. Each unit offers modern designer finishes, such as floor-to-ceiling windows, wood-style plank flooring, sleek LED lighting and stainless-steel appliances. Make The Durant Apartments your home today.



Finding Housing

Glossary of Terms

Bachelor: Small apartment without a kitchen. Sometimes a hot plate or microwave is provided.

Efficiency: One room for living, eating, and sleeping. The bathroom is separate

Single or Studio: Single room apartment with a small kitchen and a bathroom.

One Bedroom Efficiency: Large single that has been converted into a one bedroom by dividing the room with doors. An efficiency should be smaller and cheaper than a normal one bedroom.

In-law House: Homeowner sometimes has a smaller structure behind or next to their property that can be used as a private living space. Size and features vary. Sometimes it is a converted garage or pool house.

Townhouse or Condominium: Private home or very spacious and luxurious apartment that sometimes has its own laundry, pool and recreational facilities.

Lease: A legal contract signed by both the manager and the renter regarding the length of stay, price, and conditions of a rental agreement. It is important to not sign a lease for more than the amount of time you will stay. You are responsible for rent the entire length of the lease. Violation of the lease agreement can result in a heavy financial penalty. Residents should understand all of the conditions of the lease before signing. Any negotiated variation should be set out in writing, initialed, and dated by both the tenant and the manager.

Sublet: Special arrangement where you live in someone's apartment in their place. Sublets often short-term opportunities with furnished rooms and no deposit. However, it is usually best to ask the person renting if their manager or landlord knows about your agreement, in case the lease prohibits you from taking his / her place.

Credit Check: A process in which the landlord verifies your credit history and confirms your bank information. International students or scholars who do not have a credit history in this country should not need to pay for a credit check, but it may be necessary to negotiate an agreement with the landlord in this case.

Deposit or Security Deposit: An additional amount you must pay when moving into an apartment (usually at least one or two month's rent) to guarantee occupancy, payment of rent, repair of damages, and professional cleaning after you leave. In most cases, the deposit is returned to you in full if there is no damage to your apartment at the end of your stay (there may be a slight deduction for cleaning). Inspect the apartment carefully when moving in and record any damages, so you won't be charged when moving out.

First, Last, Deposit: This means that to move in, you must pay the first and last month's rent amount, plus the security deposit amount. Most rental apartments require this, but it is possible to find those that only require the deposit amount and the first month's rent.

Rent: Payment made for living accommodations, usually on a monthly basis.

Utilities: The term used for the extra charges for gas, electricity, cable television, and water. Plan on spending an extra \$25-\$100 per month depending on your lifestyle. Some students are careful about finding "gas stoves" and "non-halogen lamps" as they use less energy.

A/C or AIR: Air-conditioning

BR or BDRM: Bedroom

FP: Fireplace

4-Plex: A rental unit comprised of two ground floor or "garden" apartments and two second floor apartments

2/2 or 3/2: The first number indicates the number of bedrooms in the apartment. The second number indicates the number of bathrooms. Bathroom facilities include bathtub and/or shower, toilet (WC), and wash basin.

ABP: All bills paid. Your utilities (water, electricity, gas, sewage, garbage collection) have been included in your rent. You only have to arrange for telephone service.

W/D: Washing machine and clothes dryer are provided.

Finding Housing

Utility Services in your New Place

If you choose to live off-campus, you will be required to set up your own utility services. The fees for set up and the monthly costs are not usually included in your lease amount. However, oftentimes the landlord will include some of these utilities with the rent, and you will not need to arrange for set up. Discuss this matter with the landlord BEFORE you sign the lease agreement—you may discover that the monthly costs are more than you expected.

Telephone Service

www.att.com

To acquire a telephone line for your home, you will need to contact the telephone company directly. Most people in this area use AT&T for telephone service, because it is the biggest and most established. See their web site for prices and service options. Of course, be sure to ask about international calls if you are planning to call home while in the U.S. (a calling card may be cheaper—do some research in advance). Many students and scholars forego telephone service and rely solely on cell phones.

Gas and Electricity = Heat and Light

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) www.pge.com
Contact the company above as soon as you have a permanent home address and know what day you want your service to begin. Gas and electricity service are billed together. Homes in the area are heated by natural gas, but most appliances are run on electricity.

Water

www.ebmud.com

Water is oftentimes paid for by the landlord. If you must arrange your own water service, contact the municipal water district in your area. Most people living near the UCB campus will use the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD).

Garbage and Recycling

Most landlords also provide garbage service. Be sure to ask about this before you sign the lease. In most cases, the water and garbage service are billed together. For more information, check the web site of the city in which you are planning to live. For Berkeley, see www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=4034.

Television Services

If you have a television in your home, you may be able to access three or more channels at no charge. However, you may find that the reception is not clear and it will be difficult to watch. Many people end up purchasing cable television service, which not only makes the free channels clearer, but gives you access to a greater number of channels. Cable service also offers movie channels and other special features that enhance your viewing pleasure. In the Bay Area, Comcast www.comcast.com/ and AT&T www.att.com/ are the two main providers of cable television.

Internet Connections at Home

To have high-speed internet at home, you will need to purchase either DSL or cable service. Again, the top two companies that serve the Bay Area are Comcast and AT&T. You will need to look at their options to decide what is best for you. Check their web sites for more information.

Finding Housing

Housing Advocacy

Occasionally you may experience problems with rentals or living situations that require information or counseling services.

- The Attorney for Student
ssa.berkeley.edu/legal
Available to give legal advice at no charge to currently enrolled students (102 Sproul Hall; 510-664-7487).
- Renters' Legal Assistance (RLA),
www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~asucrla
Offers counseling and assistance for all rental problems; education, outreach, and public interest research on state and local laws that have an impact on renters; and a library. Internships are also available.
- City of Berkeley
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us
Has information on renters' rights and safety for non-University rental housing in the City of Berkeley. Search under "Rent Stabilization Board" on their web site.

Tips for Tenants

Listed below are some helpful words of advice for people who are new to renting housing in the U.S.:

Bring your paperwork. When you are conducting your search for housing, it is important to make a good first impression. When you go to look at a new place, carry with you written references from landlords, employers, friends and colleagues, evidence of solid financial support, a resume with your name and contact info on it, and a brief cover letter describing yourself. If you are interested in the place, give a copy of these to the landlord in case they will be choosing from other interested people as well.

Review the lease. Carefully review all of the conditions before you sign on the dotted line. Your lease or rental agreement may contain a provision that you find unacceptable -- for example, restrictions on guests, pets, design alterations, or running a home business.

Get everything in writing. To avoid disputes or misunderstandings with your landlord, get everything in writing. Keep copies of any correspondence and follow up an oral agreement with a letter, setting out your understandings. For example, if you ask your landlord to make repairs, put your request in writing and keep a copy for yourself.

Protect your privacy rights. Next to disputes over rent or security deposits, one of the most common and emotion-filled misunderstandings arises over the tension between a landlord's right to enter a rental unit and a tenant's right to be left alone. If you understand your privacy rights (for example, the amount of notice your landlord must provide before entering), it will be easier to protect them.

Demand repairs. Know your rights to live in a habitable rental unit -- and don't give them up. The vast majority of landlords are required to offer their tenants livable premises, including adequate weatherproofing; heat, water, and electricity; and clean, sanitary, and structurally safe premises. If your rental unit is not kept in good repair, you have a number of options, ranging from withholding a portion of the rent, to paying for repairs and deducting the cost from your rent, to calling the building inspector (who may order the landlord to make repairs), to moving out without liability,

Talk to your landlord. Keep communication open with your landlord. If there's a problem -- for example, if the landlord is slow to make repairs -- talk it over to see if the issue can be resolved short of a nasty legal battle.

Purchase renters' insurance. Your landlord's insurance policy will not cover your losses due to theft or damage. Renters' insurance may also cover you if you're sued by someone who claims to have been injured in your rental due to your carelessness. Renters' insurance typically costs \$350 a year for a \$50,000 policy that covers loss due to theft or damage caused by other people or natural disasters; if you don't need that much coverage, there are cheaper policies.

Protect your security deposit. To avoid any misunderstandings, make sure your lease or rental agreement is clear on the use and refund of security deposits. When you move in, walk through the premises with the landlord to record existing damage.

Shopping

Furniture

As a visitor temporarily in the U.S., you will likely want to buy inexpensive furniture and household goods. Listed below are some resources near campus for buying both used and inexpensive new items:

New Furniture

Ikea

www.ikea.com

4400 Shellmound St, Emeryville, CA 94608

(888) 888-4532

Inexpensive and modern Scandinavian-style furniture that you can order online

Target

www.target.com

1057 Eastshore Hwy, Albany, CA 94710

(510) 982-0512

Major retail store selling inexpensive household items and furniture.

American Home Furnishings

11425 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530

(510) 215-5034

A large inventory of quality furnishings at a reasonable price. They will deliver your purchases.

Used Furniture

Craigslist

www.craigslist.org

Search under San Francisco – East Bay for items in the local area. You will likely have to pick up the items yourself.

The Goodwill Store

<http://eastbaygoodwill.org/>

2058 University Ave, Berkeley CA 94704

(510) 649-1287

Cheap stuff! Be creative!

Thrift Town

www.thrifttown.com

2101 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA

(415) 861-1132

A big selection of many kinds of used items including furniture.

Urban Ore Ecopark

<http://urbanore.com/ecopark-store/shop/>

900 Murray St, Berkeley, CA 94710

(510) 841-7283

Serves two functions: a disposal service for people to let go of unwanted but still-useful goods, and a retail store where other people can find things they want at a low price.

Transporting Your Furniture If You Don't Own a Car

Many furniture stores will deliver items for a fee. The fee can be minimal—or it can be a major percentage of the total cost, so be sure to ask before making your decision.

U-Haul Truck Rentals

www.uhaul.com

If you decide to transport newly purchased furniture yourself, you can rent a truck through the “U-Haul” company. They have moving trucks of various sizes and prices and have many store locations throughout the East Bay (and throughout the U.S.). If you call their toll-free number at 1-800-GO-UHAUL, they will locate the nearest truck rental store in your area. You only need to be 18 years old with a valid U.S. driver's license to rent a truck. In addition to the truck rental fee, you must pay a fee per mile and fill the gas tank before returning the truck. It's a good idea to buy the insurance they offer when you make the reservation in case you get into an accident (if you pay with a credit card, your credit card company may provide insurance automatically—but you should ask about this in advance).

Shopping

Household Items

There are a number of discount stores that sell a wide range of general household supplies, small appliances and hardware near the UCB campus:

Target

www.target.com
1057 Eastshore Hwy
Albany, CA 94710
(510) 982-0512

Ross

<http://www.rossstores.com>
2000 El Cerrito Plaza
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 528-0640

Bed, Bath and Beyond

www.bedbathandbeyond.com
6000 El Cerrito Plaza
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 559-3763

Costco

www.costco.com
4801 Central Ave,
Richmond, CA 94804-5778
(510) 898-2000

Wal-Mart

www.walmart.com
1400 Hilltop Mall Road
Richmond, CA 94806
(510) 669-1342

Ace Hardware

<http://www.berkeleyace.com/>
2020 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 845-0410

Discount Clothing Stores

A discount store is a type of department store, which sell products at prices lower than those asked by traditional retail outlets. Most discount department stores offer wide assortments of goods; others specialize in such merchandise as jewelry, electronic equipment, or electrical appliances. Discount Stores are the least expensive option of the list provided here. They usually specialize in inexpensive clothing and shoes, some designer and brand-name cast-offs, and irregular items that could not be sold through more upscale retailers. These stores are often crowded with merchandise and require some searching to find that special piece you are looking for. Previously mentioned stores include Target, Wal-Mart, and Ross. Some other discount stores include:

Marshall's

www.marshallsonline.com
10759 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
Phone: (510) 527-5668

H&M

www.hm.com/us
5630 Bay Street, California,
Emeryville, CA 94608
(855) 466-7467

Old Navy

www.oldnavy.com
5625 Bay St
Emeryville, CA 94608-2407
Phone: (510) 595-8729

Kohl's

www.kohls.com
2201 S. Shore Center
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 263-0308

Shopping

Factory Outlet Stores

A factory outlet store is a store where manufacturers sell their products directly to the public instead of through an intermediary retail store. Factory outlet stores offer merchandise at deeply discounted prices from some of the biggest companies such as Nike, Coach, Levi's, Gap and other designer brands. Often these stores are grouped together in outlet malls. Although there are no factory outlet stores in Berkeley, there are a great variety within a one to two hour drive:

Chelsea Premium Outlets Stores www.premiumoutlets.com:

- Gilroy Premium Outlets, 408-842-3729
- Vacaville Premium Outlets, 707-447-5755
- Napa Premium Outlets, 707-226-9876 and San Francisco Premium Outlets, 925-292-2868

Department Stores

A department store specializes in selling a wide range of products including apparel, furniture, appliances, electronics, jewelries and selected other products all in one building. Many department stores are located within shopping malls. The stores below are listed from least expensive price ranges to the most expensive.

Sears

www.sears.com

Sears is a chain of mid-price department stores located in shopping malls; they carry clothing, jewelry, appliances, hardware, lawn and garden supplies, sporting goods, automobile repair, office supplies, electronics and school supplies. Located at Hilltop Mall (see below) and near the 19th street BART station, Oakland.

JC Penney

www.jcpenney.com

JC Penney is one of America's leading retailers (mid-price), operating throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. They have the largest apparel and home furnishing sites on the Internet, and the nation's largest general merchandise catalog business. Located at Hilltop Mall (see address below)

Macy's

www.macys.com

Macy's celebrated its 150th birthday in 2008. It has more than 810 stores throughout the U.S. Stores nearby are located at Hilltop Mall (see below).

Nordstrom

www.nordstrom.com

Nordstrom is a chain of upscale department stores, famous for their excellent selection of shoes (and annual shoe sale!) and designer clothing. The nearest store location is at the Westfield San Francisco Center (see below). They also have a discount version of their store called the "Nordstrom Rack", which is also located in downtown San Francisco.

Bloomingdale's

www.bloomingdales.com

Bloomingdale's (or Bloomie's) is a chain of upscale department stores owned by Macy's and has 41 stores nationwide. The nearest store is at the Westfield San Francisco Center (see below).

Shopping

Shopping Malls

A shopping mall or shopping center is a building or set of buildings that contain a variety of retail units, with interconnecting walkways enabling visitors to easily walk from unit to unit. In California you will commonly find open-air shopping malls designed with pedestrian areas and courtyards between storefronts. Some malls nearby include:

Hilltop Mall

www.simon.com/Mall/?id=1252

2200 Hilltop Mall Road, Richmond, CA 94806
(510) 223-6900

Indoor mall connected to a Wal-Mart store, about a 15-minute drive from campus.

Bay Street Emeryville

www.baystreetemeryville.com/

5616 Bay Street, Emeryville, CA 94608
(510) 655-4002

Bay Street is home to more than 65 shops, 10 restaurants, a 16-screen AMC theatre and over 1,000 residents who live in the 400 residential units.

Westfield San Francisco Center

www.westfield.com/sanfrancisco

865 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 495-5656

Upscale shopping; designer stores and a movie theatre in a gorgeous new facility in downtown SF.

Broadway Plaza Shopping Center

www.broadwayplaza.com/

1275 Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(925) 939-7600

Outdoor suburban mall with an assortment of stores and restaurants spread over several blocks. A little far from campus, but a nice change of pace from the urban setting of Berkeley.

Pacific East Mall

<http://pacificeastmall.com>

Ranch 99 Supermarket

www.99ranch.com

3288 Pierce Street, Richmond, CA 94804
One of the best Asian markets in the area – the Ranch 99 Supermarket, as well as the incredible Pho Saigon restaurant, delectable Asian bakery goods, a karaoke lounge, hair salons, cafes and many other stores and specialty shops.

Boutiques and Retail Stores

There are many small, privately-owned boutiques and retail stores located along College Avenue, Telegraph Avenue www.telegraphshop.com/, Solano Avenue www.solanoavenueassn.org and Fourth Street www.fourthstreet.com. Of course, shopping in San Francisco's many neighborhoods is an adventure in itself! Take a friend and go for a morning stroll and lunch at any of the cafes or restaurants along the way. You may also want to visit Oakland Chinatown www.oaklandchinatownchamber.org/index.html. The hub of Chinatown is the Pacific Renaissance Plaza, a multi-story residential and commercial complex, which features two levels of shops, restaurants and an Asian library.

Shopping

Food

Supermarkets

The supermarkets listed below are all quite different and unique and offer a variety of food and household merchandise. See them all to get a sense of what is available to you:

Lucky

www.luckysupermarkets.com

1000 El Cerrito Plaza El Cerrito, CA 94530

(510) 524-7282

Locations throughout California—check web site for location near you

Berkeley Bowl

www.berkeleybowl.com

2020 Oregon St. or 920 Heinz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703 Berkeley, CA

(510) 843-6929 (510) 898-9555

Safeway

<http://shop.safeway.com/superstore>

1444 Shattuck Place or 6310 College Ave
Berkeley, CA 94709 Oakland, CA 94618

(510) 526-3086 (510) 985-0012

Locations throughout California—check web site for location near you

Safeway Community Markets

www.safewaycommunitymarkets.com

1550 Shattuck Avenue Berkeley, CA 94709

(510) 841-7942

Upscale grocery store with higher prices, higher quality, more exotic selections, and bright, spacious presentation, fewer total items, and smaller square footage than the major popular priced markets.

Ranch 99

www.99ranch.com

3288 Pierce Street Richmond, CA 94804

(510) 558-2120

Serves the pan-Asian population by providing hometown flavors and shopping experience.

Trader Joe's

www.traderjoes.com

1885 University Ave Berkeley, CA 94703

(510) 204-9074

Locations throughout California—check web site for location near you

Customers rave about their products and are very dedicated. Shopping at TJ's always requires plenty of time—the lines are long, but it's well worth it.

Whole Foods Market

www.wholefoodsmarket.com

3000 Telegraph Avenue Berkeley, CA 94705

(510) 649-1333

The Whole Foods Market specializes in natural and organic foods. Their prices tend to cost a little more than the standard supermarket fare. A great place to find “health food” items and vegetarian meals.

Costco

www.costco.com

4801 Central Avenue Richmond, California 94804

(510) 898-2000

Costco is a discount warehouse that sells many different products. They also have food at greatly reduced prices. You must buy a membership to shop at Costco and enjoy the savings. See it for yourself.

The Natural Grocery Company

www.naturalgrocery.com

1336 Gilman Street Berkeley, CA 94706

510-526-2456

This small, local store is overflowing with healthy selections. The produce department features all organic fruits, vegetables and herbs and the meat department is all natural. Grind your own peanuts at the store for fresh, homemade peanut butter!

Shopping

Produce Markets

A produce market specializes in fresh fruits and vegetables. They also carry a wide range of other items; the quantity and selection varies from store-to-store. Produce markets are generally less expensive than supermarkets.

Monterey Market

www.montereymarket.com

1550 Hopkins St.
Berkeley, CA 94707
510-526-6042

Produce Center

1500 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709
510-848-8100

Farmer's Markets

Farmer's markets are outdoor, temporary markets set up on certain streets on certain times of the week where local farmers sell their goods. You can often find organic foods here. There are farmer's markets in every city. You may also find small fruit and vegetable stands along highways or other roadsides.

North Shattuck (Berkeley)

Organic Farmers' Markets

<http://ecologycenter.org/bfm/>

El Cerrito Plaza Farmers Market

Tuesdays and Saturdays 9am-1pm
At El Cerrito Plaza Parking lot

Oakland Chinatown Market

www.oaklandchinatownchamber.org/index.html

Oakland Chinatown's open-air markets display everything from live fish to imported ceramics. Chinatown is located in downtown Oakland between Broadway to the west, Interstate 880 to the south, Oak Street and Laney College to the east, and 12th Street to the north.

Convenience Stores

These are small stores, often connected to gas stations that sell a limited variety of items at a higher cost. They are normally open longer than most stores, sometimes even for 24 hours. The most famous convenience store in the U.S. is named "7-Eleven" (7-Eleven is famous for their frozen drink called "the Slurpee." Try one!)

Pharmacies / Drugstores

In the U.S. pharmacies are usually housed within a larger "drugstore" that carries a wide range of products such as health and beauty supplies, cleaning supplies, art supplies, office supplies and more. Oftentimes, you will find a pharmacy inside a supermarket. Common supermarket pharmacies are Rite-Aid and Sav-On Drugs. Other independent pharmacies near UCB include:

Walgreens

www.walgreens.com

2310 Telegraph Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 848-5121

CVS Pharmacies

www.CVS.com

2300 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 549-4250

Transportation

Public Transportation

While at Berkeley, you will likely use three main modes of transportation: BART, buses and shuttles. Taxis are more expensive and not frequently used by students or scholars. For longer journeys, you may choose to ride the train or rent a car on your own. Described below are more details about each mode of transportation.

<https://pt.berkeley.edu/transportation-options/public-transportation-passes-and-information/transit-info>

Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART)

www.bart.gov

BART is a local light rail / subway system that serves the entire Bay Area. Stops include San Francisco Airport (SFO), downtown San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Fremont, Richmond, and Concord. BART runs seven days a week. Fares vary according to the distance to be traveled. When you enter a BART station, you must buy your ticket from a ticket machine before boarding. You will receive a small card which you will then insert into a machine marked “enter.” Remember to keep it until you arrive at your destination. When you leave the BART station, you insert the card again in the machine marked “exit.” If there is any money left on your card, the card will be returned to you, otherwise, the machine will keep it. Children 12 years old and under are eligible for special discount tickets available at BART stations. No monthly passes are available but you may buy prepaid cards (\$45-\$60).

Alameda County (AC) Transit Bus System

www.actransit.org

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District is the third-largest public bus system in California, serving Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Oakland and Kensington. AC Transit buses run through the UCB campus and also carry passengers across the Bay into San Francisco. UCB students get a bus pass (called the EasyPass) at the beginning of each semester that allows unlimited use on this bus system. UC Berkeley employees can obtain an “EasyPass” for unlimited AC Transit rides (approx. \$40/per month). The bus line 52 runs between the UCB campus and the family housing community, called University Village (located in Albany).

Caltrain

www.caltrain.com

A commuter train that runs daily from San Francisco to San Jose, stopping at many cities along the way.

Special Transit Card /Special Tickets “EASYPASS” for Students

<https://pt.berkeley.edu/transportation-options/public-transportation-passes-and-info/ac-transit-student-classpass>

AC Transit for Visiting Scholars and Researchers

<https://pt.berkeley.edu/transportation-options/public-transportation-berkeley-and-beyond/ac-transit>

Clipper CARD

www.clippercard.com/

Clipper® is an all-in-one transit card that keeps track of any passes, discount tickets, ride books and cash value that you load onto it, while applying all applicable fares, discounts and transfer rules. ClipperSM is accepted on Muni, BART, AC Transit, Caltrain, SamTrans, VTA and Golden Gate Transit and Ferry. To learn more about using Clipper on a specific transit provider, please click here: www.clippercard.com/ClipperWeb/useTranslink.do As of January 1, 2018, there is a 50 cent surcharge per trip for Blue paper tickets. Riders are encouraged to get a Clipper Card to avoid the surcharge.

Taxis

www.bayareayellowcab.com

Although you can find taxis available near most BART stations (on Shattuck and Center Street), the best way to get service is to make a reservation in advance or call 15- 20 minutes before you want to be picked up. Taxis don’t run as often in Berkeley as they might in other big cities, so you may have to wait if you don’t have a reservation. Taxis can be expensive, thus are not a popular mode of transportation for students.

Transportation

Public Transportation (cont'd)

Greyhound Bus System

www.greyhound.com/home/

Greyhound is the largest provider of intercity bus transportation, serving more than 2,300 destinations with 13,000 daily departures across North America. It provides regularly scheduled passenger service and its “Greyhound Travel Services” unit offers charter packages for businesses, conventions, schools and other groups at competitive rates. Nearest bus terminals include:

Oakland Station

2103 San Pablo Ave Oakland, Ca 94612
510-834-3213

San Francisco Station

200 Folsom St San Francisco, Ca 94105
415-495-1569

AMTRAK Trains

www.amtrak.com

Amtrak is the largest passenger rail company operating in the United States. With more than 500 station stops in 46 states, Amtrak makes it easy for you to go where you want. Although it's not the fastest way to travel, it is a great way to see the country and relax while someone else drives! You can reserve a sleeper car for overnight trips, or just take a day trip along the California coast on the Coast Starlight where the scenery is unsurpassed. You can purchase tickets online or at the station. There is an Amtrak station in Berkeley and in Emeryville, Use their helpful web site to plan your trip.

Car Share Programs

Car-sharing is a neighborhood-based transportation service that allows people to use a car when needed, without the costs and responsibilities of ownership. Cars of various sizes are kept in small parking lots all over a city. Members make reservations on-line or via a toll-free phone number, walk to the closest car access it using an electronic key and drive off. They are billed at the end of each month based on usage. Car share programs come in many forms. Two of the most well-known programs in the Bay Area are:

Getaround

www.getaround.com

Zip Car

www.zipcar.com

GIG (Get in and Go)

gigcarshare.com

Rental Cars

There are many rental car agencies located within the Oakland and San Francisco Airport as well as other locations around the city. However, on most rentals the minimum age is 25 (or in some cases, 21 with an additional fees) and you must have a valid driver's license. Each rental agency has its own policies regarding what is acceptable proof of a driver's license, so it's best to check their web site in advance. Go to the airport web site listed previously in this Guide and click on “Ground Transportation” for links to all the rental car agencies.

Transportation

Buying and Owning a Car

Car ownership can be expensive, especially in a crowded city with limited parking. In addition to the cost of buying a car, you will need to pay annual registration fees, car insurance, smog tests and parking fees. If you have decided it's best for your situation to purchase a car, it is recommended that you become familiar with the following resources:

Kelly Blue Book

www.kbb.com

Kelley Blue Book provides information about car resale values in the U.S. and gives you an excellent resource for comparing prices, especially for used cars. The “Blue Book “ is the nation's number-one-selling automotive bookfeaturing 15 years of used car values on more than 10,000 models of cars, trucks and vans and is available in bookstores, auto supply stores and other locations.

The Better Business Bureau

<http://goldengate.bbb.org>

This site can help you find out if a particular business has a good reputation or not, and if there have been any complaints files against them. Just click on “Check out a business” and type in the name of the business to get a full report.

Consumer Reports Magazine

www.consumerreports.org

Provides unbiased car ratings and car buyer information.

Sources for Buying Cars

New and Used Car Dealers

Both new and used car dealers can be excellent sources for finding a quality used vehicle. These cars may be serviced by the dealer and sold with limited warranties. Ask the dealer how you may contact the car's previous owner if you want to get more information. You can check on a car's history through a service called Carfax at www.carfax.com.

Internet Services

Shop online for cars and you can make comparisons, get price quotes from dealers, obtain insurance and extended warranties, and even handle financing. Before you buy, do some comparisons of different web sites using similar vehicles to see if their prices are fair. There are several online resources that will allow you to compare different styles and models, evaluate prices and option packages. www.carsdirect.com

Car Registration

You must register your car with the state within twenty days if you brought it with you from another state and within thirty days if you purchase it in California. Failure to do so can result in a penalty and other legal difficulties. Registration can be accomplished at the DMV. If your car does not have a California emissions control system, you may have to pay \$300 in fees or have your car retrofitted. Your car may also have to undergo a smog control test. This will cost about \$100. The test can be done at most gas stations, but look for an official “Emissions Control” sign. Don't panic if your car fails the first time. You may only need a tune-up. Consult the Vehicle Registration booklet which you can download from the DMV website for registration fees at www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/vr.htm

Transportation

Buying and Owning a Car (cont'd)

Car Insurance

Drivers have a financial responsibility for personal injury and property damage caused during accidents. The State of California requires that all drivers be insured for this. Major insurance companies include AAA, Allstate, State Farm, and GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company). Please check the Better Business Bureau website at <http://goldengate.bbb.org/> for valuable tips on understanding, shopping for, and minimizing the cost of auto insurance. Hint for international drivers: a California driver's license is required to get your car insured. Shop around and consider different insurance companies—prices vary. Ask the company if they offer special discounts for a good driving record or any other incentives.

Parking in the City of Berkeley

You can park on Berkeley neighborhood streets for two-hour periods as long as there are no restricted parking signs posted. If you live in the city of Berkeley, you can purchase a residential parking permit which allows you to leave your car on the street for up to 72 hours at a time. To apply for a residential permit in Berkeley, see the City of Berkeley web site at <https://berkeley.cmrpay.com/permits>, and search under “Parking.” Parking spaces near the UC Berkeley campus are very difficult to find.

Read carefully the street signs for parking limits and street cleaning times. Failure to obey these signs or parking in illegal spaces will result in parking citation fees of \$30 and up. For parking rules and regulations, read the California Driver's Handbook available www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/.

Parking at UCB

There are many student, staff and visitor parking lots on the UCB campus. Visit the Parking and Transportation Office web site <http://pt.berkeley.edu/> for information on obtaining a campus parking permit, campus parking maps, campus shuttle buses / emergency night shuttle buses and other helpful resources.

Family Resources

Spouses

If your spouse accompanies you during your stay in the U.S., you will need unique services and resources to help your spouse feel at home. Living in one of the UCB family housing units is a good way to find community and supportive resources. Listed below are some common topics of interest for international spouses in the U.S.:

Education

If your spouse decides to pursue a degree program while in the U.S., speak with an Adviser in Berkeley International Office well in advance to make sure it is legally possible to do so. For example, F-2 visa holders must change their visa status to F-1 before beginning a full-time study program. This can be a lengthy process (up to six months), and planning is necessary to make sure a change of status is completed smoothly and on time.

Employment

Getting a job in the U.S. is a good way for a spouse to become integrated into the community and gain valuable experience. Dependents with J-2 status are allowed to apply for a work permission and work in the U.S. (see below). However, many dependent visa types are NOT allowed to have paid employment in the U.S. such as F-2 and H-4. Check with Berkeley International Office about your dependent's work eligibility before he or she accepts any paid job offers. Some sources for job listings include:

UCB Human Resources
<https://www.berkeley.edu/utility/jobs>

Monster.com
www.monster.com

Bay Area Jobs
www.bajobs.com

Craigslist
www.craigslist.com

San Francisco Chronicle
www.sfgate.com/jobs

Kelly Services (Temp Agency)
www.kellyservices.com

J-2 Employment

J-2 family members (spouse or child dependents age 14+ of J-1 visa holders) are eligible to apply for a work permit and work full time in the U.S. Although J-2s are free to seek employment anywhere they like, the purpose of the employment should be for cultural enrichment and should not be based on financial need. Be aware that J-2 dependents cannot apply for work permission until they are physically present in the U.S. Also note that they cannot begin working until they have received an employment authorization card (EAD) from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Currently, employment authorization cards are taking three or more months to process from the time of application and will need to be renewed yearly. If your dependent is in F-2 or H-4 status, paid employment is not allowed. An overview of the J-2 EAD application process can be found here: internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/families/j-2_employment

Unpaid or Volunteer Work

If your spouse is not eligible for paid employment due to his or her visa status, unpaid or volunteer work may be a good alternative. As a volunteer, your spouse can gain experience and become a part of the community. There are a few online organizations such as Volunteer Match www.volunteermatch.org that can help you find volunteer opportunities in the Bay Area. However, the best way to find opportunities is simply to ask people who work in places of interest to your spouse. Some ideas include hospitals, libraries, public or private schools, senior centers, museums, zoos or animal shelters, just to name a few.

Family Resources

Making Social Connections

Besides going to school or working, there are other ways to meet new friends and find community. The University Section Club sectionclub.berkeley.edu sponsors a weekly gathering of international spouses (and some children) at “The Centre”. The Centre meets weekly on Thursday mornings each semester from 9:30am to noon at the University YWCA at 2600 Bancroft Way. Each week, they feature a special program. Following the program there is time to socialize and make friends. Special field trips to points of interest are offered during the year, as well as small discussion groups. Other ideas for making social connections include:

- Clubs and Organizations – Parent Teacher Association (PTA), fitness or dance centers
- Classes – English, art, cooking, music etc.
- Informal Support Groups (moms’ groups, book clubs)
- Religious Affiliations – Churches, mosques, synagogues, mandirs, meetings
- Local tours – tours of San Francisco, Napa Valley, Yosemite

Resources for Parents

UC Berkeley Parents Network

calparents.berkeley.edu

A great web site to find information related to children, parenting, families and a wide variety of other topics related to living in the Bay Area. This web site contains thousands of pages of recommendations and advice contributed by members of the Berkeley Parents Network, a parent-to-parent email network for the community of parents in the Berkeley area. Since 1993, this network has been run by a group of volunteer parents who send out email [newsletters](#) each week to local parents. You can subscribe to their email newsletter or just browse their index of subjects at the web link provided above.

Parent’s Press Magazine

<https://parentspress.com/>

This free, local newspaper is available online and at most supermarkets, public libraries and other places that cater to children. It includes a calendar of fun things to do with the kids and provides a lot of useful information about living in the Bay Area.

Childcare

Most child care in the U.S. is not supported by the government and is privately-owned. Families are responsible for finding suitable child care for their children and paying for it on their own. Two resources of great help to UC Berkeley students and scholars are:

University Early Childhood Education Program

ece.berkeley.edu

For infants and pre-school children at UCB

Bananas Child Care Information and Referral Service

www.bananasinc.org

A community-based service for finding either regular child care or an occasional babysitter.

Family Resources

Education for Children

All children in California between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to be enrolled in and attending school. Your children will be required to have certain medical exams before entering school. The quality of schools in the Bay Area varies considerably from one school to another. To help your children make a smooth transition into their new school, read as much as you can about how the school systems works and what you can expect. Some helpful web sites for general information include:

- Info USA americanspaces.state.gov
- The U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov
- Great Schools www.greatschools.net

Public Schools

In the U.S., all children are eligible for free elementary and secondary education provided by the local public school district in the city where you reside. As such, you may want to choose where to live based on the school district serving that area. Many schools offer after-school programs that provide homework assistance and organized activities. English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is offered at many public schools. For information on how to get your child enrolled in public school, contact the appropriate school district for your city of residence:

Albany Unified School District
www.ausdk12.org

Berkeley Unified School District
www.berkeleyschools.net

Oakland Unified School District
webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/Default.aspx

West Contra Costa Unified School District
(El Cerrito/Richmond) www.wccusd.net/

Private and Parochial Schools

Private and parochial (religious) schools also educate a large percentage of the Bay Area's students, but are often filled quite early and charge tuition. It is advisable to arrange a visit to find the school that best suits your child's needs. A comprehensive list can be found at www.privateschoolreview.com/find-schools

Homeschooling

Homeschooling is a legal option in California and has recently become more popular. There are many ways to home school your children, but it's important that you do research to make sure you are complying with state laws. The California Homeschool Association web site is a good place to learn more about this type of education at: hsc.org/home-page.html

Family Resources

U.S. Educational Structure

Preschools (Ages 2.5 - 5)

Preschool is not mandatory and therefore most preschools are privately-owned. You do not need to reserve a space in a preschool prior to your arrival, although spaces at some of the better schools fill up quickly. Before choosing a preschool for your child, visit several to decide where your child would feel most comfortable. Fees range from approximately \$375/month (part-time) to \$1200/month (full-time). Most preschools require children to be toilet trained. State law requires a nap or resting period for all children in preschool. See the above links to UCB early childcare programs and Bananas Referral Service to find programs available in your area.

Kindergarten (Age 5 or 6)

Kindergarten is the first grade of elementary school. It usually runs for a half-day only — either in the mornings or afternoons. To enter kindergarten in the public school system, your child must be 5 years old by December 1st to start school in September of the same year. Some private schools require that your child be 5 years old by September 5th or October 10th to begin school in September of the same year. Many schools require certain immunizations before the child can begin school. Bring copies of your child's medical records to the U.S. for this purpose.

Elementary School (Ages 6-11)

Elementary school includes Kindergarten through 5th grade (K-5).

Secondary School (Ages 11-18)

Secondary schools include middle school for grades 6, 7 and 8 and high school for grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. In the public school system, elementary, middle schools and high schools may not necessarily be near each other geographically. Many private schools include grades K-8, but there are other configurations depending on the school.

Family Legal Matters

It is important that you know some of the laws designed to protect children in the U.S. Violation of some laws may result in payment of a fine, others may result in arrest.

Car Safety Seats

California law requires that anyone riding in a moving car must be wearing a seat belt. Children must be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat) until they are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60 pounds. Infants under 20 lbs. must be secured in a rear-facing car seat. For more information, see this link: cdph.ca.gov/vosp

Unattended Children

There are strict laws about leaving very young children alone, either in cars, in public, or at home. The law states that it is a crime to leave anyone in a car who is incapable of getting out without help. These laws stem from cases where young children have died from being left in cars with closed windows in warm weather. In addition, it is considered "child neglect" to leave very young children unattended (such as outside of a restaurant) or home alone. It is better to awaken a sleeping child than to risk their possible harm, and/or face arrest.

Family Resources

Family Legal Matters (cont'd)

Accepting Public Assistance

Non-immigrants are not eligible for public assistance in the U.S. (Public assistance includes programs such as Medi-Cal and Food Stamps). However, as students and scholars with dependents are quick to learn, the costs of health insurance for their family members can be quite high. Unfortunately, some people may be unable to bear the financial burden and choose to risk not having health insurance coverage. When they are unexpectedly faced with the birth of a child, some families may turn to the aid of the U.S. government. In some cases, hospital staff or doctors may even suggest that an international student or scholar take advantage of such public assistance.

The fact that you may be encouraged to sign up for public assistance by hospital staff or other "officials" does not mean that you are eligible. The consequences of accepting such assistance are that if you leave the U.S. and want to return, you may be stopped at the U.S. border and denied entry until the amount of public assistance you received has been repaid.

Having a Baby and U.S. Citizenship

If your baby will be born in the U.S. he or she will be considered a U.S. citizen. U.S. laws do not require that your baby give up citizenship from your home country (if they are considered as such by the laws of your country), but your home country may not accept the dual citizenship status. Contact your home country embassy in the U.S. to register their birth and if you have questions about citizenship. Parents of a U.S. citizen child are eligible to apply for U.S. permanent resident status when the child is 21 years old.

To travel and re-enter the U.S., your child will need a U.S. passport. You can obtain the application from the U.S. Department of State web site <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

Kids and the Law: An A- to-Z Guide for Parents

Published by the California Bar Association
[Kids and the Law.pdf](#)

This booklet is designed to give you a basic overview of some of the laws that apply to children—laws created, in many instances, to help safeguard your youngsters at school, in part-time jobs and at play. This updated version of the guide can also help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a parent

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence and emotional abuse are behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Violence can be criminal and includes physical assault (hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.), sexual abuse (unwanted or forced sexual activity), and stalking. Although emotional, psychological and financial abuse are not criminal behaviors, they are forms of abuse and can lead to criminal violence. Although both men and women can be abused, most victims are women (see Resources below for suggestions on where to find help).

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a very serious crime in the U.S. Child abuse is defined as any act or failure to act (neglect) on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation or any act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

In the U.S., the following people are required by law to report suspected child abuse: Doctors, nurses, dentists, mental health professionals, social workers, teachers, day care workers, and law enforcement personnel.

Taking Care of Yourself

Health Insurance

All visiting scholars and students at UC Berkeley are required to have health insurance for themselves and any accompanying dependents. Scholars must have insurance on arrival in the US; students are covered by the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) upon payment of registration fees. Several plans are available to purchase through University Health Services when they do not purchase insurance in their home countries. It is strongly recommended that all students and scholars purchase a travel insurance policy to cover their trip and the first weeks in the U.S. To read more about insurance requirements and coverage, see the University Health Service's web site at www.uhs.berkeley.edu/index.shtml

J-1 Insurance Coverage Requirements

The insurance amounts listed below have been defined by U.S. federal regulations and are required for all J-1 students and scholars. These requirements are subject to change by the Department of State-see their web site for the latest information at <http://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/how-to-administer-a-program/>. The UC Berkeley SHIP insurance plan for students meets the J-1 requirements. Per U.S. Dept. of State, the J-1 requirements are as follows:

- \$100,000 medical benefits
- Deductible of no more than \$500 per accident or illness
- Medical evacuation \$50,000 minimum coverage
- Repatriation \$25,000 minimum coverage
- Pre-existing conditions must be covered after a 12-month waiting period.
- Coverage may include a provision for maximum 25% coinsurance or co-payment paid by the exchange visitor. Coinsurance must allow for customary & reasonable charges in US dollars, not equivalent cost for services in home country.
- Coverage cannot exclude benefits for perils inherent to the activities of the program in which the visitor participates.
- Policy must be underwritten by an insurance corporation meeting the US Department of State rating requirements or backed by the full faith and credit of the visitor's home country government, designated sponsor, or exchange visitor's employee group plan.

Please visit the following website for additional information:

http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/j_insurance

Where to Get Medical Care at UCB

Students can use the University health facility, called the Tang Center, just as they would their regular doctor's office. Visiting scholars and spouses of Berkeley students and scholars may also use the Tang Center on a fee-for-service basis. The Tang Center is [fully accredited](#) and staffed by board-certified physicians and nurses. A sampling of some of the services offered at the Tang Center include: routine medical exams, lab tests, x-rays, physical therapy, pharmacy, urgent care, mental health counseling, career counseling, vision care eye clinic, and much more! See their web site for a full description of all their services at www.uhs.berkeley.edu/index.shtml

Confidentiality of Your Medical Records

By law, information you share with a doctor, nurse, or other medical provider must be kept confidential. A doctor in the U.S. is not permitted to contact your family, friends, or anyone else to discuss your medical condition, symptoms, illness, or treatment without your written permission. In general, the only exception to this rule is in a case where your life might be in danger or if you were unconscious and unable to make medical decisions for yourself. The same rules that govern confidentiality between physicians and their patients also apply to discussions between psychologists (and most other licensed mental health professionals) and their clients.

Taking Care of Yourself

Emergency Services and Hospitals

The University Health Services has an “urgent care” center for matters that are urgent, but not life-threatening. However, they are only open during regular business hours. If you have a life-threatening emergency, the best thing to do is dial “911” on your telephone and an ambulance will come to take you to the Emergency Room (ER) at the nearest hospital. Some insurance plans require you to go to a specific hospital, so check with your insurance provider in advance to avoid costly emergency room fees. The closest hospitals to UC Berkeley with Emergency Rooms are:

Alta Bates Medical Center

<http://www.altabatesummit.org/>
2450 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705

Children’s Hospital Oakland

www.childrenshospitaloakland.org
747 52nd Street, Oakland, California 94609

Children’s Hospital Oakland has the Bay Area’s only emergency department completely dedicated to the care of children and staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week with certified pediatric emergency medicine specialists. They treat children from birth to 18 years only.

Counseling Services

In the U.S., it is very common to talk with a counselor about problems or difficulties involving academic work, personal relationships, stress, unhappiness, and an individual’s view of himself or herself, etc. In different cultures, these problems may be viewed and treated differently. For example, if you experience difficulties when you are living in your home country, perhaps you would turn to your family or to close personal friends for help and advice. During your stay in the U.S., you may be apart from all family and close friends, and you may feel the need to find substitute sources of emotional support. In the U.S., many people do not live near their families, and it is not always the custom for Americans to depend on their families to solve problems. In many instances, Americans will choose to talk with professionals or trained volunteers about problems. A counselor can help you determine what the difficulty is, be in sympathy with your situation, help you see options that you might not have seen, and help you resolve the difficulty. By law, all conversations are kept confidential.

UCB’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)

<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/caps>
Provides counseling to students and postdoctoral researchers with personal, academic and career concerns. Professional counselors are available to meet with students about any of their concerns such as adjusting to school and U.S. culture, dealing with family or relationship issues, or coping with personal crises. All undergraduate and graduate students are eligible for CPS services, regardless of their insurance coverage.

CARE Services, the Employee Assistance Program

www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care/index.shtml
CARE Services is the campus faculty and staff assistance program providing free, confidential problem assessment and referral for UC Berkeley faculty and staff and eligible visiting scholars.

Other counseling services may be available through your health insurance plan. Check with your provider for more information.

Taking Care of Yourself

Culture Shock: The Process of Adjustment

What is it?

Culture shock is the natural reaction to a series of transitions that occur when we are uprooted from our cultural environment and transplanted into a new situation where the language, gestures, customs, signs and symbols that have previously helped us to make sense of our surroundings suddenly have no meaning or have new meanings. Most of all, we have lost our social supports (family, friends, classmates, coworkers) and we must begin again in a place where things are unpredictable. While the words “culture shock” imply something immediate, the onset is usually gradual and cumulative.

How can I avoid it?

Since culture shock is a natural response, your strategy should not be how to avoid it, but instead, how to manage it. Being able to anticipate the feelings you may encounter, and having an understanding of the cycle of adjustment should help minimize much of the difficulty of adjusting to life in the United States. While at times it may be an unpleasant experience to go through, adapting to a new culture provides great opportunities for personal growth and development.

The Stages of Culture Shock

1. **Honeymoon** – When you first arrive, the differences you observe are new, exciting and interesting. You are optimistic and are likely to focus on the positive aspects of your new environment.
2. **Hostility** – As some time passes, the differences that were once interesting have now become obstacles for you to get things done or communicate effectively. You may begin experiencing any of the following feelings or behaviors: • disorientation and confusion • acute homesickness for family, friends and places • loneliness • helplessness • irritability • sadness and depression • frequent frustration • being easily angered • fatigue • withdrawing from friends or other people • self-doubt, sense of failure • recurrent sickness • desire to go home
3. **Recovery and Adjustment** – Gradually, you begin to feel more comfortable in the new culture and are functioning well at work or school. Your confidence builds as you start to adjust to the differences and expand your social network. You are able to view things more objectively and are becoming more flexible.
4. **Reverse Culture Shock** – Do not underestimate the adjustment that will be required when you return home from your sojourn. People go through a similar series of stages upon re-entry to their home culture.

When will it go away?

Sometimes the symptoms of the hostility stage last just a few days, but more commonly, a few weeks or even months. Your friends may appear to adjust easily while you are suffering miserably. Several different factors, such as your pre-departure expectations, coping skills, and any past experience living overseas can affect the degree to which a person is affected by culture shock, making each individual's experience unique. Also, people often move back and forth between the stages throughout their stay.

Suggestions for a Smooth Adjustment

- Realize that what you are going through is normal. Remember that the unpleasant feelings are temporary, natural, and are common to any transition that a person makes during their life.
- Be patient and give yourself the time to work through this process.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat well, exercise, learn relaxation and stress reduction techniques.
- Maintain a sense of humor. Be able to laugh at yourself and at the predicaments you get into.
- Resist the temptation to constantly disparage the host country. Begin to consciously look for logical reasons for anything in the United States that seems strange, confusing, or threatening. There is a reason why Americans do things differently than people do in your country.
- Talk to someone about your experiences. Do not be afraid to talk to family, friends, members of your host department, a trained counselor or the staff at the Berkeley International Office, especially if you are thinking of leaving the U.S.

Taking Care of Yourself

UC Berkeley Campus Safety

The UC Berkeley campus is situated in an urban environment, and though campus areas are relatively safe, the campus is not immune to crime. Your best defense is to adopt an attitude of awareness and to take precautions. The University Police Department (UCPD) works closely with the city of Berkeley Police Department to prevent crime and keep people safe. Since much of the crime that occurs around the UCB campus is robbery and theft, there are easy measures you can take to avoid these incidents:

- Read the UCPD web site. Stay aware of criminal activity on campus by reading UCPD alerts on Timely Warnings on Nixle and Daily Activity Logs at ucpd.berkeley.edu/alerts-log-news/daily-crime-log. If you are interested, crime reports are listed there.
- Store the UCPD emergency number into your cell phone: 510-642-3333. Although you can reach emergency services by calling 9-1-1, you will get faster service by calling 642-3333 from your cell phone (when on campus only).
- Avoid walking alone at night. The UCPD has a service called “[Bear Walk](#)” where you can arrange to have an officer meet you on campus and walk with you to a nearby location (such as the residence halls on campus or other nearby housing). Simply call 510-642-WALK (9255). Or, use the campus [Night Safety Shuttle](#) which provides free service on campus from 7:30pm to 2:30am.
- Use theft prevention strategies:
 - Keep apartment/dorm room doors locked while you are out.
 - Close and lock windows in your home while you are out
 - Do not leave laptops, books, or other valuable items in common areas. For example, don’t leave valuables on tables while searching for books in the library or at a café while getting your food or drinks. “Professional” thieves are waiting to grab for these opportunities.
 - Walk in well-lit, populated areas and be aware of people and your surroundings
 - Avoid carrying your original passport and important documents (make copies and carry these instead)

The Alerting and Warning System

The “[Alerting and Warning System](#)” (AWS) is a network of warning sirens that warn and inform the campus community in the event of certain major emergencies such as earthquakes, chemical spills, flooding, power outages, transportation incidents, and other public safety incidents.

Siren testing occurs every first Wednesday of each month at noon. You will be able to hear this loud siren throughout the campus and in Berkeley. If you hear the siren on a test day, you do not need to do anything. The system is simply being tested for functionality. If you hear the Alert Warning Siren on a non-test day, follow the campus emergency response procedures:

1. Shelter - go inside
2. Shut - shut the doors and windows

3. Listen - do one of the following three things: call the emergency hotline at 1-800-705-9998, log on to the campus emergency web page, or listen to the campus radio station: KALX, 90.7 FM. Wait for instructions, then follow them.

You may hear these warning sirens in other locations off campus as they are found in nearly every city across the U.S. Follow the same procedures as above.

WarnMe Emergency Alert Service

warnme.berkeley.edu

WarnMe is UC Berkeley’s alerting and warning service for students, staff, and faculty. It is activated to contact you directly when there is an immediate threat to safety or health affecting the campus community. WarnMe can alert you by phone, text message, or email — you choose the best ways to reach you. To receive WarnMe emergency warnings, you must sign up on the website noted above to indicate how to best contact you.

Taking Care of Yourself

Safety in the Community

Precautions you would take to stay safe in Berkeley are probably not that much different from what you would do in a big city in your home country. Listed below are a few general reminders:

- Be aware of your surroundings when walking outside, especially if you are listening to music on your headphones or talking on your cell phone.
- Don't open the door to strangers
- Always lock your doors (even when you are home) and windows at home and in your car
- Don't give out personal information over the phone (such as social security numbers or account numbers)
- Avoid scams (see tips below)
- Be aware of certain unsafe areas – carry a map in your car at all times if you are driving
- Move away from suspicious-looking people

Avoiding Scams

A “scam” is a confidence game (also known as a con, scheme, or swindle) used in an attempt to deceptively take money from a person or group by gaining their confidence. A person who tries to scam you is often referred to as a “con artist.”

International visitors are easy targets of con artists because of their unfamiliarity with the U.S. Con artists can be of any age, sex, or race, and may even work in groups. They will often start by telling you a sad story about themselves, such as needing money to buy food for their children. At some point, they will ask you for money. Once you give it to them, you'll never hear from them again.

Telephone scams are very common in the U.S. If someone calls you and tries to sell you something, sign you up for a service, or has “free offers,” it's best to ask for information in writing so you can review it at your leisure. If it's a legitimate company, they should agree without hesitation. Do not give out personal information over the phone, especially identification or account numbers. Also, be wary of voice messages asking you to return their call—that return call might be long distance or cost you money. Be careful when accepting a check, money order or a bank check from someone you don't know.

Earthquakes

According to the U.S. Geological Society (USGS) earthquake.usgs.gov in a 2008 comprehensive study, scientists have determined that the chance of having one or more magnitude 6.7 or larger earthquakes in the California area over the next 30 years is greater than 99%. Although we cannot yet predict precisely when or where an earthquake will occur, we do have some control over how much damage will result.

UC Berkeley maintains an emergency preparedness web site oem.berkeley.edu that has links to resources for earthquakes and other large-scale disasters. It is the place to look for information on how the campus will respond and what you can do to find help.

Taking Care of Yourself

How to Prepare for Earthquakes

As you may know, there may be a period of time when emergency services cannot reach you during a major disaster. Take a few easy steps now to developing your emergency plan. You can start by reading the U.S. Geological Survey publication, “Protecting Your Family From Earthquakes” <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/2007/41/gip41.pdf>. Even if you don’t have family with you, this guide has many good tips and resources. As a quick reference, the following information was taken from the UC Berkeley Emergency Preparedness web site:

Before it happens

- Read emergency information posted in your buildings. Talk with your roommates or family members about what you will all do in an emergency.
- Sign up for free training through the City of Berkeley.
- The campus has been divided into zones called Emergency Management Areas (EMAs), where command posts will be established in a campus-wide emergency. These posts will be staffed by police personnel and will also be a contact point for response teams and arriving resources, and radio communications. For a list and map of EMAs, see this web site oem.berkeley.edu/bcema-coordinator
- Each campus building has a designated evacuation area (for example, where you go during a fire drill). Find out where these Emergency Assembly Areas (EAAs) are for your residence hall and classroom buildings.
- Think ahead about how you would exit your room or apartment building.
- Locate the fire extinguishers; know how to use them.
- Share this information with your family. Make a plan for communicating with them in case of an earthquake. Long distance phone lines may work better than local ones.
- Back up your computer(s) daily or weekly. Keep the disks at a separate location.

Make your Room or Apartment Safer

- Be sure that mirrors, framed pictures, glass items or other heavy objects aren’t hanging over your bed or desk.
- Tall bookshelves and cabinets could fall or block your exit. Brace and bolt such furniture to prevent its toppling.
- If it’s not possible to secure furniture, rearrange it to reduce danger.
- Don’t use unsecured shelves made out of bricks, cement blocks and boards.
- Kitchen cabinet contents can be dangerous; keep the doors latched.
- Anchor stereo equipment, TVs, and computers with earthquake fasteners.

Put together an Emergency Kit

- First aid supplies are very important. Have a good supply and know how to administer first aid.
- A flashlight with extra batteries will be useful if the electricity goes out.
- Have a small portable radio, with the right batteries.
- Keep extras of such personal supplies as glasses, contact lenses, and prescription medications.
- Include a pair of sturdy shoes, a jacket or sweater, and a blanket.
- There may not be running water for a time after a quake; store a couple gallons of water or juice.
- Keep your kit under your bed or in a closet you can get to easily.

During an Earthquake

- Take cover under a desk or table and hold on. Get down between the rows of seats in a classroom, or against the wall in a hallway.
- Stay covered until the shaking has clearly stopped.

Taking Care of Yourself

Intimate Partner Violence / Abuse - Laws to Protect You

Get help right away if you think you are in an intimate partner violence situation. Inform yourself of the options and resources that are available to you in the community. The web sites below are excellent references for additional reading. In the U.S., there are laws that offer some protection against abuse. If you feel you or your children are being threatened, here's what you can do:

1. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger. The police can escort you and your children safely out of the house and often will take you to a safe place. The police may arrest your abuser if they believe a crime has been committed. If your abuser is arrested, he may be released in as soon as two hours. You can use this time to find a safe place to go.
2. Try to leave the situation and go to a safe place, either a friend's house or a women's shelter. If you can, take your children with you. You can request an emergency protective order from the police so that your abuser will not be allowed access to you. However, you should still take other steps to keep yourself and your children safe. A legal protective order is not always enough to keep you safe. You do not need to be a citizen or legal resident to get a restraining order.
3. Tell someone you trust what is happening to you. You can speak confidentially to an Adviser in Berkeley International Office if you choose. Simply come in or make an appointment by calling (510) 642-2818 and mention that it is urgent and personal. What is said in your appointment will not be reported or shared.
4. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline. They can connect you directly with someone in your area who can help you -- 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).
5. If you are hurt, go to a doctor or a hospital emergency room. Tell them what happened. Ask them to make a record of your visit and what happened. Get a copy.
6. If your abuser is threatening to take your children away or take them to his home country, you can apply for a custody order at any time to prevent this. Contact a family lawyer or a domestic violence advocate to find out how to file for a custody order (see Resources below).

UCB Campus Resources

Gender Equity Resource Center

<http://geneq.berkeley.edu>

Dedicated to fostering a safe, equitable, & inclusive campus experience for all, The GenEq Center provides services and information to (but not limited) women and men on issues such as hate crimes, intimate partner violence and Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues.

University Health Services/ Social Services Unit

<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/socialservices>

Social Services provides confidential services and counseling to help students with managing problems that can emerge from illness such as financial, academic, legal, family concerns, and more. In addition, Social Services specializes in helping students with the following: pregnancy resources and referrals, alcohol/drugs, sexual assault/rape, relationship or other violence.

Taking Care of Yourself

Community Resources

Women's Law

www.womenslaw.org/

A web site that provides easy-to-understand legal information and resources to women living with or escaping partner violence or sexual assault.

Narika

www.narika.org

Provides a culturally-sensitive domestic violence telephone help line - as well as advocacy, support, information, and referral services for South Asian women in the Bay Area, Northern California, and Central California.

A Safe Place

www.asafeplacedvs.org/

Offers both shelter and professional supportive services to victims of domestic violence. The Emergency Shelter Program provides up to 8 weeks of shelter and therapeutic environment for women and their children.

Family Violence Law Center

www.fvlc.org

Provides legal services, support groups, crisis help amongst a range of other services to victims of intimate partner violence in Alameda County.

Asian Women's Shelter

www.sfaws.org

Offers a variety of services including a shelter, crisis phone line, and support groups. Offers some services in over thirty-one languages including Arabic, Cantonese, Dutch, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Tagalog and Thai.

Korean Community Center of the East Bay

<http://kcceb.org>

An Oakland-based organization offering services to Korean victims of intimate partner violence. They also offer a wide range of other services to the Korean community.

Bay Area Legal Aid

www.baylegal.org

In addition to providing legal services for survivors of intimate partner violence, the organization also helps with immigration issues.

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

UC Berkeley Policies

Nondiscrimination Statement

<https://ophd.berkeley.edu>

The University of California, in accordance with applicable Federal and State Law and the University's nondiscrimination policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), gender identity, pregnancy/childbirth and medical conditions related thereto, disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related), ancestry, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran. This nondiscrimination policy covers student admission, access, and treatment in University programs and activities. It also covers faculty (Senate and non-Senate) and staff in their employment.

Sexual Harassment

<https://ophd.berkeley.edu/policies-and-procedures>

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects a person's employment or education, unreasonably interferes with a person's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or learning environment. In the interest of preventing sexual harassment, the University will respond to reports of any such conduct.

Harassment that is not sexual in nature but is based on gender, sex-stereotyping, or sexual orientation also is prohibited by the University's nondiscrimination policies if it is sufficiently severe to deny or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from University educational programs, employment, or services.

If sufficient evidence of violation of the policy is found, the Title IX Compliance Officer will forward a report of findings to the appropriate administrator for disciplinary action.

Racial Harassment

<https://ophd.berkeley.edu/policies-and-procedures>

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), and its implementing regulations, no individual may be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination on the ground of race, color or national origin in the context of any University academic, athletic, and extracurricular program or activity. It is the policy of the University to comply with Title VI and its implementing regulations. Therefore, the University has a duty to provide a nondiscriminatory environment that is conducive to learning; racial harassment denies students the right to an education free of discrimination.

Substance Abuse

<https://sa.berkeley.edu/uga/substance>

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, use, or sale of alcohol or of controlled substances by University employees and students in the workplace, or University premises, at official University functions, or on University business is prohibited. In addition, employees and students shall not use illegal substances or abuse legal substances in a manner that impairs work performance, scholarly activities, or student life.

UCB Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted on any property owned or leased by the University of California Berkeley, regardless of location. Smoking is not permitted in any outdoor campus facility used for spectator sports, meetings, entertainment, dining, or designated children's play areas. UC Berkeley is a Smoke Free campus. Advertising tobacco products on campus is not permitted.

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

California Laws

Smoking

www.lungusa2.org/slati/statedetail.php?stateId=06

Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed spaces of places of employment including bars and restaurants. "Enclosed spaces" includes lobbies, lounges, waiting areas, elevators, stairwells, and restrooms that are a structural part of the building. The exceptions to this law are: 65 percent of rooms in a hotel, motel, or similar transient lodging establishment; a percentage of all lobby areas in hotel, motel, or similar establishments; meeting and banquet rooms, except while food, beverage or exhibit functions are taking place; retail or wholesale tobacco shops; cabs of motor trucks when only smokers are present; warehouse facilities; theatrical production sites, if smoking is an integral part of the story; medical research or treatment sites, if smoking is integral to those functions; private residences when not in use as family day care centers; and patient areas in long-term health care facilities.

Tobacco use is prohibited within the boundaries of any playground or tot lot sandbox area. Disposing of cigarette butts, cigar butts, or any other tobacco related waste within a playground or tot lot sandbox area is also prohibited.

Alcoholic Beverages

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cacodes/bpc/25657%2D25667.html>

The United States has the highest and most rigorously enforced drinking age in the world. California law states that any person under the age of 21 years who purchases an alcoholic beverage or consumes an alcoholic beverage in any on-sale premises, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Any person who sells, furnishes, gives, or causes to be sold, furnished, or given away, any alcoholic beverage to any person under the age of 21 years is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Car Safety Belts and Seats

California law states that, "A person may not operate a motor vehicle on a highway unless that person and all passengers 16 years of age or over are properly restrained by a safety belt. A person 16 years of age or over may not be a passenger in a motor vehicle on a highway unless that person is properly restrained by a safety belt."

A driver may not transport on a highway a child in a motor vehicle, without properly securing the child in a rear seat in a child passenger restraint system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards, unless the child is either six years of age or older or weighing sixty pounds or more." (See Family Legal Matters for more information)

Car seats sold in California are required to meet federal motor vehicle safety standards. If you purchase a used car seat, make sure that it meets these standards.

Cell Phones and Driving

It is against the law to use a cell phone to make calls or to send text messages while driving unless the driver is making an emergency call (to law enforcement, for example) or the cell phone is set up for hands-free use.

Bicycle / Motorcycle Helmets

California law states that "A driver and any passenger shall wear a safety helmet ...when riding on a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle. It is unlawful to operate a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle if the driver or any passenger is not wearing a safety helmet. It is unlawful to ride as a passenger on a motorcycle, motor-driven cycles, or motorized bicycle if the driver or any passenger is not wearing a safety helmet."

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Taxes in the U.S.

Sales Tax

Sales tax is an additional fee added to the regular price of any item sold, except for certain food items. In the city of Berkeley, the sales tax is 9.5%. Sales taxes vary by city and county. There is no way to get a refund of sales tax.

Income Tax

Income that is taxed includes wages, scholarships and earnings on investments. (A complete list of taxed income may be found in IRS and state tax guides.) The tax is withheld by the employer from the employee's paycheck as an estimated payment of the tax obligation. Some scholarships may have some amount of taxes withheld as well. International students and scholars who have been in the U.S. for any portion of a calendar year, must file an annual tax report (also called a "tax return") by the following year's tax filing deadline, which is usually April 15.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

www.irs.gov is the U.S. federal agency for collection of income tax. Tax forms and information can be found on their web site. Publication 519 is the "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens" and contains most of the information you might need about payment of federal taxes.

The Franchise Tax Board

www.ftb.ca.gov is the government agency that collects taxes for the state of California. If you have spent time in other states, you will need to obtain their state tax information as well.

Income Tax Withholding and the W-4 Form

When a person is working in the U.S., the employer is required to deduct a portion of the salary in each pay period to be sent to the government as income tax. At the start of your job, you will complete a half page W-4 form (Employees Withholding Allowance Certificate). The information on that form determines how much will be withheld from your paycheck for taxes. When completing the W-4 form, most international students and scholars are required to file as "single," regardless of their marital status. It is usually correct to claim one "withholding allowance" as well. Your employer should be able to help you complete the W-4 form if you have any questions. UC campus departments can contact UC Payroll office if there are questions about the W-4.

Tax Treaties with the U.S.

Some countries have tax treaty agreements with the U.S. in which certain types of income may be exempted from federal tax. General information on tax treaty benefits can be found in IRS publication 901, or go to the IRS website for the treaty text. To take advantage of a tax treaty, provide IRS form 8233 and a tax treaty statement (see IRS publication 901 for examples) to their U.S. income provider to reduce or avoid tax withholding on income.

Even when all U.S. source income is free of federal tax because of a tax treaty, the person receiving treaty-protected income must complete an annual federal tax return. Keep in mind that although the income is tax free under U.S. federal rules, the State of California will expect tax to be paid on this income. (If you have questions about tax treaties in general, consult IRS publication 901. The actual tax treaty text may also be found on the IRS website.)

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Taxes in the U.S. (cont'd)

Social Security and Medicare Taxes

Anyone who works in the U.S. is required to have a Social Security number (SSN) to be hired by an employer, and for use in completing the tax return form. Social Security and Medicare (FICA) are U.S. government programs that provide benefits for U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents, usually for retirement. It is financed by taxes withheld from the paychecks of working people. F-1 or J-1 students and scholars who are “nonresidents for tax purposes” (see below) are not required to pay these taxes. Those in J-2 status, and those in F-1 and J-1 status who have become a “resident for tax purposes,” do pay Social Security and Medicare taxes. If Social Security and Medicare taxes are withheld in error, you can obtain a refund by following the instructions in IRS Publication 519.

When you leave the U.S.

After leaving the U.S., you must still file a U.S./California State tax report for the period you were in the U.S. This tax report is due in the spring of the year following your stay in the U.S. You can get the information you need through the IRS web site.

Tax Help and Information

Berkeley International Office staff are not tax experts and cannot provide tax advice. To assist our clients, Berkeley International Office has purchased GLACIER Tax Prep (GTP), a user-friendly tax preparation software created specifically for international students and scholars. GTP will help you navigate U.S. federal tax forms, residency status, tax treaties, exemptions, and deductions. GTP is available at no cost to you and is accessible from around the world.

Workshops

In the spring each year, Berkeley International Office will present optional introductory workshops to help you learn about GTP and your tax filing obligations. In addition, BIO will host workshops(s) featuring a speaker from the California Franchise Tax Board who will go over California taxes in detail.

These two separate workshops are NOT intended to help you fill out your federal tax forms or to give individual tax advice. The workshops will cover the following topics:

- General overview of the U.S. tax system: its function, basic terminology and timelines
- Presentation of GTP interface: what it looks like and what to expect
- Directions on how to get your GTP password (note: these directions will also be posted on our web site. Passwords will NOT be given out during the workshop).

Announcements about the tax workshops will be sent via email to you in early spring each year.

Local Arts and Culture

Having fun and getting regular exercise is important for both your physical and mental health while you are living abroad. The San Francisco Bay Area is full of variety when it comes to recreation. Listed below are a few of our favorite ways to stay in shape both on and off campus. Take a look at these web pages for calendars of art, culture and recreational events in the Bay Area:

General

UC Berkeley Events Calendar
www.berkeley.edu/calendar

Cal Performances
www.calperfs.berkeley.edu

SF Chronicle Entertainment
www.sfgate.com/entertainment

SF Station
www.sfstation.com

Berkeley's Convention and Visitor's Bureau
www.berkeleycvb.com

Music

UC Berkeley Music Department
<http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/music/noon.html>

San Francisco Symphony
www.sfsymphony.org

Berkeley Symphony
www.berkeleysymphony.org

Theater

UCB Theater, Dance and Performance Studies
<http://theater.berkeley.edu>

Berkeley Repertory Theater
www.berkeleyrep.org

Museums

Asian Art Museum
www.asianart.org
 In the San Francisco Civic Center.

Bay Area Discovery Museum
www.baykidsmuseum.org
 Children's science museum located in Sausalito.

Berkeley Art Museum
www.bampfa.berkeley.edu
 Includes the Pacific Film Archive

California Academy of Sciences
www.calacademy.org
 Aquarium and Natural History Museum

California State Railroad Museum
www.csrnf.org
 Located in Old Sacramento

Contemporary Jewish Museum
www.jmsf.org
 Contemporary art, film, music, and more

De Young Museum
<http://deyoung.famsf.org/>
 Art of America, native Americas, Africa, & the Pacific

Exploratorium
www.exploratorium.edu
 Museum of "science, art, and human perception"

Legion of Honor
<http://legionofhonor.famsf.org/>
 Ancient and European art

Oakland Museum of California
www.museumca.org
 Art, history, and natural sciences of California.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)
www.sfmoma.org
 A dynamic center for modern and contemporary art

The Tech Museum of Innovation
www.thetech.org
 Technology center in Silicon Valley

The Walt Disney Family Museum
www.disney.go.com/disneyatoz/familymuseum/index.html
 Opened October 1, 2009 in the Presidio

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
www.ybca.org
 Across the street from SFMOMA in San Francisco.

Sports and Outdoor Recreation

Cal Recreational Sports

www.recsports.berkeley.edu

The Cal Rec Club offers memberships to students, faculty, staff (includes visiting scholars), alumni, UC Berkeley retirees, and members of the community. Spouses are also eligible for membership. As a Cal Rec Club member, you have access to cardio equipment; indoor basketball courts, pools, weight rooms, outdoor tracks, tennis, racquetball, handball and squash courts, group exercise classes, Intramural Sports Teams classes such as strength training, dance, Pilate's, sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and personal training. The main facility is called the RSF (Recreational Sports Facility), located on Bancroft Way.

YMCA

www.baymca.org

The YMCA is a health club and non-profit community organization that provides fitness classes, child care, family resources, volunteerism, and many other programs for all ages. You must purchase a membership to use their services; ask about the low-income discount on membership prices. The downtown Berkeley YMCA has a wonderful indoor "Kindergym" for young children with a slide, ball pit, bounce house and other play equipment. The Kindergym is a great place for kids to run, climb, jump and explore (good place for birthday parties too!)

The Berkeley YMCA is located in downtown Berkeley at 2001 Allston Way, just one block from Shattuck Avenue. There are YMCAs throughout the city and the country-- check their web site for a location near you.

East Bay Regional Parks

www.ebparks.org

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is a system of beautiful public parks and trails in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The system encompasses 1,745 square miles on the eastern side of San Francisco Bay. The parks offer many fun programs and activities for such as swimming, boating, horseback riding lessons, hiking, camping, music concerts and more.

Tilden Park

www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden

Tilden is a popular destination for Berkeley students and scholars and their families. Plenty of picnic areas, hiking trails and open fields for impromptu ball games or sunbathing. Don't miss the Little Farm, the carousel and steam train or the Golf Course and Botanical Garden. Tilden Park is located just up the hill behind the UC Berkeley campus.

Hiking

www.bahiker.com

There are over 2,000 miles of hiking trails in the Bay Area, most with breathtaking views. There are a range of challenging excursions for the experienced to easier hikes for families with children. Nearby hiking spots include Tilden Park, Mount Diablo, and Lafayette Reservoir, just to name a few.

Lake Swimming

The East Bay Regional Parks system has many options for swimming and other outdoor activities. Many lakes have sandy beaches, lifeguards on-duty and snack bar during the summer months. Hours of operation vary, so it's best to check the web site of the particular park you are planning to visit in advance. Here are some highlights:

- Lake Anza, Tilden Park-Berkeley
www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden
- Lake Temescal, Oakland hills
www.ebparks.org/parks/temescal
- Shadow Cliffs Lake, Pleasanton
www.ebparks.org/parks/shadow_cliffs

Public Swimming Pools

There are public pools located in most cities. Since the weather in the Bay Area is moderate most of the year, some pools stay open all year. The city of El Cerrito has a nice outdoor pool, and the city of Albany has an indoor pool (currently closed for remodeling). Check the web site of the city where you want to swim for hours and locations.

UC Berkeley Pools

Cal Recreational Sports operates several outdoor pools on campus available for recreational use. Only the Strawberry Canyon pool allows children (not open during winter). With membership (see above), you can use the pools for free.

Sports and Outdoor Recreation

Public Beaches

The beaches of the San Francisco Bay Area can often be foggy, so even on the warmest days of the year, a chill can usually be felt in the ocean air. Your best beach days will occur during the warmest months of the year- September and October. Not too many people actually go swimming due to the cold water (unless you own a wetsuit), but you can still enjoy beach activities on the shore. Take a jacket along to keep out the cold and an extra blanket just in case.

Ocean Beach

www.parksconservancy.org/visit/park-sites/ocean-beach.html

The largest of the San Francisco beaches, it takes up the entire west side of San Francisco and offers a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean. It offers approximately five miles of peaceful surf and sand. For people living in The City, it is a pleasant getaway from the rapid pace of city life. It's often foggy and the water is cold, but on a rare hot day, it can be a great escape.

China Beach

www.parksconservancy.org/visit/park-sites/china-beach.html

Named after the history of Chinese fishermen who camped here in days past. It is located in Pacific Heights, at the intersection of Seacliff and 28th Avenue. This is one of the safest beaches for families with younger children, with shallow waters for the kids to play in and lifeguards on duty during the summer.

Stinson Beach

www.stinsonbeachonline.com

is located in Marin County, about a one-hour drive from Berkeley down Highway 1. The drive itself offer stunning views along winding seaside roads. On your way, stop by to see Muir Woods, home of some of the oldest Redwood trees in California.

Muir Beach

www.muirbeach.com

is near Stinson Beach. It's a little smaller and parking is limited, but it's closer than Stinson.

Cycling

There are many places to ride in the Bay Area. If you are a serious cyclist, join the Cal Cycling Club <http://calcycling.org/>. Their website also provides a quick list of some of the more popular routes. Here are a couple of suggested places to ride:

- San Francisco Bay Trail
<http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>
Currently, a 290-mile biking and hiking trail. It is also a great place to view wildlife in the Bay. The East Bay section of the Trail extends from Richmond to Hayward. The easiest access point is on University Avenue near the Berkeley Marina. Expansion of the trail to a 500-mile circle around the San Francisco Bay is on-going.
- Tilden Park/ Nimitz
Trailwww.ebparks.org/files/EBRPD_files/access_reports/Nimitz.pdf
This is a well maintained, wide, 4-mile paved trail that starts out at Inspiration Point off Wildcat Canyon Road in Tilden Park. This trail is great for young children to ride their bikes on.

Sailing

Cal Sailing Club

www.cal-sailing.org

The Cal Sailing Club is a non-profit, volunteer-run sailing and windsurfing club that offers lessons, recreation, and free programs for the general public and for summer programs. Located on the south side of the Berkeley Marina, CSC's major activity is teaching sailing and windsurfing safety.

OCSC Sailing

www.ocscsailing.com

Teaches sailing to enhance people's inextricable link to the ocean, to nature and to each other. Three docks with over 50 boats right on San Francisco Bay, a club room with stunning views, state-of-the-art classrooms, pro shop, gear rental, and professional service department

Family Fun for Children of All Ages

The Bay Area is a vast playground for adults and children alike. There are so many things to do and see, you'll never be bored! Listed below are just a few resources to explore with your family.

Public Libraries

A wide range of free programs is available for children such as storytelling, "toddler time" (for younger babies) and films. You can also get a free library card for your child to check out books, videos and music to take home.

Berkeley Public Library

www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/children

Albany Public Library

www.aclibrary.org/albany

Oakland Public Library

www.oaklandlibrary.org/

Lawrence Hall of Science

<http://www.lawrencehallofscience.org/>

A public science center with exciting hands-on experiences for learners of all ages with on-going exhibits, special events, a planetarium, animal discovery room, classes and camps for kids, and a science-themed gift store. Don't miss their outdoor park with a fabulous view of the San Francisco Bay.

Chabot Space & Science Center

www.chabotspace.org

Chabot Space & Science Center seeks to educate students of all ages about Planet Earth and the Universe. It offers an observatory, planetarium, classes, lectures, shows, interactive exhibits, and a natural park setting where a diverse public can imagine and learn science.

Cal Recreational Sports / Youth Programs

www.recsports.berkeley.edu

This UC Berkeley-based program exposes children to a variety of activities and sports in a supportive environment. Full-day and half-day summer camps keep kids busy and in good shape when school is out. Most activities take place on or near the UCB campus.

Parks and Playgrounds

www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/DepartmentHome.aspx?id=8506

Berkeley has 52 parks located throughout the city that include athletic fields, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts, as well as numerous playgrounds. Popular parks include the Berkeley Marina, Adventure Playground, Codornices Park, the Virginia-McGee Totland and Tilden Park (see East Bay Regional Parks, above). You are sure to find one near you!

The Berkeley Marina

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=3966>

The Berkeley Marina is much more than just a place for boats and fishing. Two fine restaurants provide breathtaking views of the bay. Businesses supporting fishing, diving, sailing, and boarding are available. Outdoor recreation opportunities include the Adventure Playground, the Shorebird Nature Center, an off-leash dog area, kite flying, and a 3,000 foot long pier for fishing or just walking out onto the Bay.

Adventure Playground – Berkeley Marina

www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=8656

The Adventure Playground at the Berkeley Marina is a wonderfully unique outdoor facility where staff encourage children to play and build creatively. Children can climb on the many unusual kid designed and built forts, boats, and towers. Ride the zip line or hammer, saw, and paint. By providing these low risk activities Adventure Playground creates opportunities for children to learn cooperation, meet physical challenges and gain self-confidence. Open Saturday and Sunday, 11- 5pm.

Children's Fairyland

www.fairyland.org

At Fairyland, children will discover storybook sets, kid-size rides, friendly animals, a reading room, and an arts-and-crafts center. The Storybook Puppet Theater—the longest-running puppet show in the United States—brings classic tales from all over the world to life. Admission fee is only \$7.

Family Fun for Children of All Ages

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

www.nps.gov/goga

One of the world's largest urban national parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area hugs the California coastline for nearly 60 miles in and around San Francisco. There are so many things to do, it's impossible to list them here. The most popular places to go include Muir Woods, Alcatraz Island, and Stinson Beach.

Golden Gate Park

goldengatepark.com

This San Francisco attraction is a large urban park, similar to Central Park in New York. It is the third most visited city park in the United States and contains the California Academy of Sciences, the De Young Museum of Art, the Conservatory of Flowers, a Japanese Tea Garden, and a Botanical Garden and Arboretum. Activities you can find here include Archery (at the Archery Range, biking, boating, roller skating, lawn bowling, Segway tours and listening to live concerts on the Music Concourse.

Oakland Zoo

www.oaklandzoo.org

The Oakland Zoo is home to more than 440 native and exotic animals. The recently remodeled children's area is designed for up-close views of the animals as well as plenty of play area for kids to run around. Children's exhibits include alligators, river otters, tortoise, pot-bellied pigs, domestic sheep, goats and rabbits, fruit bats, ring-tailed lemurs, and a host of reptiles, amphibians and insects. They also offer special activities and events for young children and their families on an ongoing basis. Don't miss the mini-amusement park adjacent to the zoo with a steam train, merry-go-round, roller coaster and other attractions for younger children.

SF Zoo

www.sfzoo.org

The San Francisco Zoo is home to a stunning and important botanical collection as well as more than 250 species of animals, many of which are highly endangered. It also has a recreation area where people can relax and have fun and a bird sanctuary and bird watcher's paradise. There is also a miniature steam train and carousel ride for the kids. Penguin feeding time is a popular activity.

Habitot Children's' Museum

<http://www.habitot.org/>

A hands-on "discovery" museum for young children with exhibits and drop-in art activities designed for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and families. Habitot offers children's classes and camps, preschool field trips, birthday parties, parenting classes and parent support groups.

Exploratorium

www.exploratorium.edu

Housed within the walls of San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts, the Exploratorium is a collage of hundreds of science, art, and human perception exhibits. In its vast interior, children of all ages can interact with unique machines, experiment with sound, light and texture, and learn about physics in a fun way.

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom

www.sixflags.com/discoveryKingdom/index.aspx

Six Flags is a chain of amusement parks found throughout the U.S. The Discovery Kingdom park, located in Vallejo (about a 30-minute drive from Berkeley), is based on an animal theme—you can ride roller coasters and see a dolphin show all in one park! They often have promotions and discounts tickets at supermarkets and elsewhere; contact the park for more information.

California's Great America Theme Park

www.cagreatamerica.com/

This amusement park has the most thrill rides in Northern California. They also offer rides for young children, live performances, and a water park.

Water World

www.waterworldcalifornia.com

A water with dedicated play areas for little kids, thrill attractions for the young at heart, family attractions almost everyone enjoy, and lots of sunshine in Concord, CA.

Gilroy Gardens

www.sfbayfun.com/gilroygardens.html

A horticultural theme park designed for families with young children and garden lovers.