



WESTMONT

International, TCK & MK Student Handbook



Welcome to Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A.!

Those who travel about the world are sometimes referred to as “sojourners,” or “those who live somewhere temporarily, as on a visit.” If sojourners in an alien culture are to feel successful in their new culture, certain types of information must be readily available and must be understood.

Who we are as people and ways we behave that are socially acceptable are largely determined by our families and the culture that surrounds us. Over a life span, we come to know and understand the structure of our society. Sojourners enter a new culture without this accumulated knowledge about the culture, and therefore face challenges through cultural shock. One international researcher put it:

“It is difficult for us to orient ourselves in everyday life: how should we greet people or accept their suggestions, when should we take their remarks seriously or how we should identify humor; how should we interpret different lifestyles, gestures, expressions, and so on?”

For you, the international visa student, TCK or MK, the task at hand is obvious - the completion of an educational program. This handbook addresses the academic program, immigration issues as well as those aspects of the American culture and campus life that are not normally taught, but which must be acquired through life experience. Please note that all information listed regarding immigration and employment pertain only to F-1 visa students, but the rest of the handbook is a guide for all students who have been living in a country outside the U.S. We hope it will help you to interpret the signs and signals of our environment, the signs and signals needed to guide social interaction, so that you feel happy and successful in your new community.

Welcome!

¡Bienvenido!

欢迎!

Bienvenue!

!الدهسو الءا

Benvenuto!

ようこそ

Karibu!

دمآ شروخ

Welkom!

Ласкаво просимо!

환영합니다

Bem-vindo!

םיאבה םיכורב

Välkomna!

Hoan nghênh



Things to Consider Before Your Arrival:

Writing Your Name

When you are corresponding with Westmont College, it is important that you always write your name the same way.

Whenever you write your name, write it exactly as it appears on your passport. Whenever you sign your name, sign it the same way and as legibly as possible. If you have a preferred name, you can add "Aka." (also known as), then your preferred name.

Housing Survey

When you are confirmed, you'll receive a Housing Survey to complete, which will help the Housing Office place you with a roommate in an on-campus room. You have the option of choosing an international, TCK or MK student as well, which may seem more comfortable, but it may also serve to isolate you and prevent you from embracing your new peers, so consider this carefully before deciding. If you need to ship boxes, please wait to ship them so that they arrive no earlier than 2 weeks prior to your arrival campus. Please contact the Housing Office for more information at housing@westmont.edu or call (805)565-6037

Communicating with Westmont College

Contact your International Student Advisor

Your International Student Services Liaison is Sarah Sagredo, who works in the Student Life Office. She is the point of contact for all F1-Visa students and assists with legal documentation pertaining to your student visa and immigration. Once you arrive on campus, she will also be the person you should see first before you begin working any job or internship throughout your years at Westmont.

After you arrive on campus, you may use the contact list at the back of this handbook to find the person who will best meet your needs.

Obtaining your I-20 Form and F1-Visa:

Once you are a confirmed student, and have submitted your financial documents to the Admissions Office we will send you the immigration document, Form I-20. This verifies that you have been accepted into a specific degree program for the expected length of your program, and that you have documented a certain amount of funds available for your education and living expenses.

All international students will then need to apply for an F-1 Student Visa*. In order to apply for this visa, you will be required to present to the embassy your I-20 Form: Certificate of Eligibility. You must have your acceptance letter, award letter, passport, valid for travel to the U.S. and in the U.S. for at least 6 months after your proposed date of entry into this country, visa, receipt of i-901 fee, as well as your financial documents. You will be required to check in with the International Student Services Liaison immediately after arrival on campus, as well as before and after any trip out of the U.S. during your years studying at Westmont.

Read about your immigration responsibilities and applying for your F-1 Student Visa in more detail as you read the section, *Visa Information for International Students*.

*Note: Some students may study under other visas if here in the U.S. with parents, but even then, the student will need to have applied for and received an F-1 visa by their 21st birthday.

How to contact your International Student Service Liaison:
ssagredo@westmont.edu or call (805)565-6028

Visa Information for International Student

All **I-20 forms** are created by the educational institution and issued through SEVIS, which is an internet-based system that allows schools and the Department of Homeland Security (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service) to exchange data about the visa status of international students. United States embassies and consulates also have access to SEVIS.

Applying for an F-1 Visa

After an admitted student confirms admission with a tuition deposit, SEVIS is notified and the College issues an I-20 form to the student. The student visits the U.S. consulate abroad, and the consulate confirms through SEVIS that the I-20 the student is carrying is a valid document. You will need to present a valid passport, your admission letter, and the documentation of your financial support (Award Letter plus Bank Statements). If everything is in order, the consulate issues the visa stamp in your passport with the classification “F-1”. A Department of Homeland Security officer at the airport (or port of entry) reports to SEVIS the student’s entry into the U.S. The student must then report to the International Student Advisor (located in Office of Admissions), within five days, and the school confirms through SEVIS the student’s enrollment. Westmont continues to provide regular electronic reports to Department of Homeland Security throughout the student’s academic career. Finally, SEVIS records the student’s departure from the United States.

Data that is recorded in SEVIS

- Whether the student has enrolled at Westmont, or failed to enroll
- A change of the student or dependent’s legal name or mailing/permanent address/phone number
- Any student who graduates prior to the end date listed on the initial I-20
- Any student who is participating in a “study-abroad” program through the College
- Academic or disciplinary actions
- Whether the student drops below a full course of study (12 units) without prior authorization from the DSO. (Immigration regulations refer to international student advisors as “designated school officials”-DSO’s)
- Termination date and reason for termination
- Other data generated by standard procedures such as program extensions, school transfers, changes in level of study, employment authorizations, and reinstatement
- Any student who fails to maintain status or complete his or her program



International F-1 visa students



What does “fails to maintain status” mean? Can a student who is “out of status” regain legal status?

Some examples of failure to maintain status include dropping from full-time to part-time enrollment, attending a school other than the one a student is authorized to attend, failure to apply for a timely transfer or I-20 extension, change in level of study, unauthorized employment, and failure to report a change of address.

If a student drops below a full course of study without prior approval from the DSO, that “event” would be reported to Department of Homeland Security (DHS), via SEVIS, and he/she would be out of status. The student may apply to DHS for reinstatement if the violation resulted from circumstances beyond his/her control. Reinstatement is intended to be a rare benefit for exceptional cases. The student may not apply for reinstatement under any circumstances if he/she is out of status longer than five months. If DHS does not reinstate the student, he/she may not appeal that decision.

What are the consequences if a student fails to maintain status?

The student’s record will be updated with SEVIS every semester. Students who fail to maintain status lose the privileges of the student visa and become subject to deportation. Specific consequences may include denial of re-entry to the U.S., inability to move from undergraduate to graduate status, denial of requests for Practical Training, denial of requests to change visa status, and possible denial of all future visa applications.

How will Westmont help students comply with the immigration laws?

The college is committed to assist students in ways that prevent status violations from ever occurring. All F-1 students new to Westmont must physically check in with the International Student Services Liaison, within five days of arrival on campus. She will review and photocopy the student’s passport and visa documents and confirm to SEVIS that the student has arrived on campus. She will also notify students if their passport and/or visa is about to expire, requiring steps for renewal. Questions? Contact Sarah Sagredo at ssagredo@westmont.edu or (805) 565-6028.

Travel Documents

Keep Important Documents with You

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) offer the following recommendations for students and exchange visitors:

1. Hand carry (do not check) the following documents:
 - Your passport
 - Your SEVIS Form I-20
 - Evidence of financial resources
 - Evidence of student status, such as tuition receipts, transcripts or admittance letter
 - Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee
 - Name and contact information of International Student Advisor (business card)

Important Note: If you are a new student participant, remember to carry with you the sealed envelope given to you by the U.S. Department of State's Consular Officer – attached to your passport. It is important that you do not open this envelope.

2. Inform the Customs Officer at the port of entry as soon as possible that you will be a new or returning student in the United States. Be ready to present the above documents mentioned, if they are requested.

3. Report to your school upon arrival so that Sarah Sagredo, Designated SEVIS School Official, can validate your participation in SEVIS.

4. Maintain contact with the International Student Services Liaison regularly to ensure your SEVIS data is updated and accurate.



Health & Travel Insurance

Westmont international students are required to maintain adequate F1 visa emergency or catastrophic health insurance coverage while studying in the USA. There are no insurance requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of State, however Westmont College, like most colleges, requires you to purchase insurance for the full duration of your stay in the United States. (This will likely mean that you will need to renew your insurance every 6-12 months, depending upon the terms of the insurance you choose.) You will need to supply a copy of this insurance to the International Student Services Liaison upon each renewal. Your general tuition and fees will cover routine visits to the campus health center, but for any injury or illness requiring referrals to an off-campus clinic or hospital, personal health insurance is required. NOTE: If you intend to participate in athletics, be sure that the insurance plan you choose will cover athletics. Likewise, if you have a pre-existing health condition, be sure that the plan you choose covers this.

On the next page are listed the most popular insurance providers for international student health and travel coverage. Please contact them and compare. Once you have secured insurance, please provide a copy of your insurance policy upon arrival on campus to the International Student Services Liaison, who will keep a copy in your file and forward a copy on to the Westmont Health Office to use in case of an emergency.



Insurance



Health insurance programs available to international students:

Source: <http://www.edupass.org/living/health.phtml>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INSURANCE For more information, contact: www.internationalstudentinsurance.com or ask for a brochure from the International Student Advisor. (Many of our students choose this insurance.)

BETINS INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND TRAVEL INSURANCE offers several different types of health and travel insurance.

ACADEMIC HEALTH PLANS offers the International Student Health Insurance Plan. Their plans meet the F-1 student visa regulations and are affordable. For more information, call 888-308-7320, fax 817-421-9432, or send email to marketing@academicrisk.com.

UNITED HEALTH CARE-STUDENT INSURANCE DIVISION (SID) offers a variety of student health insurance programs, including several that are open to international students. For more information, call 1-800-237-0903 or send email to info@sid.com.

RUST AND ASSOCIATES PREMIER INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE. For more information, call 1-800-336-0747, fax 1-515-292-7684, or send email to rust.assocs@ames.net.

INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS, INC. For more information, call 1-800-356-1235 or send email ifs@insuranceforstudents.com.

CHAMPION INSURANCE provides short and long-term health insurance for full-time students at US colleges and universities, including international students and their dependents, temporary health insurance for recent US graduates, and health insurance for US students for study or travel abroad. For more information, call 1-410-879-4577, fax 1-410-836-7441, write to Champion Insurance, PO Box 1050, Bel Air, Maryland 21014-7050, or send email to info@champion-ins.com.

What to Pack?



Santa Barbara, California Weather

Santa Barbara is warm and sunny for most of the year. Summer is often warm with temperatures ranging from 60-90°F (15-32°C). In the Spring and Fall, the weather is a little cooler, but still great for beach days, with temperatures from 60-80°F (15-26°C). Winter can be somewhat chilly with temperatures dropping as low as 40°F (4°C), but normally staying around 50-60 °F (10-15°C).

Many styles in clothing are available. Some points to consider when looking are:

LIGHT-WEIGHT CLOTHING: Because Westmont is close to the beach, most students wear light, casual clothing. Modest shorts, jeans, blouses, and sundresses are common for women. Men normally wear shorts and t-shirts.

SHOES: Sandals and flip-flops are common. The campus is very hilly, with uneven paths, and there are great hiking trails behind campus, so at least a pair of sneakers or tennis shoes is highly recommended, as are flat shoes even when you choose to dress up for class. During the winter, many students also wear boots.

BEACHWEAR: Be sure to bring at least one bathing suit, sunscreen, a large beach or duffle bag, and a shady hat for your trips to the beach.

WARM CLOTHING: During the Winter, you will need at least one jacket or coat. Sweaters or sweatshirts are normally warm enough for the Spring and Fall. A sweater or sweatshirt layered over light-weight clothing is generally appropriate, for the mornings may be foggy and cool, but then it burns off to warm sun in the afternoons. An umbrella is advised for the short rainy seasons in Spring and Winter.

If any of the above items are not available in your home country, or if such items are inconvenient to bring with you, they may be purchased in Santa Barbara. If you do have national dress, we welcome you to bring it as well.

Please keep in mind that Westmont College is an academic institution, and despite its proximity to the beach, students must dress appropriately at all times.



Getting to Westmont College

After you have received your I-20 from Westmont College, you will have to apply for your student visa from the American Consulate closest to where you are living. After you have applied for your visa, you should purchase your airplane ticket. (Please note! Your return flight should be reserved after the last day of exams, because you will not be given a chance to take your exams at a different time, so plan carefully. Reservations should be made no less than one month before you plan to leave for the U.S. If you are flying internationally, you will most likely land at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), which is about a 2-3 hour drive to Westmont. If you plan to fly domestically from within the U.S., or transfer flights, a nearby airport would be the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport, located just a half hour away from school.

Pick-Up from Airport

For your first arrival only, you may request to have someone from Westmont College pick you up from the airport when you are arriving for International Student Pre-Orientation. If you require this service, please make sure to include your request in the International Student Orientation form (page 2) that will be sent to you in the Summer.

Driving to Westmont from LAX

1. From LAX, follow signs to get onto the I-405 North. You will continue north for 13.8 miles (about 22 km).
2. Then take the US-101 North exit towards Ventura. Continue north for about 75.4 miles (about 121 km).
3. Take Exit 94A for Olive Mill Rd and turn right onto Olive Mill Rd when you get off the freeway.
4. Turn left onto Hot Springs Rd
5. Turn right onto Sycamore Canyon Rd
6. Turn right onto Cold Springs Rd

*There will be signs that will lead you to Westmont College once you get off the freeway.

Taking a shuttle/train

If you wish to arrange your own form of transportation from LAX to Westmont College, which would be required of you for times other than your first arrival, you may do so through shuttle services. However, you would need to find arrangements from the shuttle stop to the college. The more common services are:

SANTA BARBARA AIRBUS: \$50 one way, with discounts if you pre-pay online or travel with more than 2 people. This is the only shuttle that picks you up from LAX airport and drops you off at the Hyatt Hotel-Santa Barbara, close to a Westmont Shuttle stop. (800) 423-1618 or (805) 964-7759 www.sbairbus.com

AMTRACK TRAIN: \$30-60 one way. Leaves from Union Station in downtown L.A. and stops at the Santa Barbara Station. If you choose this method, you will have to arrange for transportation from LAX to Union Station and from Santa Barbara Station to Westmont College. www.amtrak.com. If it is your first arrival, arrangements can be made to pick-up from the Santa Barbara Station. If it is during the school year, you may utilize Westmont provided services (Dial-A-Ride).

LAX to Union Station: FlyAway Bus (\$8) Exit terminal and locate a green sign "FlyAway, Buses, and Long-Distance Vans". Shuttles depart every 30 minutes.

Union Station

800 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Santa Barbara Station

209 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101



Money Matters

Opening a Bank Account

Carrying around large amounts of cash is unsafe and not recommended. When first arriving to the U.S., it is recommended that you bring your money in the form of traveler's checks. Upon arrival, it should be a priority that you open a bank account, which can be done during the International Student Orientation.

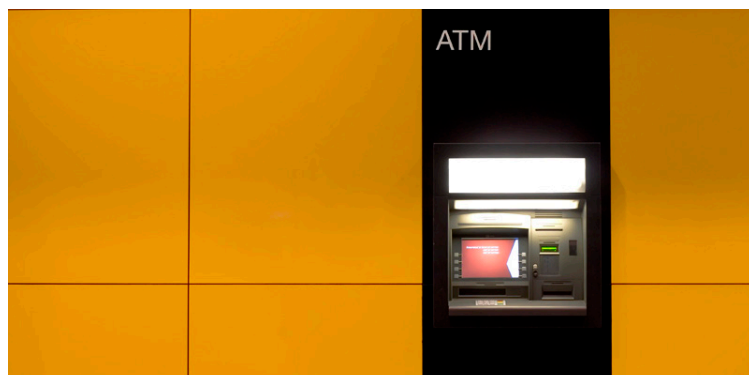
Majority of Westmont students use one of the following banks due to their locations and ATMs. Online banking options are also available; however, you have to visit a branch to open an account.

BANK OF AMERICA: The most international-friendly as they provide various international locations and banking services. Bank of America has a branch located within walking distance of Vons, where the shuttle stops. 1096 Coast Village Rd.
(805) 695-8835
www.bankofamerica.com

UNION BANK: Union Bank has an ATM located in the upstairs Kerr Student Center (KSC) at Westmont and a branch located within walking distance of the shuttle stop. 1106 Coast Village Rd.
(805) 963-7511
www.bankofamerica.com

WELLS FARGO BANK: An ATM is located within Vons; however, there is no branch within walking distance of a shuttle stop. 1482 E. Valley Rd.
(805) 963-7511
www.wellsfargo.com

Upon opening an account, the bank will provide you with the information you need to wire money from overseas and give you temporary checks. Within a couple of days, you will receive checkbooks and an ATM/Debit card, both of which may be used as monetary value. Deposit checks or traveler's checks take up to 3 weeks to clear. If you have any questions, you may contact Sarah @ (805) 565-6028 or your bank.



Using an ATM

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) allow you to make cash withdrawals, deposits, and transfers between accounts while also allowing you to view your account balance. These services, when done at your own bank's ATMs and branches, are free. However, you may be charged a fee of \$1.50-\$2.50 from either or both banks when using an ATM from another bank. There is also a limit on how you can withdraw from an ATM at one time or on one day; this varies depending on your bank and account type.

Using a Debit Card

A debit card, also known as a check card, is connected to your checking account and is used like a regular credit card. However, instead of having a bill sent to you at the end of the month, the funds are taken directly from your checking account. Make sure to keep track of how much you spend on your debit card and the balance in your checking account. If you overdraw, the bank may charge you a fee of about \$30.

Sales Tax

When buying something in the U.S., sales tax is added in addition to the price of your item. (Note: some stores include sales tax in their prices, but if so, they will state this.) The percentage of sales tax varies between states. California sales tax ranges from 7.5-10% depending on local municipal taxes. This means, if an item costs \$1.00, and sales tax is 9%, you will have to pay a total of \$1.09.

Income Tax

Refer to Page 10: Social Security Card & Taxes

Employment



International students here on an F-1 visa may work on campus, and sometimes off-campus, depending upon the situation. There are three types of employment open to international students which are outlined below.

Regular Employment on Campus

Many types of on-campus jobs and internships are available to students. All students will need to have a Social Security number in order to hold a job on or off campus, so be sure you apply for this, but you may only do so after you have an offer of employment from an on-campus office. Please obtain a "Verification of On-Campus Employment" from the International Student Services Liaison in the Student Life Office. You will take this to your employer, who will complete the top portion, then return it to the ISA, who will complete the bottom portion. You will take this form with you, along with other identity documentation, to the Social Security Office. (See Social Security Card section in handbook.)

To locate a job, international students desiring to work on-campus should create a profile on Handshake, available through the Office of Career Development and Calling website.

Please Note: International students here on a visa other than an F-1 should contact the International Student Services Liaison in the Student Life Office to be sure they are eligible to work under the guidelines of their type of visa, because some visas do not allow a student to work

On or Off-Campus CPT (Curricular Practical Training)

A student may participate in a CPT, or Curricular Practical Training Program, that is an Internship as an integral part of an established curriculum and directly related to the student's major area of study. This is an alternate work/study which is a required internship or practicum, offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the college.

Please Note: Students who participate in a full year of CPT are not eligible for post completion (post graduation) academic training.

To obtain a CPT, the student must see the International Student Services Liaison in the Student Life Office to apply for CPT, as well as to add the CPT to the Form I-20 in SEVIS. Approval will be determined by the College and added into SEVIS.

Off-Campus Employment (very limited)

In rare circumstances, a student may apply for off-campus employment in the following conditions: 1) No jobs left on campus, and 2) "unforeseen financial hardship." In these cases, please see the International Student Services Liaison, who will help you apply to USCIS for this type of employment (see OPT for steps).

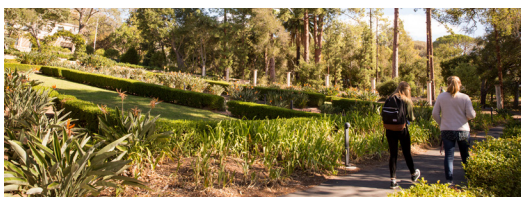
Off-Campus OPT (Optional Practical Training)

POST-COMPLETION OPT: A student may obtain an OPT to work after graduation for up to one year. The job must relate directly to the student's major field of study in order to be eligible for an OPT. A student may work multiple jobs but cannot work more than 40 hours per week total.

To obtain an OPT, the student must see the International Student Services Liaison in the Student Life Office to apply using Form I-765, as well as to add the OPT to the Form I-20 in SEVIS. Student submits I-765 to USCIS, and on approval, student will receive an EAD card authorizing him/her to work. Student may only begin work after receiving the EAD card.

No written offer of employment is required to apply for a standard OPT, although a verbal indication of the job secured, employer contact information, and how it pertains to the student's field of study is required. The student is expected to work and cannot be out of work more than 90 days (including up to 60 days to find a job after entering OPT into SEVIS, and 30 days during OPT dates).

Upon completion of OPT, student may be able to apply for a 17-month STEM extension, but a written offer of employment relating directly to student's major field of study is required.



Social Security Card & Taxes

International students may work through one of the types of employment programs mentioned, but ALL student workers will need a SSC and will need to file income taxes each January.

Obtaining a Social Security Card (SSC)

Many types of on-campus jobs and internships are available to students. All students will need to have a Social Security number in order to hold a job on or off campus, so be sure you apply for this.

Social security numbers (SSNs) will only be issued to F-1 students who have a properly completed Westmont Employer Verification Letter, which must be signed by both the employer and the International Student Services Liaison. In addition, F-1 students must be registered for classes as full time students (12 units or more) before the International Student Liaison can endorse the Employment Verification Letter. It will take Social Security a minimum of 30 days to issue the number. Students will need the following documents to apply:

1. Form I-20 and I-94
2. Passport (or original birth certificate if passport exempt)
3. One other form of identification: driver's license, student ID card, health insurance card, marriage record, etc.)
4. Properly endorsed Westmont Employer Verification Letter, which is (available from the ISA).

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE: 122 W Figueroa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Phone: 963-7806 (Mon–Fri: 9 am – 4 pm)

SAVE THIS CARD FOR LIFE: This is your Social Security Number in the U.S.A. for life. Guard it in a safe place.



Tax Responsibility/Reporting Income to the Internal Revenue Service

All international students who were present in the U.S. during any part of the previous calendar year are responsible for filing a tax report to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by April 15 each year.

In many countries, the government assesses and collects taxes that are owed, but in the United States, it is each individual's responsibility to meet his or her own tax obligations.

The United States has several different sets of tax laws. Federal tax law applies to taxes paid to the United States in Washington, D.C. State tax laws apply to taxes paid to the state in which you live.

Filing a tax report is required (usually referred to as filing a 'tax return') whether or not you worked in the U.S., gained income in the U.S., or received a scholarship. The good news is that if you earned income in the U.S., you may be eligible for a tax refund if you overpaid, or a complete reimbursement based on tax treaties.

Finding resources to help you file your tax return can be complicated. Unless a person has received training from the IRS to give tax advice, it is against the law to do so. Federal Tax Documents for U.S. Nonresident Aliens are 1040NR and 1040NR-EZ, or Form 8843 for those exempt from filing. These forms and instructions can be found at the IRS.gov website. More information can be obtained from Tiffany Lobner in the Student Life Office.

Important Tax Dates

APRIL 15

The last day on which residents and nonresidents who have earned wages from U.S. sources may file their U.S. federal income-tax returns.

JUNE 15

The last day on which nonresident students and their dependents who have no wage income from U.S. sources may file their income tax returns.



Academic Information

for International Students

Westmont College is set up on a Semester System with Written Final Examinations

Westmont College has organized the academic year on the semester system. This academic year has two periods of 16-17 weeks each, the first beginning at the end of August, called fall term, and the second in January, called spring term. Generally speaking, international students are admitted to begin classes at the fall term, which begins at the end of August. Exceptions are made occasionally for students already studying in the U.S. A third, optional, shorter semester, called Mayterm, is held immediately following the spring semester, usually beginning the week after graduation. New courses start at the beginning of every semester.

Units refer to the number of units (or credits) given for each class. Most classes are 4 units. Some classes, such as physical education classes and labs, are 1 unit. The number of units needed for graduation is 124, but the number of units required by each program varies. Each semester, all students must carry a full load, which is a minimum of 12 units. Students usually carry an average load of 16 units.

Most examinations at colleges and universities in the United States are written, rather than oral, and they are administered more frequently than in many other national educational systems, where only one examination is given at the end of the school year. In addition to a written exam, students may also be required to write research papers. Plagiarism (copying material without attributing the source) and cheating are strictly forbidden and may result in expulsion from the college.

Recommendations for First Semester

You are encouraged to register in ENG-002 Composition in your first semester at Westmont College. Writing skills are essential at the college level in order to effectively communicate your ideas. This course will prepare you for academic writing and will teach you standards that all colleges in the United States follow.

Also available is lab course, IS-051L (one credit course). This course offers customized instruction via on-on-one tutorials. In addition to ENG-002 Composition and the IS-051L, the Writer's Corner is a great way to receive feedback on your written work from your peers. Student tutors are available all semester long to assist you with your written work. Writers' Corner tutors are strong writers who are nominated and trained by our faculty. They are happy to assist their peers with a range of writing concerns:

- Genres of writing (understanding assignment prompts)
- Invention (getting started)
- Arrangement (getting organized)
- Thesis statements
- Paragraph development and structure
- Integrating sources
- Common citation styles (MLA, APA, and Chicago/Turabian)
- Sentence style (grammar, mechanics, etc.)

This is a free service available to all Westmont Students.

NOTE: Final Examination dates will not be rescheduled due to travel plans. You should ensure that your travel plans are worked around these dates.





The Post Office

The Post Office is where you will receive and send out mail/packages. This includes internal (within the school), domestic (within the U.S.), and international Mail. Hours of Operation are 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. during the Weekdays, excluding 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, due to Chapel. Special hours, like the first week of school, can be viewed on the Westmont website.

Mail Stop (MS) Number

All students are given a free mail box on campus. This address may be used when applying for a bank account, phone service, etc. Your MS number is located on your student profile and will be available by the first Monday in August or shortly after for new students. The combination for your Mailbox is also found on your student profile, under the “private” section. As combinations cannot be looked up for you at the post office, it is advised to have it written down or linked in your phone/note book.

Letters/Packages to you should be addressed as followed:

Student's Name

MS #XXXX

955 La Paz Rd.

Santa Barbara, CA 93108

U.S.A.

**Note: do NOT include Westmont College as part of the mailing address*

Receiving Packages

If a package has arrived for you, you will receive a square, yellow package slip in your mailbox. You will then need to bring this slip to the back door of the post office, where you will be able to sign for and retrieve your package. Mail is processed up until 3:00 p.m. so if your tracking number states that it has already been delivered, but you have not received your slip, give it a couple of hours or check back the next day! Inquiries about packages may be brought up only 48 hours after the indicated delivery time.

International Mail

You may wish to send postcards, letters, or even packages to your friends and families back home. You may do so through Westmont's post office. For regular postcards and letters, you are encouraged to purchase *International Forever Stamps*, available at the post office. These stamps cost \$1.10 each and will deliver letters/postcards under 1-ounce to anywhere in the world. Additionally, you may use these stamps even if the price of the stamp increases throughout time. For packages, you will have to bring them to the front of the post office and they will be able to provide you the best option.



Transportation: Santa Barbara & Beyond

Westmont Transportation Services

Westmont College provides a variety of free services to students to allow them to travel around the Santa Barbara area.

WESTMONT SHUTTLE: The shuttle service stops at 7 different locations, including Coast Village (Vons; Bank of America, etc.), East Beach, and State Street. Additional express routes are also provided on Friday nights and Saturdays (stops at Trader Joe's in the day). This service begins at 11:30 a.m. on the Weekdays and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. on Sunday. The time between each shuttle varies on the time of day. The shuttle schedule may be found here: http://www.westmont.edu/offices/physical_plant/shuttle-schedule.html

Can I Drive in the U.S.?

Driving in the U.S.

If you have already obtained your driver's license, you will need to obtain an international driver's license through your local driving office. You may use this license for a month when you first arrive. After which, the license is no longer valid, and you will have to obtain a local driver's license. This can be done through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You will be required to schedule an appointment for you driving test beforehand.

Santa Barbara DMV Office

535 Castillo Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(800) 777-0133 or www.dmv.ca.gov

Many students choose to purchase a car while studying in the U.S. as it is more convenient. However, Westmont's policy is that freshmen are not allowed parking permits (\$150-200 per semester) unless there are special circumstances. If you are a transfer student, you will have to request a permit through the Westmont website, however, this does not guarantee you a permit as there are strict restrictions as to how many cars are allowed to be parked on campus.

DIAL-A-RIDE: We understand that at times, students may need to be somewhere that is not within walking distance to the shuttle stops, does not coincide with the shuttle schedules, or just requires an actual car. Dial-A-Ride is a free cab/taxi-like service, provided for Westmont students to use in addition to the regular shuttle service. However, it only covers points between Carpinteria and U.C.S.B (Goleta). You will be required to call in advance to reserve this service. (805) 565-7000.

CHURCH CONNECTION (AND TRANSPORTATION): A big part of Westmont's intent for students is for them to be able to grow spiritually. A great way is to connect with one of the many local churches and be actively involved in it. Church Connection is a service that provides students information about a wide variety of churches and in some cases, transportation to the church. Several churches send church vans to the DC parking lot on Sunday morning to transport students to the church and back again, when the service has ended. Alternatively, during the 1st week of the semester, students may also indicate on the back of their Chapel card their desire to attend a certain church, and transportation may possibly be arranged.



East Beach/Hyatt Hotel Shuttle Stop

Westmont "Slang"

(Glossary of Terms used by Westmont Students)

M.K. "Missionary Kid"; a student that has grown up within a missionary home, mostly outside of the U.S.

P.K. "Pastoral Kid"; a student with one or both parents involved in church leadership

T.C.K. "Third Culture Kid"; student that has lived outside of the U.S. for the majority of their lives but still retains an American citizenship

The "Burbs" The outer cluster of buildings in Clark Halls

V.K. "Van Kampen"; a dorm consisting of mostly upperclassmen

G.L.C "Global Leadership Center"; a dorm consisting of mostly upperclassmen

O.V. "Ocean View"; a dorm (apartments) located off campus for mostly upperclassmen

D.C. "Dining Commons"; all meals are served here

K.S.C "Kerr Student Center"; a building that serves as the location of the D.C. on the lower level and offices of Campus Life, Intercultural Programs, and Career Development and Calling on the upper level

I.C.P. "Intercultural Programs"; the department that provides the oversight of intercultural student organizations including G.I.S.A "Global and International Student Association"

C.D. & C. "Career Development and Calling"; this department helps students in with career planning, campus jobs and internships.

U.I. "Urban Initiative"; Short term immersion trips held during Spring Break.

P.C. "Potter's Clay"; Held during Spring Break, students provide a week of service to the residents of Ensenada, Mexico

INDY Hanging out with another individual one-to-one; not to be confused with a romantic date

D.T.R. "Define the relationship"; when two individuals discuss the prospect of dating; most often done at the D.T.R. pond

D.T.R. Pond; The pond located below the Prayer Chapel where two individuals may go to "define the relationship."





INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES LIAISON will help with such matters as immigration and visa status, employment, insurance, etc. The ISSL at Westmont is Sarah Sagredo.

Another valuable resource is Anna Fletcher, Global Leadership Center Resident Director. Anna is available to help answer any questions and/or concerns related to adjustment and life in the US. Additionally, Jason Cha, Director of Intercultural Programs, can help you connect with students in intercultural organizations.

Where Can I Get Help?

Who Can I Talk to?

Your Advisors at Westmont

You will have different types of advisors while you are at Westmont: your academic advisors and other people who can help you, including the and International Student Services Liaison.

Your **ACADEMIC ADVISOR** is a faculty member in your intended field of study that you will find is an important resource. You will meet with your academic advisor during New Student Orientation weekend, immediately following International Student Orientation. Your advisor will help you make decisions on selecting a major and an emphasis within a major. Your academic advisor is also knowledgeable about potential career opportunities and may be able to help you make community connections. Your academic advisor will help you stay on track with your degree requirements, but you are responsible for selecting your classes and making final decisions. You should meet with your advisor regularly to discuss academic issues and your class schedule for future semesters.

ANNA FLETCHER

GLC Resident
Director
afletcher@westmont.edu



JASON CHA

Director of
Intercultural
Programs
(805)565-6132



International Student Services Liaison:

For any questions related to immigration visa status, employment, OPT or CPT, contact:

Sarah Sagredo

Executive Assistant to the V.P. for Student Life,
International Student Services Liaison (805)565-6028
ssagredo@westmont.edu

Academic Advisors in the Records Office:



MICHELLE HARDLEY

Registrar
(805) 565-7263
mhardley@westmont.edu

SONYA WELCH

Coordinator of
Academic Support
Services
(805) 565-7160

My Academic Advisor is:

(805)-_____-_____-_____- Email:_____

Moving to a New Culture

CULTURE SHOCK.

Remember that this is a Learning Experience!

You have come to the United States to further your education, and to learn more in a particular academic field. Certainly, you will also be learning many things relative to the way people of another culture live and the way they view the world and their own lives.

There is valuable learning in experiencing and understanding a way of life different from your own. It may surprise you to discover that you will learn things about your own culture that you may not have thought about before.

It is a rare opportunity, not only to broaden your viewpoint, but also to mature personally and to realize and establish your values.

Enjoy your Westmont experience – and learn from it.

"Culture Shock" is normal for international students, but there are adjustment strategies to set yourself up for success.

"Culture Shock"-What Is It?

"Culture Shock" is a name given to a feeling of disorientation or confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one.

Coming to Westmont from another country, you certainly will encounter many new things.

The buildings and landscape will look different. You might be unused to the food, and the people here look, speak, and act differently from people in your country. Your English may not serve you as well as you had expected, and you may feel unable to fully convey your personality in English.

You may experience academic anxieties as well: Will you do well in an educational system different than the one you are used to? Will you live up to the hopes and expectations of your family and sponsor? Will you be able to make friends? All of these things can be a part of "culture shock."

Culture shock can make you feel confused, unsure of yourself, and doubtful about your decision to come here. If you have lived outside of the United States for an extended period of time, whether you are a national of another country or a U.S. citizen living abroad as an MK or TCK, you may experience culture shock.

People experience culture shock in varying degrees.

Those who do experience it tend to become nervous and unusually tired. They sleep a lot. They write many letters home. They may feel frustrated and hostile toward their host country. They may become excessively angry over minor irritations. It is not unusual for them to find it difficult dealing with Americans and to become very dependent on fellow nationals who are also students here.

Second Culture Shock When You Return Home

Almost all international students experience culture shock when they return home. For some, it is even more painful and difficult than the problems they faced when they first arrived at Westmont. Among re-entry, some issues are problems of identity and insecurity upon returning home, adjustments in lifestyle and interpersonal relations, family and community pressures to conform, frustration as a result of conflicting attitudes. Your family and friends may expect you to be exactly the same as when you left, but you will have grown and changed during your time at Westmont. It is important to communicate to them ahead of time that you may be a little different than they remember.

Be aware that re-entry anxieties exist, so seek counseling – or at least an informal conversation about this with the International Student Services Liaison before you finally depart for home.

Coping with Culture Shock

Successful Adjustment Strategies

Different people react differently to culture shock, but almost all foreign students must cope with it to some degree. Here are some suggestions that may be helpful:

Maintain your perspective

Try to remember that you are not alone in this journey. Many students from around the World have come and gone from Westmont and have excelled.

Evaluate your expectations of Westmont and United States

Your reactions to the United States and to Westmont will be the products both of the way things are here and the way you expect them to be. If you find yourself confused or disappointed about something, ask yourself "What did I expect?" "Why?" "Are my expectations reasonable?" If you determine that your expectations are unreasonable, you can take steps to reduce the amount of dissatisfaction – and unhappiness – that you feel, like meet with your R.A., faculty mentors, campus pastor, the health/counseling center, or even your fellow International, TCK, and MK students.

Evaluate your expectations of yourself

Don't expect that you should be able to function smoothly and get things accomplished easily in a new culture. The higher your self-expectation, the greater the possibility of frustration and disappointment when adjustment struggles occur. Know and accept that you will make mistakes.

Keep an open mind

People here might do or say things that people at home would not do or say. Try to understand that they are acting according to their own set of values, and these are born of a culture different than yours. Avoid evaluating their behavior by the standards of your own country.

Learn from the experience

Moving to a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It is an opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living-and to compare it to your own. There is no better way to become aware of your own values and attitudes and to broaden your point of view!

Knowledge & Attitudes That Will Help You in a New Culture

Fight, Flight, and Adaptation

When entering a new culture, a person may fight it, try to avoid it, or try to adapt to it. Everyone engages in all three to some extent, but adaptation is the most effective. It is helpful to evaluate your behaviors and overall adjustment experience in terms of these approaches. If you are aware of the normal cycle of cultural adjustment that everyone goes through, it will help you understand yourself and not feel you are abnormal. Be assured that 99% of people experience some difficulty adjusting.

Have a sense of humor about yourself and adapting to this new culture. **Remember: your goal is to adapt to life in the U.S. in a way that is appropriate and effective for you – not to adopt the American way or become Americanized.**

STAY TRUE TO WHO YOU ARE!

Feeling CULTURE SHOCK?
Visit your
International Student
Liaison to connected to all
of the resources available to
you!

Sarah Segrado

Executive Assistant to Vice President for
Student Life and International Student
Services Liaison

(805) 565-6028 or ssegrador@westmont.edu

Ask, ask, ask!
In the U.S., asking questions
is a well-respected
behavior, so don't be afraid
to ask questions!

Knowledge of American Culture

Customs and history can help you to understand and get along better in your new environment. Read as much as you can, and always be observant and ask questions.

Think about how you have managed transitions in the past (leaving one life situation and entering another), and apply the strategies that helped you.

Know and accept that you will make mistakes, just like we all do, but we are all here to help one another.

Idioms and common expressions

Pay attention to common expressions and seek their real meanings and figurative implications. (Don't always take things literally.) When you are unsure, ask for the meaning. See list of expressions used by Westmont students on the "Westmont Slang" page.

Everyday-Life Skills to Apply in a New Culture

Observation & Reflection

Watch very carefully how people behave in specific situations, and reflect on your own behaviors in cross-cultural interaction; how do your cultural customs and values affect who you are, and why and how you interact with others. Even when things seem to go well, discuss your daily interactions with someone who knows the culture to see if your actions and perceptions are accurate and appropriate.

Develop Friendships

Because you are away from family, friends and community, you need to build a new "social support system," which includes persons with cross-cultural experience, including campus intercultural clubs and programs.

Keep in Contact

Keep in some kind of contact with your home and culture through letters, music, reading about home, reading your native language and contact with fellow nationals.

Saying No

It is culturally acceptable (as well as common practice) to say "no" in the U.S. in situations where it is not common or acceptable in some cultures. If you don't understand someone or don't want to do something, it is proper to say so. It's considered less rude to say "no" than to give the impression that you understand or agree when you really don't.

Ask for help!

If you need help, see your International Student Services Liaison, Tiffany Lobner, or ask your advisor or professors. We are all here to help you!

Ask, ask, ask!

This may be the most important skill of all. When your contact with American people and culture causes you to have strong reactions, or when you are confused, ask others who understand the culture to help you understand. In America, asking questions is a well-respected behavior. Also, don't hesitate to ask people to repeat what they said if you didn't hear or understand.

Take Risks; Experiment

Attempt to overcome your fear of trying new behaviors and experiences. Go places and participate in activities so that you can observe and try out culturally appropriate behaviors.

Dealing with Ambiguity

You may find yourself in situations where American culture dictates that you behave in a way that is different or contrary to your own culture's values. These can be difficult moments. Choose which value or behavior is personally appropriate for you; don't be afraid to be yourself.

Suspend Judgment

There are three ways to deal with the observations you make about Americans and American culture: Describe, Interpret, and Evaluate. You will naturally be inclined to judge (interpret or evaluate) what you see. However, it can be more helpful and effective to suspend judgment by focusing on descriptions, separating them your interpretations and evaluations. Ask Americans for their point of view, and talk with friends before making strong interpretations or evaluations.

Understanding “American” Thinking

What is an “American”?

There are so many aspects to any one culture that it is impossible to describe or to summarize in a few words what the culture is like. However, there are some characteristics of American culture that can be described, and perhaps these descriptions will help you understand better the behavior you see and observe in the United States. It does not mean, of course, that everyone in this country will display these characteristics, but it does mean that these characteristics tend to be evident in the country in general. The word “American” as used here means a person from the United States. Actually anyone in the Americas – North, Central, and South America – can be called an American. However, there is no convenient word in English for a person from this country, and the word American has come to be used.

Scientific Orientation

The United States and the western world in general have accepted scientific methods and scientific reasoning as the way to understand the physical world. They believe that everything in the physical world should have logical, understandable basis. Many other countries do not necessarily accept scientific explanations and are likely to be guided in their behavior and understanding of behavior by mysticism, tradition, or other non-analytical bases.

Control of Nature and the Environment

Americans usually think of nature as something that can be altered, conquered, and controlled for people’s comfort and use and in order to minimize the effects of fierce weather conditions. In contrast, many cultures accept nature as a force greater than people and something to which people must adapt rather than something they can control.

Progress and Change

Most people accept change as an inevitable part of life. Non-Western people tend to look to their traditions as a guide to the future. Americans are more inclined to make decisions based on the anticipated or desired future, and they tend to view change and material progress as good and desirable. Achievement, positive change, and progress are all seen as the result of effort, hard work, and the control of self and nature.

Try to understand Americans, but choose which values and behaviors are personally appropriate and effective for you.

Materialism

Americans usually look for measurable results of their efforts so that they can decide whether they are making progress. They often stress material comfort and convenience, while many non-western people strive for spiritual and aesthetic values that stress the inner experience of a person rather than any tangible result. Americans will often judge another culture by its material progress – how many telephones, how many cars – and neglect other possible aspects.

Individualism

In American culture there is great emphasis on the individual, who for the most part is responsible for making the decisions, which affect his/her own life. Americans think that individuals should take control of their own lives, develop their own potential, and use their own initiative to move ahead. There is less emphasis on consultation within the family or community. Americans have a desire for personal success, for social and economic progress, and they are not likely to consider social and cultural factors as barriers to their ability to get ahead. A result of this is the competitiveness of American life. Achievement is a dominant motivation in life.

Get involved in the many Westmont Organizations/

Clubs, to learn and help your American friends develop a global perspective! (ISO list on back page.)



On Campus Resources and Services for International Students

Service	On-Campus Contact
Immigration Visa (F-1, H-2, E-2, L-2), Consulate Letters, Financial Aid for internationals only	Jodi Smith, Associate Director of Admissions Admissions Office, KH 103 565-6006
Consulate Letters, Social Security Card, employment and internship eligibility, residence hall concerns and issues, living experience	Sarah Segrado Executive Assistant to the V.P for Student Life and International Student Services Liaison Student Life Office, KH 209 565-6028
Adjustment and life in the U.S., residence hall concerns and issues	Anna Fletcher, Global Leadership Center Resident Director Global Leadership Center- RD Office
APC Class/Study Skills, Academic Advising, Enrollment Verification	Michelle Hardley, Registrar Sonya Welch, Coordinator of Academic Support Services Records Office, KH 107 565-7160
Writer's Corner (help with writing papers, but not an editing service)	Sarah Skripksy Professor of English & Coordinator of Writer's Corner, located in the Library 565-6122
Support with learning and test taking as well as physical disabilities	Sheri Noble Director of Disability Services Library VL310A 565-6186
Intercultural Programs on Campus (organizations and clubs) Asian Student Association (ASA) Black Student Union (BSU) Latino Cultural Organization (LCO) Multi-Ethnic Student Association (MESA) Global & International Student Association (GISA) Racial Equality & Justice (REJ)	Jason Cha Director of Intercultural Programs Co-Advisor to GISA Kerr Student Center 565-6132 Dr. Amanda Sparkman Assistant Professor of Biology, Co-Advisor to GISA and organizer of the Faculty Mentoring Program 565-6283

