



American Language and Culture Institute Pre-Arrival Information

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the ALCI. The following information will help you prepare for your life as an ALCI student. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or need help, contact the ALCI office at alci@csusm.edu or 760-750-3200.

APPLYING FOR AN F-1 STUDENT VISA

- ❖ When you receive your I-20, review the document. If everything is correct, you must sign, date and print your full name at the bottom of page 1 (item #11).
- ❖ Pay the SEVIS fee online with a credit card at: www.fmjfee.com.
- ❖ Print two copies of the computer receipt for your records.
- ❖ Make an appointment at your local U.S. Consulate and prepare any required documents or application forms.

F-1 Visa Interview

During the interview answer every question truthfully. Your visa application will be denied if the consular officer thinks you are not being truthful. Think about the questions that you may be asked. Be prepared to answer those questions. Listen carefully to every question. Answer each question directly and honestly. Do not prepare a speech. If you do not understand the question, ask the consular officer to repeat or explain it.

You must provide evidence that you plan to return home after you complete your studies. The best evidence of a plan to return is "strong ties" to your country. This may include:

- ❖ Family living in your home country
- ❖ A job you plan to return to after completing your studies
- ❖ A business of your own, property or other assets in your home country
- ❖ If you had a brother or sister who came before you as a student and returned to your home country

F-1 Student Visa Approval

Contact the ALCI office as soon as you receive your visa. We will give you helpful information about housing, travelling to San Marcos, and new student orientation. When your F-1 student visa is approved, a visa stamp will be put in your passport. **You must bring your original I-20, passport, and visa with you when you travel to the U.S.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR STUDENT STATUS

All students with an F-1 student visa must maintain legal status while in the United States. To do so, you:

- ❖ **Must report to the ALCI and register for class by the program start date on your I-20.**
- ❖ Must be a full-time student.
- ❖ Cannot work unless you have permission from ALCI.
- ❖ Must not let your I-20 expire.
- ❖ Must not let your passport expire.
- ❖ Must attend all classes and make academic progress.

Students who do not report to ALCI by the program start date on their I-20 will have their I-20s terminated (canceled). Students who do not attend class or do not pass ALCI classes will have their I-20s terminated. When your I-20 is terminated, you are in the United States illegally. If your I-20 is terminated, you must leave the United States immediately. If you have any questions about maintaining your status in the United States, please contact the ALCI staff.

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES & ARRIVAL IN SAN MARCOS

Bring your original I-20, SEVIS fee receipt, passport, and visa with you when you travel to the U.S. You will receive an I-94 card either on the plane or when you arrive in the U.S. F-1 students must have a **WHITE** I-94 card. When you arrive in the U.S., the immigration official will read your I-20. They will stamp page 1 and return it to you. The officer will also stamp and put the I-94 card in your passport. Keep this card with your passport. Do not lose it. Check your I-94 card to make sure your name and birth date are correct before you leave the immigration post.

Flight Arrangements

Make your travel plans early. San Marcos is about 37 miles (60 km) north of the San Diego International Airport (SAN) and 100 miles (160 km) south of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

We strongly recommend that you arrive at the San Diego International Airport. If you have to change planes in the U.S., **you must allow at least three hours to go through immigration and find your connecting flight.**



Transportation from the Airport

You must make your own travel arrangements from the airport to San Marcos. We strongly recommend that you arrive at the San Diego International Airport. Airport shuttles from Los Angeles International Airport can cost about \$200. Connecting flights from Los Angeles to San Diego can cost about \$50 - \$150. Companies that provide transportation from the airport include:

1. [SuperShuttle](http://www.super Shuttle.com): (888) 888-6025
2. [PrimeTime Shuttle](http://www.PrimeTime Shuttle.com): (800) 733-8267

You can find additional shuttle information from either the San Diego Airport or Los Angeles at www.san.org or www.lawa.org. If you arrive in San Diego, and you are living in homestay, then you may reserve airport transportation from the homestay company for an extra fee. We do not recommend taking a taxi cab from the airport to San Marcos. The ALCI does not provide airport transportation. **You must reserve a shuttle or arrange your transportation before you leave your home country.**

HOUSING



Make housing arrangements before you travel to San Marcos. The ALCI does not arrange housing for students. Please see the housing information on our website at: <http://www.csusm.edu/alci/housing>. Tell the ALCI office if you will live with a family member or friend in the San Marcos area. **You may not** live with relatives or friends in Los Angeles because it is too far away. Los Angeles is about 150 km (100 miles) north of San Marcos. Read the housing choices below.

Housing Choices:

Homestay - Live with an American host family

Homestay is a great way to practice your English and experience American culture. You will also have the opportunity to share your culture with your homestay family. Your homestay family may be a traditional American family with a mother, father, and young children. Your family may be a single parent, older couple, or married couple with no children. Southern Californians are proud to live in a culturally diverse area with people from many different countries and cultures. Your homestay family may reflect this cultural diversity.

Homestay includes a private, furnished bedroom (with bed linens), a private or shared bathroom, and breakfast and dinner each day. Sometimes you will have to cook your own meal with the food provided by your host

family. Sometimes you will eat meals cooked by your host family. You must have basic cooking skills, clean up after yourself, and be polite to others.

Some host families live within walking distance to campus. Other families live within a 15-45 minute bus or train ride to campus. You may have to ride the bus, ride the train, and/or walk to school each day. Some students buy a bicycle when they arrive in San Marcos. Students must apply for homestay directly through the homestay agency. Links to homestay agency websites are on the ALCI website.

Homestay fees:

- ❖ \$650.00 - \$750.00 per month
- ❖ \$200 - \$250 placement fee (non-refundable)

Campus Housing - University Village Apartments

University Village Apartments (UVA) are on-campus apartments for CSUSM students. Apartments have four bedrooms and two bathrooms with kitchen and living room space. Only students who will attend ALCI for one complete semester or a full academic year may live in UVA.

UVA includes:

- ❖ Private or shared bedroom with furniture
- ❖ Shared modern kitchen
- ❖ Shared living area and bathroom
- ❖ Utilities (water, electricity, high-speed internet, and cable TV)

UVA Fees (fees are different for shared bedrooms and private bedrooms):

- ❖ Small shared bedroom: \$3,375 for fall or spring semester; \$6,750 for full academic year (fall and spring)
- ❖ Large shared bedroom: \$4,250 for fall or spring semester; \$8,500 for full academic year (fall and spring)
- ❖ Private bedroom: \$4,750 for fall or spring semester; \$9,500 for full academic year (fall and spring)

To apply to live in the UVA residence, please complete the online Housing Application at:

<http://www.uvasanmarcos.com/> . A \$50 UVA application fee must be submitted with the application. After you submit your application and fee, the UVA staff will contact you to confirm your housing reservation and provide you with payment information. UVA fees are **non-refundable**, even if your travel plans or school plans change for any reason.

Off-Campus Apartments

Renting an apartment in the area costs \$700 - \$1,600 per month depending on the size of the apartment and how many people will share the apartment. The communities close to the campus are San Marcos, Vista, Carlsbad, San Elijo Hills, Escondido, and Oceanside. If you will rent an apartment or a room, we recommend that you stay in a hotel or make other temporary housing plans for the first 1-2 weeks that you will be in San Marcos. For more information on off-campus housing, visit www.csusm.edu/alci. Click on "housing."



NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

New student orientation is on the first day of the semester. This is the start date on your I-20. You will receive an orientation schedule via email 2-3 weeks before the start of the semester. Orientation is required for all students. At orientation you will learn about the ALCI English language program and the university campus. You will meet the ALCI staff, instructors, and other ALCI students.

You will take a mandatory English placement test on the first day of orientation. **There is a \$250 late testing fee for students who do not take the placement test on the first day of orientation.** Bring the following items with you to new student orientation: your original I-20, passport, I-94 card, local address and phone number, immunization form, money for a student ID card, and proof of health insurance or a check or credit card to buy health insurance.

Expenses & Money

When you arrive you must have enough money to pay for ALCI tuition, fees, housing, health insurance, books and other personal expenses. You should arrive in the United States with cash, a credit card, or traveler's checks. Tuition and student fees are due **before** the first day of the semester. See the attached invoice. **There is a \$100 late fee for students who do not pay tuition and fees, in full, by the due date.**

ALCI Refund Policy

- ❖ Application fees are not refundable.
- ❖ 100% of tuition, less a \$250.00 cancellation charge, will be refunded if you withdraw from the program before the start date. Refunds will be processed within three weeks of written notice.
- ❖ If you are a second entry student with conditional admission to CSUSM, you will be charged a \$500.00 cancellation charge if you do not enroll in the following semester.
- ❖ If you paid tuition through an educational agency, university or sponsor, you should check the refund policy of the agency, school or sponsor to see if you may receive a refund. In this case, you will not receive a refund from the ALCI or CSUSM UARSC.
- ❖ If you withdraw during the first week of the Intensive Academic Preparation (IAP) program, you will receive a 75% refund of tuition.
- ❖ If you withdraw during the second week of the IAP program, you will receive a 50% refund of tuition.
- ❖ If you withdraw after the second week, you will not receive a refund.
- ❖ Payment of refunds will only be made directly to the person who paid tuition.

Health Insurance

Health Insurance is REQUIRED. There are no exceptions. All ALCI students must have written proof of health insurance (translated in English) that meets the following requirements:

- ❖ The medical benefit is at least \$250,000 per condition with a co-payment of no more than 25% and a deductible of no more than \$100.
- ❖ The policy is valid as long as the student is enrolled at ALCI.
- ❖ The repatriation benefit is at least \$7,500.
- ❖ The medical evacuation benefit is at least \$10,000.
- ❖ The policy includes prenatal (pregnancy) and maternity coverage at no extra costs.
- ❖ The policy pays for pre-existing conditions after 6 months of continuous coverage.

Students who do not have health insurance that meets these requirements must purchase health insurance at the ALCI on the first day of orientation. The policy costs approximately \$336 for fall or spring semester and \$225 for the summer semester.

Immunization Requirements

Bring the enclosed immunization form to your doctor. Have your doctor complete the form and bring your documents with you. Students without proof that they have received the required immunizations may receive these immunizations for a fee at the Student Health Services. Students must complete immunization requirements during their first semester at the ALCI.

Directions to the CSUSM Campus

From San Diego
Go north on Interstate 15
Take Highway 78 West
Exit Twin Oaks Valley Road and turn left (south)
Turn left onto Craven Road
Park in Student Parking Lot B or C
ALCI is located in Academic Hall, Room 111

From Los Angeles
Go south on Interstate 5
Take Highway 78 East
Exit Twin Oaks Valley Road and turn right (south)
Turn left onto Craven Road
Park in Student Parking Lot B or C
ALCI is located in Academic Hall, Room 111

Parking Information

Parking is strictly enforced on campus. Visitors must buy a permit from the kiosk in Parking Lot C or B, or from the vending machines located in the middle of the student parking lots. It costs \$3.00 for the first hour or \$9.00 all day. Bring cash. You will be able to purchase a student parking permit during orientation.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU BEGIN CLASSES AT THE ALCI:

- ___ Review your I-20. Make sure your name, birth date and personal information are correct.
- ___ Print your name and sign your name on line #11 of page 1 of your I-20.
- ___ Pay the SEVIS fee (\$200) online at www.fmjfee.com. Print two copies of your receipt.
- ___ Schedule a visa interview. Find your local U.S. Consulate at: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- ___ If you did not receive a visa, tell the ALCI if you will go for a second interview.
- ___ If you receive a visa, contact the ALCI at alci@csusm.edu and complete the following steps.
- ___ Reserve your plane ticket.
- ___ Arrange housing in the San Marcos area. Visit www.csusm.edu/alci for more information.
- ___ Complete the immunization requirements. Bring the immunization form to your doctor or prepare other documents that prove you have received the required immunizations.
- ___ Reserve and confirm airport transportation at least two weeks before your arrival. The ALCI does not provide or reserve airport transportation.
- ___ Give your arrival and housing information to the ALCI.
- ___ Pay tuition and fees by check, credit card or wire transfer.
- ___ Check your email regularly. Print the New Student Orientation Schedule.
- ___ Bring your original I-20, passport, immunization form, SEVIS fee receipt and other documents with you.
- ___ Report to school by the semester start date on your I-20.
- ___ If you have any questions or need assistance, contact the ALCI at 760-750-3200 or alci@csusm.edu

WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU!