Important Information for INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

PRE-DEPARTURE

Your receipt of this Pre-departure Information for International Students indicates that you have been admitted to California Lutheran University (CLU). This information was designed to help you make the final arrangements necessary for your successful arrival on campus and beginning of the term. Please read all the information carefully and contact us if we may be of further assistance. We look forward to seeing you soon!

STEP #1 – BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Applying for a student (F-1) visa

Once you return to CLU the Intent to Enroll Form, the Application for Student /Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Form I-20, and the International Student Financial Responsibility Statement, CLU will send your Form I-20 which you will need to apply for the student visa that is required for your entry to the United States.

To obtain a student (F-1) visa, you must apply at a U.S. embassy or consulate (usually in your home country). IMPORTANT NOTE: If possible, try to get an appointment more than 90 days prior to the start date on the Form I-20. A personal interview with a consular official may be required. Students must present a valid passport, the Form I-20, and verification of financial support for at least the first year of studies. There will also be an application fee. This fee must be paid before the U.S. embassy can issue your student visa. You will be required to provide a copy of your letter of admission from CLU as well as copies of documents providing proof of financial ability to cover the costs of your education. Please check at the embassy or consulate for fee information and any additional documents that may be required to apply for a student visa. To find the embassy or consulate nearest you, go to www.state.gov. IMPORTANT NOTE: When you report to the consulate for your visa interview, you must bring with you all original documents (copies will not be accepted).

Please note that the student (F-1) visa is a non-immigrant visa. During your interview with the embassy official, you will be required to articulate why you want to study in the United States as opposed to your home country and that you intend to return to your home country at the end of your studies. You should be prepared to provide evidence that 1) there is a permanent residence outside the United States to which you wish to return when you graduate; and 2) that you are seeking admission to the United States temporarily and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full-time course of study at the academic institution (CLU) that issued the Form I-20.

You should only initially enter the United States on a student visa issued in association with the I-20 you used to apply for the visa. Entering the U.S. on a visa associated with any other university or college may result in your being denied entry at the U.S. border.

If you have to enter the United States on any other type of visa and intend to enroll at CLU, please contact the Graduate and Adult Programs office BEFORE acquiring the visa. Entering on another non-immigrant visa may deny you certain rights that F-1 visa students have, such as on-campus employment and opportunities for off-campus employment. These F-1 visa student rights are generally granted after a minimum of nine continuous months of student status. (Juanita Hall, the Director of International Student Services, will discuss these rights with you after you arrive). Additionally, using another type of visa may cause you to be temporarily or permanently denied the right to enter the U.S.

According to new rules under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, although you may be issued a visa more than 30
days prior to the start date on your I-20 form, you may not enter the U.S. earlier than 30 days prior to the starting date of study on the Form I-20. Please plan your travel arrangements accordingly.

NOTE: Please notify CLU by e-mail at clugradusa@callutheran.edu when you are issued a student visa.

If your F-1 student visa application is denied

Please contact the CLU Graduate and Adult Programs Admission staff as soon as possible if you are denied a student visa. Though we cannot guarantee that a visa will be issued to all of our students, it may be possible for us to assist you with a second application or to provide further information that may assist with your visa application.

Immigration documents required to enter and remain in the U.S.

You will need the following:

- Valid passport or travel document
- Form I-20
- Student (F-1) visa

An explanation of each document is provided below:

**Passport** - The passport shows the bearer's nationality and is valid for entry into a foreign country and back into their home country. It must be kept valid at least one year from the date of your application for an F-1 visa.

**Form I-20** - The Form I-20 is the document that CLU sends to you so that you may apply for a student (F-1) visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate. The form indicates to consular officials that you have been accepted for admission to CLU and are eligible to attend the University for the period of time required for your studies.

**Visa** - The visa is usually a stamped or affixed entry on a page of the passport. It allows a person to apply for entry at a foreign port of entry. There are various categories of visas, depending upon the purpose and length of the intended stay. Visas are agreements made with the foreign country on conditions of entry (such as maintaining full-time student status and leaving the U.S. after a specified period). Students must apply for an F-1 visa and enter the country in F-1 student status.

 NOTE: Upon arrival in the United States (or on your flight to the U.S.), you will be given a Form I-94. It is a small white card that is usually stapled into your passport. Your immigration status will be indicated on this card. If you are coming into the country with your Form I-20 and F-1 visa, “F-1, D/S” (meaning “duration of status”) should be written on your Form I-94. If this is not written on your Form I-94, ask the immigration official about it. Occasionally, immigration officials make mistakes. A mistake made by an official can be costly to you because you will have to pay to have your status changed later.

Please keep your passport and Form I-20 in your carry-on bag, you will need them to pass through immigration when you arrive at the airport prior to having access to your checked luggage. During your stay in the U.S., keep these documents in a safe place. Replacing any of them may be a difficult, lengthy (and possibly costly) process.

Transferring your student visa and Form I-20 from another U.S. institution

If you are currently attending another U.S. institution and are planning to transfer to CLU, you will need to submit a Transfer Form to Graduate and Adult Programs prior to issuance of the Form I-20. This Transfer Form, which will be completed by you and the International Student Advisor/Designated School Official (DSO) at your current school, indicates to CLU that you have maintained your full-time student status at your current school and allows CLU to issue a new Form I-20 indicating that you are transferring from your current school.
If you plan to exit the U.S. after leaving your current school but before coming to CLU, you will be required to use your new CLU Form I-20 to re-enter the U.S. If necessary, use the CLU Form I-20 to apply for a new visa at the U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country prior to returning to the U.S.

If you come directly to CLU from your current school without leaving the U.S., CLU’s Graduate and Adult Programs Office will need the Transfer Form before your transfer status can be confirmed with the Bureau of Customs and Immigration Services (BCIS). If you have not maintained full-time student status at your current school, have had any extensions made to your program, dropped below a full-time course load or been authorized for employment, that information must be indicated on the Transfer Form.

Your arrival on campus

U.S. law requires that international students enrolling at CLU provide certain information upon their arrival on campus and maintain that information accurately during their stay.

1. International students must maintain a valid passport at all times. (A copy of your current passport must be provided during orientation.)

2. You must attend the college or university associated with the initial I-20 that was used to apply for and receive the F-1 student visa.

3. If you are a transfer student, you must notify the DSO at both your current U.S. college/university and the college/university you intend to enroll in of your intention to transfer and the date that your studies will end at your current institution (also known as your “transfer release date”). You and the DSO of your current college/university must also complete the CLU Transfer Form prior to CLU issuing your new I-20. If you do not have this form, please contact Graduate and Adult Programs.

4. If you have not already done so, you must provide CLU with your permanent address outside of the United States.

5. You must notify the Director of CLU International Student Services of any change of address (permanent address overseas or temporary address in the U.S.) within five days of the date the change takes effect. CLU will then notify the U.S. government of that change (a requirement for maintaining your valid non-immigrant status in the U.S.).

6. You must notify the Office of International Student Services PRIOR to traveling outside the U.S. so that the Form I-20 can be endorsed for travel or a new form can be issued, if required.

7. When entering as a new student, you must notify the CLU Graduate and Adult Programs Admission Office of any dependents accompanying you into the United States (spouse or children) so that appropriate documents can be issued. If your dependent(s) will join you after your arrival, you must notify the Office of International Student Services of the following: your dependent’s name(s), copies of current passports, permanent address overseas, country of birth, citizenship, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This information is not exhaustive and is subject to change without notice. International students are required to attend international student orientation and should contact the Office of International Student Services at the beginning and end of each semester in attendance at CLU to ensure that you are informed of all up-to-date U.S. immigration laws and requirements connected with your current visa status. These details will be discussed at New Student Orientation.
NOTE: Make sure to notify CLU of your travel itinerary by sending an e-mail to clugradusa@callutheran.edu.

The nearest international airport to CLU is Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). If you are flying in from overseas, you should plan to arrive at LAX. If you are flying to California from inside the United States, you may use either Bob Hope Airport in Burbank (BUR) or LAX.

Upon your arrival, you will go through Immigration and Customs. After disembarking, you will first pass through passport control (immigration). Have your passport and I-20 ready for inspection. Then, collect your luggage and go through baggage inspection (customs). This process may take an hour or more depending on how busy the airport is with other flights.

California Lutheran University cannot provide transportation from the airport. The most efficient and cost-effective way to get to CLU from BUR or LAX is an airport shuttle van. Taxi service is also available but is much more expensive. There is no bus service from LAX to Thousand Oaks. It takes about one hour to reach CLU from LAX.

Taxis are available in certain areas along the first sidewalk when you exit the customs area. You may ask a uniformed airport official if you are not sure where to go. Be sure to have plenty of U.S. cash (minimum $150 US) if you plan to use a taxi; not all will accept credit cards.

CLU students, faculty and staff frequently use Roadrunner Shuttle, which serves the city of Thousand Oaks, which is in Ventura County. This is only a recommendation; you may use another shuttle company if you wish.

To use Roadrunner Shuttle, you should make a reservation ahead of time. You may fax Roadrunner, call them directly or make a reservation online (see phone numbers and online address below). The current fare for one person in a shared shuttle van is approximately $50 (one way). The current fare for an exclusive van ride is approximately $115 (one way). A fare of $10 (one way) or $20 (round trip) will be charged for each additional passenger within the same party, traveling at the same time from the same location to the same destination. The fare includes two pieces of luggage per person. Additional baggage is $5 each way; odd size baggage (golf clubs, skis) is $5 each way. These prices are approximate and not guaranteed. Roadrunner Shuttle accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express or cash for payment. A $5 to $10 gratuity (tip) is very much appreciated by the driver.

To request pick up at LAX after you have claimed your baggage, use the courtesy phone in the baggage claim area and dial 56890 or call 1(800) 247-7919. The Roadrunner driver will pick you up under the GREEN Buses & Long Distance Vans sign on the island outside baggage claim. If you did not make an advance reservation, you may call the toll-free number from the airport, but you will have to wait until a van is available.

For Roadrunner reservations:

Roadrunner Shuttle
Tel: +1(805) 389-8196
Toll free in the U.S.: +1(800) 247-7919
Fax: +1(805) 389-8198
Website: www.rrshuttle.com

Another shuttle service which is more expensive but more personalized and provides enhanced service is Gemstar Limousine Service. The price for Gemstar’s exclusive pickup service from the airport and delivery to CLU is approximately $120. If you make a reservation with Gemstar, they will arrange to have someone meet you in the baggage claim area upon your arrival.
For Gemstar reservations:

Gemstar Limousine Service  
Contact Numbers  
Telephone +1(310) 457-7307  
Fax +1(310) 457-6307  
Toll free (World Wide) +1(800) 922-5466

**If you have problems**

If you arrive late or need assistance along the way, look for official, uniformed authorities and ask for help. Do not accept assistance from others who may look official, but are not. They may offer to help you and then ask you to pay them. Laws in the U.S. allow for a wide range of freedoms, and the airports are not allowed to tell these unofficial helpers to leave. Be very careful from whom you accept assistance. All airports and stations have information booths with officials who are ready to help you find hotel accommodations, connecting flights, buses, shuttles, etc.

Remember that the first rule of travel is to expect the unexpected. Assume that there will be turns of events that you did not anticipate, changes of plans, delays, etc. It will be a long trip and probably somewhere along the way something will not go according to plan. Don’t take it too seriously. Just keep a good sense of humor and a sense of perspective.

If something goes wrong, you will probably have to ask questions, most likely in English. Try to do it calmly and patiently and don’t be too frustrated if people don’t understand you or you don’t understand them. Simply ask again or ask someone else. Take advantage of the information available to you. Know specific details about buses, motels, etc., of the cities you will be visiting along the way. Have this information ready to show someone if you are having difficulty.

**Security**

When you arrive in the U.S., you will probably be tired and unsure of your surroundings. Keep your bags as close to your body as possible – do not turn away from them, or leave them alone or with a stranger. We want you to arrive safely and with all your possessions!

**STEP #3 – HOUSING**

If you plan to live in CLU housing, you should contact the Residence Life office to make arrangements at least 120 days prior to coming to CLU. Please be aware that housing contracts are for one year. You will be provided with specific times to arrive, given instructions on what to do in the event that you are scheduled to arrive at some other time, and also be provided other valuable instructions, which must be carefully followed.

California Lutheran University  
Residence Life Office – Mt. Clef Hall  
60 W. Olsen Road #6200  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360  
Phone: +1(805) 493-3220  
Fax: +1(805) 241-2283  
E-mail: reslife@callutheran.edu
Bank Information

CLU has arranged with officials of Citibank to provide graduate students at CLU with the highest quality and lowest cost banking services available. Citibank representatives will be present at the New Student Orientation, and students will be able to open an account with Citibank at once. Citibank maintains an automatic teller machine (ATM) on the CLU campus and has several banking branches in the Thousand Oaks area. Our experience is that Citibank provides the best possible service to our students, and we are pleased that they will be a part of the international student orientation process at CLU. Students are encouraged to open a U.S. bank account, and the best way to do this is to open an account at the New Student Orientation where Citibank officials will be present.

Health and Counseling Services

International students are required to carry health insurance. You must purchase the comprehensive insurance provided by CLU. The charge for insurance will be included in the “Fees” designation on your quarterly invoice.

Registration

To ensure that you are enrolled in the proper classes at the proper times to earn your degree on a timely basis, full-time international students in the MBA program are automatically registered by the MBA office, and MS-IST and MS Econ students are automatically registered by the Graduate School of Management. MSCS students will meet with MSCS program director Dr. Myungsook Klassen during the New Student Orientation to register for classes. MPPA students will meet with the MPPA program director, or a representative during the New Student Orientation to register for classes.

Business/Student Account Information (Tuition)

Tuition will be billed four times a year at the beginning of each term. You must immediately pay your entire bill as soon as you receive a bill. If payment is not promptly made, your registration may be cancelled, at which time your permission to remain in the United States will be revoked.

Payments to CLU may be made by check drawn on a U.S. bank, cashier’s check, money order or by wire transfer. Cash or traveler’s checks will be accepted upon your arrival at the University.

To make payments by wire, contact CLU’s Business Office by e-mail at devrist@callutheran.edu.

If you encounter sudden and unexpected financial problems during your stay at CLU, see Juanita Hall, Director of International Student Programs and Services, immediately! Do not wait until your studies are jeopardized. We may be able to assist you in exploring outside sources of funding or emergency loans. Remember, however, that extra sources of funding are not widely available, so do not expect to rely on additional money once you are here. International Student Programs telephone numbers are +1(805) 493-3302 or +1(805) 493-3951, and the e-mail address is jahall@callutheran.edu.

Financial Matters

You should plan to bring with you enough money to cover your preliminary expenses, such as transportation from the airport, books, and other personal items. If you have not already paid your university fees before your arrival, you must have enough money to make those payments at time of registration.

Cash – Bring enough cash in U.S. dollars to cover your immediate needs upon arrival. In addition to transportation from the airport, you should have enough cash to pay for a few meals and a night in a hotel, depending on your plans and expected date of arrival.

U.S. currency is available by exchange at international airports or large hotels, though the exchange rate is usually better at a major bank. Although changing money at a major bank often provides a better exchange rate, it may take longer. Be sure to have some small denominations of cash (including change) to make a phone call or purchase a snack. Do not carry a large amount of money in cash. Be sure to keep all cash close to your body.
Traveler’s Checks – Many students carry the amount needed for the first few weeks in traveler’s checks. When purchasing traveler’s checks, ask for those which are readily negotiable in the U.S. and which guarantee refunds in case checks are lost or stolen (such as American Express, Visa or Barclays). It is wise to request checks in several different denominations: $10 and $20 checks for incidental expenses; $50 or $100 checks for tuition.

Take proper precautions when carrying checks and other important papers. For example, never carry your passport and traveler’s checks together because a thief would be able to cash your checks using your identification. You should also carry at least some of your traveler’s checks separate from the others. This will ensure that you have some money while waiting for a refund if some checks are lost.

Traveler’s checks may be exchanged at most banks, post offices, airports, and large hotels. Many restaurants and stores also accept them with proof of identity (such as your passport).

Credit Card – All students going abroad are urged to take with them a major credit card such as Visa or MasterCard. A credit card is extremely useful in case of emergencies. Most car rental agencies and many hotels also require a credit card. Be sure to notify the issuing bank that you will be using your credit card in the United States.

If you have questions along the way, please contact the Graduate Admission Office at any time during office hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

Direct all inquiries to:
California Lutheran University Graduate Admission
60 West Olsen Road #2200 • Thousand Oaks, California 91360, USA
Tel.: +1 (805) 493-3325 • Fax: +1 (805) 493-3861
E-mail: clugradusa@callutheran.edu
Visit: callutheran.edu/graduate

We look forward to your arrival.