



UNIVERSIDAD TECNICA
FEDERICO SANTA MARIA

DIRECCIÓN DE
ASUNTOS
INTERNACIONALES



Manual for Incoming International Students



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Greetings from the Director

¡Welcome to our incredible University!

I am delighted to extend a warm and radiant welcome to this new adventure in your lives. Today, I serve as the Director of International Affairs, but not so long ago, I was an exchange student just like you, so I know exactly what you are about to experience!

Get ready for an amazing experience! Not only will you be immersed in an environment of academic excellence, but you will also have the opportunity to discover a vibrant culture and make friends from all over the world. Additionally, you will have the chance to travel and explore everything from the driest desert in the north of the country to the glaciers in the south, appreciating all the natural beauty of Chile.

I personally know how wonderful it is to travel and study in a foreign country. It's much more than just classes and books. It's about discovering new flavors, listening to different languages, and creating connections that will last a lifetime. I encourage you to make the most of every second of your stay here, because a wealth of unforgettable moments awaits you.

In addition to your studies, there are plenty of activities outside the classroom waiting for you. Join clubs, events, and university parties to fully immerse yourself in student life. I assure you that you will meet amazing people and form friendships that will last a lifetime. This exchange is not only an opportunity for academic growth, but also personal growth. Dare to explore, break barriers, and live life to the fullest. You will be surprised at what you are capable of achieving!

I wish you great success on this adventure and an unforgettable experience here. Welcome to our university community!

Lydia Droegemueller

Director of International Affairs



About USM



With over 90 years of history and tradition, USM stands out as the top Chilean university in engineering, science, and technology.

The five campuses of our university are located in: San Joaquín-Santiago, Vitacura-Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, and Concepción. Here, you can find professional technical careers, undergraduate, and postgraduate programs. To review our study programs, you can visit the following [link](#).

Welcome to USM!



International Affairs Team

The International Affairs team at the USM was founded to enhance the university's international presence and relations. The DAI supports and coordinates institutional or student initiatives and activities at USM. In addition to other initiatives, the DAI is responsible for incoming and outgoing mobility at USM.

Before and during your stay at USM, the DAI will be the place where you can address all your questions related to: conditions for foreign students, accommodation in Chile, course registration and other academic procedures, TNE (National Student Card), certificates, among others.

More info on the web site: <http://www.oai.usm.cl/>

Out Team

Get to know the members of the International Affairs team [here](#).

Our Office

Valparaíso

- Address: Avenida España 1680, Valparaíso, Valparaíso Region, Chile.
- Phone: +56 32 2654599.
- Email: info.oai@usm.cl

Santiago

- Address: Avenida Vicuña Mackenna 3939, San Joaquín, Chile.
- Phone: +56 22 3037024.
- Email: info.oai@usm.cl

Apply to USM



Whether you are coming as an exchange student in a bilateral program or as an independent student, you must submit your application online according to the following schedule:

- Semester 1 (March-July) - apply in September of the previous year.
- Semester 2 (August-December) - apply in March of the same year.

Exchange students from exchange agencies must confirm with their agency how and when to apply to USM.

Study Options

- Regular Courses
- Thesis Work
- Research
- Double Degrees

You can review the application requirements and specific application dates at the following link.

Acceptance Documents



Once the call for applications is closed and the evaluation period for the course proposal is completed, you will receive your acceptance documents. This process takes between 4 and 6 weeks.

You will first receive the digital documents, and then after a couple of weeks, you will receive the original documents at the exchange office of your university.

The documents will be:

- Acceptance letter, which includes the dates of your exchange, selected campus, USM supervisor for those doing thesis work or an internship, and personal information.
- Student Visa Certificate if you will be at USM for more than one semester, which will allow you to apply for the mandatory temporary residence permit. If your stay would be equal to or less than one semester at USM, you can study with the temporary residence permit that for some nationalities is obtained directly upon entering Chile. Confirm other requirements and deadlines with the [Chilean Immigration Service](#) or in this [summary](#) made by the Legal Department of USM.
- Response to requested courses in the application. There will be approved, rejected, and recommended options.



Prepare for your trip

When you receive your acceptance documents, you should apply for the temporary or temporary residence permit if the duration of your stay and/or nationality requires it. Review more details with the [Chilean Immigration Service](#) or in this [summary](#) made by the Legal Department of USM. Residence permits do not allow you to work but do allow you to carry out internships or practical training related to your study program.

Once you receive your residence permit, purchase your tickets including the date of the orientation session. If you want to participate in the Intensive Spanish Course, you should consider arriving 2 weeks prior to the start of classes for the semester.

For the first few days upon your arrival, we recommend making a hotel or hostel reservation so that you can get to know the city and arrange your accommodation for the semester in person, safely, and comfortably.

Will you be participating in the Intensive Spanish Course? Please confirm your participation according to the instructions provided by the DAI.

Vaccines and Covid-19

Currently in Chile, there are no specific requirements related to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we recommend reviewing the “[Paso a Paso](#)” program prior to your trip, as there may be quarantine requirements for travelers or vaccination certification.

Arriving in Chile

Whether you arrive by plane or bus, you will have to complete 2 procedures: entering the country with international police and luggage inspection with SAG and Customs. On the plane or bus, you will receive a luggage declaration form that you must complete.

At the international police, you will need to present your passport and you will receive an entry stamp along with a PDI entry paper, which you must not lose. The Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG) will receive your sworn declaration and inspect your luggage to prevent the entry of fruits, seeds or grains, vegetables or unprocessed animal products, soil; firearms, ammunition or explosives; illegal drugs, biological products, veterinary drugs, animals or pets, live or dead species. Customs will check if your luggage is duty-free.

On the way to my new city



SANTIAGO

If your exchange will take place in Santiago and you arrived by plane, from the airport you have the following options:

- Official taxis, paid at the taxi module or counter inside the airport. Do not accept any taxi that you cannot pay for in this way.
- Official transfers, which are paid at any of the modules or counters inside the airport.
- Buses to the metro station and Pajaritos buses or downtown Santiago with the Turbus or Centropuerto company. You can board them at gates 1 or 2 of the airport and pay at the same place where the bus will be parked before boarding.

If you have arrived by bus, the bus terminals will be: Terminal Alameda Sur or Terminal Tur Bus, both located next to the Universidad de Santiago metro station.



VALPARAISO/VIÑA DEL MAR

From Santiago airport, you have the following options:

- Direct bus to Valparaíso/Viña del Mar with the Turbus company.
- Official taxis, paid at the taxi module or counter inside the airport. Do not accept any taxi that you cannot pay for in this way.
- Buses to the metro station and Pajaritos buses with the Turbus or Centropuerto company. You can board them at gates 4 or 5 of the airport and pay at the same place where the bus will be parked before boarding. From Pajaritos, you will have buses to Valparaíso/Viña del Mar from 06:00 to 22:30.

If you arrived by bus, you can travel from different cities in the country with companies like Turbus or Pullman.



CONCEPCION

If your exchange will be in Concepción, you have two options to get there:

1. By plane from Santiago, traveling with LATAM, Sky, or Jet Smart; flights are available at different times.
2. By bus, you can arrive from different cities in the country, with companies like Turbus or Emebus.

**Important:
Never take
unofficial
taxis, it
could be
dangerous.**



My new home

Due to its vast extension, Chile offers a variety of climates and landscapes. In the north, you can explore the highlands or the desert; in the central region, you'll find fertile valleys and distinct four seasons; in the south, there's more rainfall, forests, rivers, and islands, while in the extreme south, you'll encounter Patagonia, channels, and further adventures. Make sure to check the weather and climate in the city where you'll be doing your exchange, and don't forget that winter here is from July to September.

Schedule

Winter -04:00 GMT
Summer -03:00 GMT

For the first few days upon your arrival, we recommend making a hotel or hostel reservation so that you can get to know the city and arrange your accommodation for the semester in person, safely, and comfortably.

USM does not have on-campus residences, but on our website, you can review options such as hostels, host families, and offers from local students who want to share their houses and apartments.

Lodging

Energy

220V 50Hz - Devices designed for 110V should use a transformer.
Travel appliances and laptops usually come with an auto voltage transformer (110V-240V) that adapts to Chilean electricity.

In Chile, it is customary to have three meals a day: breakfast, lunch (the main meal of the day), and "once" (tea/coffee + sandwich). Optionally, dinner is also available, typically around 8pm or 9pm.

Chilean cuisine consists of a wide variety of ingredients due to the country's geographical conditions and the blend of traditional food with influences from various countries such as Spain, Germany, France, and Italy. Additionally, the extended coastline offers seafood as an important ingredient in Chilean cuisine.

Chile also offers a fabulous variety of wines, and another traditional alcoholic beverage is 'pisco,' a grape-based distilled spirit.

Gastronomy and Meals



My new home

Water

Although tap water throughout Chile is completely safe for direct consumption, it is recommended for individuals whose bodies are more susceptible to changes to drink bottled water during the first few days of their stay, as the high mineral content of tap water could cause some stomach discomfort.

It is not advisable to consume raw vegetables, especially those that grow close to the ground (lettuce, carrots, cabbage, etc.), unless obtained from an established supermarket, which typically monitors the sources of their products.

Raw foods

Tips

In Chile, the tip is not included in bills at bars and/or restaurants. The usual tip amount in these places is around 10% of the total bill.

In Chile, tipping is not customary in taxis, but it is common to tip the workers bagging your groceries at supermarkets for an amount not exceeding \$1,000 CLP.

In Chile, it is common to greet with a handshake or a kiss on the cheek, but it is not necessary, so don't feel obligated to do so. Simply saying 'good morning/afternoon/evening' in a formal situation or a simple 'hello' in an informal situation is sufficient.

Greetings

When addressing someone older, the recommended form of address is 'Señor or Señora' followed by their name, and using 'usted' as the pronoun. However, in familiar situations, you can address them by their name and use the pronoun 'tu' (you).

Communications

Regardless of whether you are calling from a landline (home or office) to a mobile or another landline, you must always dial the area code followed by the phone number.

To call a mobile phone, dial '9XXXXXXX,' and for a landline, dial 'area code + XXXXXXXX.' The area code for Santiago is 2, Valparaíso/Viña del Mar is 32, and Concepción is 41.

If you will be using your foreign cell phone with a Chilean SIM card, you must register at www.registratuimei.cl.



My new home

Banks schedule

From monday to friday, from 9.00 to 14.00 hours.

The opening hours of retail stores may vary from region to region and the size of the store. All prices displayed in stores include taxes.

Commerce

Internet

Many companies offer cable or fiber optic service with download speeds ranging from 2Mbps to 800Mbps. Find out which option is available for the area where you live.

Chile is not a dangerous country; like many other cities around the world, there are certain areas to avoid and safety recommendations to follow, especially for foreign students.

Security

In public transportation, always keep your belongings where you can see them. Avoid showing that you are carrying valuable items with you.

Keep cash for your daily expenses, but avoid carrying the money for your rent, for example, in cash.

Make a copy of the data page of your passport to carry with you, and leave the original in a safe place.

Be sure to download or update your maps on your phone so you can find your way around the city easier.

Health

All students with the status of international exchange student at any of the USM campuses must have valid medical insurance in Chile for the same duration as their stay in our country. It is the responsibility of each student to understand the workings of their medical insurance, including coverage and contracted health institutions or professionals.

Each USM campus has a free primary care nursing service. If you fall ill or have an accident off-campus, you should go to the nearest healthcare center (hospital or clinic) or one that is covered by your medical insurance.

Money



CASH

Chilean peso CLP

US\$1 = CLP 950 approximately

Available in bills of \$1,000, \$2,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$20,000; and coins of \$10, \$50, \$100, and \$500.

In Chile, decimals are expressed with a comma, for example: 13,5% (thirteen point five percent), and the period is used to express thousands, for example: 10,000 (ten thousand).



CREDIT CARDS

Most established businesses in Chile accept credit and debit cards.

However, some remote rural towns operate solely on cash, so it's advisable to have cash on hand if you plan to visit these places.

If students wish to use credit cards for purchases in Chile, they should verify that their cards have international coverage.



ATMS

In commercial and banking areas, it's easy to find ATMs (Redbanc, marked by a red "R" symbol), as well as at gas stations and supermarkets.

The maximum withdrawal limit is \$200,000 pesos per day.



CURRENCY EXCHANGE OFFICES

Money can be exchanged at "currency exchange offices" at the daily exchange rate. In major cities, there are currency exchange offices where a generally more favorable exchange rate is offered compared to airports, hotels, and banks.

Although it's not common to have this option, it's highly NOT recommended to exchange money with individuals on the street.



Public Transport

Santiago

Public transportation in Santiago is called RED, formerly known as Transantiago, and consists of buses ("micros") and the metro. For both modes of transportation, you'll need the Bip! card, available for purchase at metro stations. [Click here to plan your trip and recharge your Bip! card.](#) There is no public transportation to/from the airport.

Black taxis with yellow roofs are also an option but only accept cash payments.

Uber, Cabify, and Beat are available in Santiago. Additionally, many shared bicycle and scooter rental options are available at various points throughout the city.

The "micro" is the public transport with the best coverage. The price varies depending on the distance traveled, and you must pay in cash. Google Maps can help you get around the city.

There is also a metro that connects Valparaíso and Viña del Mar.

Uber, Cabify, and Beat are available in Valparaíso/Viña del Mar.

Valparaíso/ Viña del mar

Concepcion

The "micro" is the public transport with the best coverage. The price varies depending on the distance traveled, and you must pay in cash.

Google Maps can help you navigate the city.

There is also a metro in some parts of Concepción; our campus has its own station. Uber and Cabify are available in the city.

Emergency numbers



Ambulance: 131



Firefighters: 132



Police: 133



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