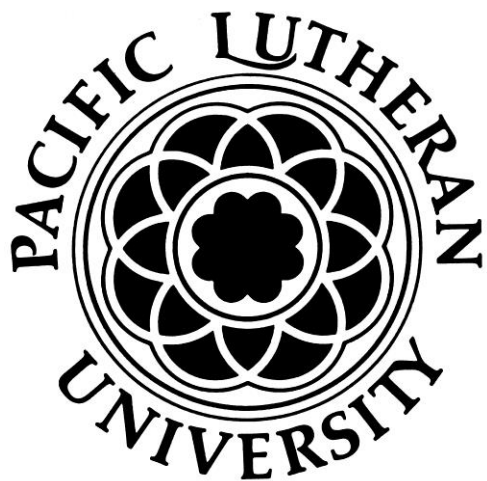


**PACIFIC LUTHERAN  
UNIVERSITY**

**EXCHANGE VISITOR  
AND  
VISITING SCHOLAR HANDBOOK**



2016 Version

## WELCOME TO PLU!

Exchange Visitors and Visiting Scholars are a valued part of our campus. We hope you will enjoy your stay with us as well as profit intellectually from it. While you are here, please consider the Wang Center for Global Education one of your campus contacts. We will be happy to help you in any way we can.

### WANG CENTER FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

The Wang Center for Global Education coordinates the university's international academic and off-campus programs. The center is located on Wheeler Street by the Mary Baker Russell Music building. Our staff will be happy to help make your transition to PLU as comfortable as we can.

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# **PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY**

[www.plu.edu](http://www.plu.edu)

Pacific Lutheran University is located in the small Pacific Northwest community of Parkland, Washington, just south of the city of Tacoma. Within easy driving distance is the Pacific Ocean, Puget Sound, Cascade Mountains with Mt. Rainier and Snoqualmie Pass, the City of Seattle, and numerous parks, recreation areas and cultural centers.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This handbook is intended to provide Exchange Visitors (professors, research scholars or students on J-1 visas) with pre-arrival information about a variety of topics to ensure that they understand the nature, objectives, and requirements of their programs, to ease their arrival, and help them derive the fullest benefit from their experience in the United States and at Pacific Lutheran University.

## **PURPOSE OF THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM**

The broad purpose of the Exchange Visitor program is to promote international educational and cultural exchange in order to develop mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. Exchange programs exist in a variety of formats and permit visitors to come to this country for a wide range of activities. Comprehensive information about the J-Visa Exchange Program can be found at <http://j1visa.state.gov/>.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Exchange Visitors are expected to have a specific goal for their stay at PLU. Whether it is to enroll in classes, sit in on classes, carry out research, or teach or lecture, we would like to know these goals in advance so that we can accommodate you and arrange for a faculty or departmental contact.

Exchange Visitors are expected to comply with PLU policies and community standards. See <http://www.plu.edu/human-resources/>

Exchange Visitors are expected return to their home country within 30 days of the program end date on their DS-2019.

Exchange Visitors are required to be covered by medical insurance for the entire length of their stay in the US.

**PLEASE BRING THIS HANDBOOK WITH YOU.**

## **PART I**

### **PRE-DEPARTURE**

#### **How to Obtain Your Visa**

1. You will receive Form DS-2019, “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status” from PLU or your sponsoring agency. This document is only an “enabling” document. Please review your DS-2019 carefully and sign the bottom of page 1. If you are outside of the US you will need to take this form to a US consular office to obtain a J-1 visa. (Canadians have different rules and Scholars already in the US may need to apply for a change of status.
2. Present the following to the US consulate to apply for your J visa: Form DS-2019, issued in SEVIS by PLU, proof of having paid the SEVIS fee (currently \$180), documentation evidencing financial ability to meet expenses, evidence of English ability sufficient for the exchange program, evidence of residence abroad and intent to depart the US after completion of the program, passport, Form DS-156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-157 if required, Form DS-158, Photographs, Proof of having paid the Machine Readable Visa fee, and Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable).
3. The consular officer will evaluate the documents submitted and conduct an interview to determine if you are eligible for a J-visa and whether or not you will be subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement. If you are found eligible, the consular officer will issue a J-1 visa and affix it to your passport. The immigration officer will return the original DS-2019 to you.
4. When you are admitted to the US, you will be issued a Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record). It will be marked “D/S” for “duration of status.” Exchange visitors may remain in the US as long as they maintain J-1 status. This means that INS considers the exchange visitor to be in status as long as their DS-2019 is valid and they engage only in those activities permitted on the DS-2019.
5. Keep the DS-2019 and I-94 in your passport at all times. You will need them for extending your stay in the US, for work permission, or for reentry to the US after temporary trips abroad during the period of the validity of the DS-2019.

Visit <http://j1visa.state.gov/> for more information.

#### **Home-Country Physical-Presence Requirement**

Some Exchange Visitors are not eligible for permanent residency, H-Temporary Worker or Trainee, or L-Intra-company transferee status under the “Home-Country Physical-Presence Requirement” until they have lived and been physically present in their country of nationality (or last legal permanent residence) for at least 2 years following departure from the US. The purpose of this requirement is to have the home country benefit from the Exchange Visitor’s experience in the US. Exchange Visitors come to this country for a specific objective such as a program of study or research project. The requirement is intended to prevent a participant who is subject to the requirement from staying longer than necessary for the objective, and to ensure that he or she will spend at least two years in the home country before coming back to the US for a long-term stay. See item 1 (e) on the back of Copy 1 (the white copy) of your Form DS-2019 for the terms of the requirement. If you have questions about the requirement, including whether or not you will be subject to it, please raise them with the Consular Officer when you apply for your visa.

#### **Airline Travel and Frequent Flyer Miles**

Most Exchange Visitors will travel many miles by air and most airlines have Frequent Flyer programs which award free airplane travel tickets after the accrual of a certain number of air miles (each airline is different). It is to your benefit to sign up for these programs when you check into the airport for departure from your home country or if you wish to get credit for the miles you travel on your way to Seattle and back home again.

## **PART II**

### **ARRIVAL AT PLU**

#### **Airport Arrival and Transportation**

The closest airport to PLU is Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. It is located between Seattle and Tacoma. Generally students and scholars take the Shuttle Express from the airport to Tacoma, mentioned under Transportation.

#### **Check-in**

Once you are settled into your lodging facility, come to the Wang Center for Global Education for introductions and orientation. A representative from the Wang Center will meet with you and make copies of your DS-2019, I-94, Passport, and Medical History Form. She will also review your insurance policy or assist you with purchasing the PLU approved policy. Once the paperwork is done, you will be given a tour of campus and get your picture taken for your PLU identification card.

All students, staff, and Exchange Visitors are issued a picture identification card with an identification number. This card entitles you to free or reduced admission to athletic and cultural events on campus, use of the library, swimming pool, and fitness center. It is also required for cashing checks at the Business Office and is generally accepted as identification at local businesses and banks near PLU.

#### **Culture Shock**

After you have been in the U.S. awhile, you may experience what is called commonly referred to as “Culture Shock”. Culture Shock “...is the term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own. It can cause intense discomfort, often accompanied by hyper-irritability, bitterness, resentment, homesickness, and depression.” (Survival Kit for Overseas Living) The good thing about culture shock though, is that it usually goes away. There are numerous resources on-line these days to learn more about Culture Shock and many on-campus resources to talk with.

## **PART III**

### **CLOTHING**

You should be prepared to have clothing for all types of weather. We recommend that you bring something for cold, rainy weather as well as clothing for warm, sunny weather. An umbrella is recommended for all seasons and a hat or scarf and gloves for the fall, winter, and spring months.

Fall (September - November)

We usually have cool evenings with sun, rain, fog, or clouds during the day. Daytime temperatures range from 20 °C to 5°C.

Winter (December - February)

You can expect cold to freezing temperatures at night and often during the day. Snow is always a possibility and rain, wind, and clouds are common. January and February often have very cold but sunny days. Daytime temperatures range from 8°C to 10°C.

Spring (March - May)

Spring in the Pacific Northwest (where Tacoma is located) has a wide variety of weather. You can expect some snow, sun, wind, hail, and rain. Daytime temperatures range from 13°C to 18°C.

Summer (June - August)

The summer months are usually warm and sunny with occasional rain. Rain is more prevalent in June. Late July or August temperatures can get very warm. Daytime temperatures range from 21°C to 25°C.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Employment opportunities are complex and vary for J-1 visa holders and depend on your Exchange Visitor Category, i.e., whether you are here as a student, a research scholar, or a professor. (Employment is considered work or services performed in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, etc.) If you would like information about employment eligibility, please contact the Wang Center. For any employment you will need written approval from the J-1 adviser in the Wang Center before you begin the work. The Wang Center can help assist you in applying for a Social Security Card.

#### **Social Security Taxes**

*In general, Exchange Visitors with J-visas are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for the first five years in the US, as long as you continue to declare non-resident status for tax purposes (see Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "US Tax Guide for Aliens").*

#### **Federal, State and Local Taxes**

*Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the US and your home government, your earnings will be subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. By April 15 of each year you must file a federal income tax return and a "Required Statement" covering the prior calendar year to determine whether you owe more taxes or have a refund coming. More information is available in the Business Office. Or you can seek assistance from a professional tax advisor.*

### Employment for J-2 Dependents

*J-2 dependents may apply to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for authorization to work as long as the pay is not used for support of the J-1 visa holder. It may not be used to pay any of the expenses of the intended exchange program.*

## **FACILITIES**

Facilities at PLU are designed to meet the needs and interests of all students, faculty and staff. PLU's computer services change often to keep up with new technology. Visiting Scholars have access to campus technology as do the students. A letter of introduction is required from Wang Center for Global Education to set up a computer account. Scholars will be assigned a computer account and password. Assistance with computers is available in the Computer Center in the Library

Recreation is an important part of the PLU and Pacific Northwest culture. And PLU has many facilities to accommodate sports and recreation -- a 9-hole golf course (fee required), an Olympic-size swimming pool, 3 gymnasiums, exercise facilities, tennis courts, and racquetball courts.

Our modern Science Center is equipped with open laboratories shared by Chemistry, Physics, and Engineering. Noteworthy is a research grade scanning electron microscope, a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer, and specialized laboratories for Biology and Geoscience. The Mary Baker Russell Music building is the first concert hall in the area designed exclusively for music and houses classrooms, faculty offices, and studios. The Anderson University Center houses the cafeteria, an information desk (conciierge), a coffee and snack shop, numerous meeting rooms, and The Cave - a coffee shop/restaurant, meeting and entertainment area managed by students. The Mortvedt Library, one of the most extensive in the area, has over 500,000 published records. Copy machines and typewriters are available in the library and you can purchase a copy card for making copies. Your PLU identification card is required for access to the library facilities and needs validation for use. The PLU bookstore, Garfield Book Company, is located on Garfield Street near campus.

PLU has a Faculty House where Visiting Scholars are encouraged to join other faculty for a noon meal.

## **HEALTH CARE**

### Medical History

Exchange Visitors are required to complete a Medical History form. This form is sent to you with your DS-2019. Please complete it while you are still in your home country. Upon arrival or prior to arrival at PLU, leave a copy with the Health Center. You keep the original. (If you are ever in an accident or become very ill, this form will be helpful to the doctors and nurses. Often when a person is hurt seriously, they remember only their native language and many doctors and nurses may not be able to understand a language other than English in order to help you quickly.)

### Health Services -253-535-7337

The Health Services Center [health@plu.edu](mailto:health@plu.edu) is located across the street from the PLU Library and provides the initial health screening to Exchange Visitors on J-1 visas (not family members). All international students, faculty, and scholars are required to have their immunizations either up-to-date or brought up-to-date upon their arrival. The Health Center will review your Medical History form and tell you if any immunizations are needed that are required by the university. You are required to have a tuberculosis skin test called a PPD (purified protein derivative) upon arrival. This test is done at Health Services when you arrive. Costs vary and are your responsibility to pay.

You will use your health insurance policy for standard doctor visits at local facilities. In the case of an emergency, push 911 on the phone if you are *off-campus*. If you are *on-campus*, push 7911 on a campus phone for Campus Safety.

- Give your name
- Tell how you feel or where you hurt
- Give your address and phone number. (Always keep your address and phone number written on a piece of paper by your telephone.)

Health care is very expensive in the US. If you need to visit the hospital or a doctor, or require an ambulance, some charges may not be covered by your insurance policy and payment may be asked for at the time of the visit. Be sure to show your insurance identification card.

There are several dentists close to PLU and within walking distance. Dentistry is rarely covered by medical insurance and is the responsibility of the Exchange Visitor to pay.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases are a concern in all countries. For more information, see Appendix or contact the Health Services Center.

### Health Insurance

Exchange Visitors are required by the US government to have health insurance coverage for themselves and any accompanying family members for the entire length of their stay in the US. The minimum required is:

1. up to \$100,000 per accident or illness
2. up to \$ 25,000 for repatriation of remains
3. up to \$50,000 for medical evacuation to the home country
4. and a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness

PLU requires the purchase of an International Student/Exchange Visitor Insurance Plan. A copy of this policy will be provided to you. Please read carefully and be prepared to purchase insurance upon arrival in the US.

Exchange Visitors are responsible for maintaining their insurance and for keeping the Wang Center informed of this coverage. When arrangements are made for returning home, make sure your insurance coverage does not expire before you depart the US. Exchange Visitors are responsible for any and all medical expenses they incur. Please note that you may be subject to the terms of the Affordable Care Act.



## HOLIDAYS

Like most countries, America has lots of holidays to celebrate. We hope you will enjoy participating in some of these celebrations. Many of the holidays are recognized by closing the University. As a rule, the University is closed for the following:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of January
President's Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday in February
Spring Break	usually the 4 <sup>th</sup> week of March at PLU
Good Friday	Friday before Easter
Memorial Day	last Monday of May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of September
Thanksgiving	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in November
Christmas	December 25

## OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

PLU has *some* housing available for Exchange Visitors in a nearby apartment building. These one-room apartments are for rent and have a small kitchen and bath. Each apartment is minimally furnished with furniture, telephone hook-up, wifi, bed and bedding, towels, dishes, and cooking utensils. Coin operated clothes washing machines and dryers are available and shared by all of the tenants in the apartment building. House cleaning services are *not* provided. All tenants are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their own apartment - vacuum, wash floors, toilet, sinks, tub, shower, and remove old food from refrigerator regularly. Tenants are asked to pay special attention to keeping the stove clean and free of grease.

Utilities (electricity, water, and refuse service) are included in the rent. Television service is not included in the rent.

### Safety Tips for Living Off-Campus (or on)

1. Know how to get out of your apartment in case of fire or emergency. Do not use the elevators in case of fire or emergency. Each apartment should have a smoke detector that will sound an alarm if there is smoke in the apartment or hallway. Contact the building manager if you think your smoke detector is not working.
2. Keep your passport in a safe location and easily accessible. In case of a fire or emergency if you can get quickly, take it with you. But remember, your life is more important than your passport.
3. Unplug the iron immediately after each use.
4. Do not place furniture or other objects close to heaters because of fire danger.
5. Turn off stove, oven and other electrical appliances when you are through using them.
6. Ask the apartment manager how to regulate the heat thermostats and operate any of the other appliances you are unfamiliar with.
7. Keep your door locked.
8. Smoking is *not* allowed.

### Telephone Calls

The PLU leased apartments have a telephone but each Exchange Visitor needs to activate the phone service with Pat Bieber's assistance. All phone expenses are the Exchange Visitor's responsibility, including payment of activation and long distance charges. There is no cost for local calls other than the services. Most Exchange Visitors use cell phones.

### Mail

Mail will be delivered directly to your housing location. Stamps may be purchased in the University Center or at the Parkland Post Office. Stationary may be purchased in the PLU Bookstore in the University Center or at nearby stores.

### Meals and Groceries

Exchange Visitors at PLU can prepare their own meals or purchase PLU Dining Dollars. Groceries can be purchased at nearby grocery stores that are a short bus ride away.

Visitors who prefer not to cook their own meals can purchase a meal plan to eat in the University Center and other campus dining facilities. Prices for these plans vary depending on the number of meals purchased per week. Dining Dollars cannot be transferred or redeemed for cash value, and can be used on campus only.

Exchange Visitors are encouraged to join other faculty at the University House for the noon meal during fall and spring semesters. Soup and sandwiches are available for purchase. Faculty presentations are held Wednesdays at noon during the academic year. (If you would like to be a presenter at one of these noon presentations, please talk with the Wang Center.)

## **MONEY AND BANKING**

Depending on the length of your stay, you may wish to open a checking or savings account at one of the local banks. We recommend that you do not keep large amounts of cash in your apartment. The Wang Center staff will be happy to take you to a bank during the first week of your visit.

Cashing checks or traveler's checks is relatively easy at PLU. The Business Office has a cashier who will cash checks up to a maximum of \$75 a day. You will need to show your PLU identification card. The window is open during normal business hours.

Stores and banks may require your passport for identification.

As a rule, we recommend that you only carry small amounts of cash with you while you are here. This can be used for bus fare, groceries and small purchases.

### Banks & Credit Cards

Wells Fargo Bank is close to PLU within walking distance. They are very helpful and are familiar with the banking needs of international students and scholars.

Visa and Mastercard credit cards are widely accepted in the US. If you have one, we recommend that you bring it. Be sure to notify your bank that you will use your credit or debit card in the US; otherwise they will likely freeze your account. Credit cards are especially helpful for those unexpected expenses such as doctor or dentist fees.

ATMs (automated teller machines) are easy to find. One is located on campus in the University Center for your convenience. Note that there are fees associated with its use unless you have an ATM card from Wells Fargo Bank.

## **NEWS AND EVENTS AT PLU**

There are always interesting things happening on campus at PLU; lectures, theater, music, sports, and more. During the school year, the campus newspaper, "The Mast" is distributed every week in most PLU buildings. You'll find listings of activities in which you may want to participate. We encourage you to get involved in the PLU community and to take advantage of the many opportunities here.

## **SECURITY**

The PLU campus and immediate vicinity is regularly patrolled by PLU's own Campus Safety Staff. Though there are few incidences of crime in this patrolled area, visitors are urged to exercise caution. Campus Safety staff provide an escort service to students, staff, and Exchange Visitors in the evening for on-campus safety and up to 6 blocks from campus. Though you will feel very safe at PLU, we discourage anyone from being out alone at night and recommend use of the escort service. (Just call x7441.) We also ask that you keep the door of your apartment locked at all times.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

We encourage Visiting Scholars and students to explore the Tacoma/Seattle area on their own as much as possible. A Transit Center is just 2 blocks from campus. For a minimal fee, passengers can ride the bus to stores, Seattle, Tacoma, numerous shopping malls, the Tacoma Dome, Point Defiance Park and Zoo, and Sprinker

Recreation Center (ice skating, racquetball and tennis courts). Schedules are available at the University Center and at the nearby Transit Center. Please keep in mind that there are places in Tacoma and Seattle that are not safe to visit. You should have a specific destination planned and ask the driver if it is a safe area to visit or if you should transfer to another bus to reach your destination.

### Pierce Transit (Bus Transportation)

Go to [www.piercetransit.org](http://www.piercetransit.org) for schedule, fees, routes, etc. <http://www.soundtransit.org/> which includes schedules for buses around Tacoma and throughout the South Sound, including the airport, Seattle, etc.

1. The cost is approximately \$2.00 one way; \$5.00 all-day pass (\$3.50 each way to go to Seattle). You must have the exact amount, as the drivers do not carry change.
2. Pay when you get on the bus.
3. Pull the chord above the window about 1 street block before you want to get off. (If you only have the address, or only know where you want to go but do not know what it looks like, tell the bus driver when you get on – or write it on a piece of paper and give it to the driver when you get on.) The bus drivers are very helpful.
4. Exit at the rear door. (Passengers get on the bus through the front door and off through the rear door.)
5. If you need directions, call (253) 581-5000. You will get a recording that asks what service you need. To reach Customer Relations, push #1. Then after the next question, push #2.
6. If you get lost, stay on the bus and ask the driver for help. Do not get off if you don't know where you are. If you're not sure if an area is safe, ask the driver.
7. Buses are numbered. See the next page for frequently used bus numbers from the Parkland Transit Center.

The following destinations are common for our Visiting Scholars to want to travel by bus to:

- South Hill Shopping Mall
- Tacoma Shopping Mall
- Lakewood Shopping Mall
- Downtown Tacoma
- Tacoma Dome & Freighthouse Square
- Airport - #574 from Lakewood SR 512 Transit Center or from Tacoma Dome Station
- Seattle - Take the bus from the Parkland Transit Center to the end of SR 512. Then catch the Seattle Express Bus.

*Schedules are available in the University Center by the Campus Concierge Desk or call 581-8000.*

### Driving

If you plan to rent or buy a car while you are at PLU, you will need to get a Washington State Driver's license and vehicle insurance. (International driver's licenses acquired in your home country are accepted for short stays, but insurance is more expensive.) To get a Washington State license you will need to take a written exam and a driving test in a car that you provide. That means that someone else will need to drive you to the license bureau, which is close to PLU.

### Airport Shuttle

Airport Van service is convenient and available through Shuttle Express [www.shuttleexpress.com](http://www.shuttleexpress.com) and several other agencies.

#### Pick-up at the Airport:

1. Go to Baggage level and claim your luggage from the carousel.
2. Then locate the nearest Traveler's Information Center.
3. Tell the operator that you want a van to take you to Pacific Lutheran University. Then proceed to the closest inside waiting area at either end of the terminal.
4. You will usually have to wait no longer than 30 minutes. The ride to the university should take 45 minutes depending on how many other people it needs to drop off. Ask them to take you to Campus Safety (253-535-7441) in Harstad Hall at the end of Garfield Street on Park Avenue. It will be helpful for you to carry this handbook with you since it has a map with directions to the university too.

#### Going to the Airport:

1. Call Shuttle Express at 1-800-487-7433 or make a reservation on-line.
2. They will pick you up at your door or in front of Harstad Hall.
3. Call them again the day before you are to be picked up.

## TRAVEL

Many of our Exchange Visitors are able to find a week or two in which to travel on their own. Please notify the Wang Center if you intend to do this and leave your itinerary including contact phone numbers and addresses.

If you plan to travel to another country and return to the US, you will need the back of your DS-2019 signed by the RO in the Wang Center. Many countries have Visa requirements. Contact the Wang Center if you need assistance.

## PREPARING TO RETURN HOME

Confirm your airline reservations at least three days before departure.

Read your airline ticket closely.

Read to see if there are restrictions on the number of pieces of luggage and the maximum weight allowed.

Pack according to these rules.

We recommend that you mail or ship some of your belongings back to your home country before you leave. Contact the local post office for rates and shipping guidelines. There are weight, size, and content restrictions. We especially recommend that you mail books early, because the least expensive way is also the slowest. The Wang Center cannot mail these packages for you.

*We hope that this handbook has been helpful.  
Any comments or suggestions you would like to make will be appreciated.*