

# **International Student Handbook (2009-2010)**



## **Welcome to Vancouver Island University**

Thank you for choosing Vancouver Island University for your studies. We are delighted to welcome you to Nanaimo—our beautiful Harbour City—and to the VIU campus. We hope you will enjoy your stay here, and we all look forward to getting to know you.

This handbook has been designed to assist you during your stay in Nanaimo. We trust you will find the information useful and helpful in becoming familiar with the services available to you on campus, and in the community.

We wish you success in your studies and hope that you will find your courses both challenging and rewarding. Also, we encourage you to participate in social activities while you are here, and hope that you will make new friends and experience many aspects of Canadian culture.

Graham Pike  
*Dean of International Education*

## **Section 1: Getting Started at VIU**

• Orientation .....	4
• Why Attend/Can't Attend/Need Extra Help .....	4
• VIU Student Card .....	4
• Discovery Computer Account .....	5
• Access Your Student Record for the First Time .....	5
• Change Your Address on Your Student Record .....	5
• How to Print/Set Your Own Language .....	6
• ISS-List Serve/Moodle .....	6-7
• Bus Pass: Building 193 .....	7
• International Student Identity Card .....	7
• Paying Fees/Refund Policy .....	8
• Student Conduct Policy .....	9
• Academic Misconduct/Disciplinary Measures .....	9
• Problem with a Class or Instructor .....	10
• How to Contact VIU Staff/Instructors .....	10
• Academic Students: Things to Know .....	10
• Waitlists/Registration in Courses .....	11
• No Show Policy/ Withdraw from Classes .....	11-12
• How to get a Transcript .....	12
• Math/Writing Centre .....	12
• Scholarships .....	12
• Academic Probation .....	12
• ESL Students: Things to Know .....	13

## **Section 2: Centre for International Education**

• Advising .....	15
• Homestay/Peerstay .....	15
• Peer Helper Program .....	15
• L.E.A.P. Program .....	15
• Social Events/Student Focus Group .....	16
• TOEFL .....	16

## **Section 3: Campus Facilities & Services**

• Bookstore: Building 305 .....	17
• Campus News, Activities and Volunteer Links .....	17
• Campus Safety/First Aid Service: Building 190 .....	18
• Campus Safewalk .....	19
• Computer Labs: Building 255 and 315 .....	19
• Counseling: Building 200 .....	19
• Dental Cleanings: Building 180 .....	19
• Eating and Dining Facilities .....	20
• Haircuts: Building 164 .....	20
• Gymnasium: Building 190 .....	21
• Human Rights Advisor: Building 200 .....	21

• IT Help Desk: Building 305 .....	21
• Library: Building 305 .....	21
• Lost and Found: Building 193 .....	22
• VIU Students' Union: Building 193 .....	22
• Music Building: Building 320 .....	22
• Nanaimo Art Gallery: Building 330 .....	22
• Okayama Gardens: Between Buildings 205 and 200 .....	22
• Parking and Security Office: Building 300 .....	22
• Registration Centre: Building 200 .....	23
• Tamagawa Gardens: Beside Building 350 .....	23
• Theatre: Building 310 .....	23
• Tutors .....	23

#### **Section 4: Canadian Laws and Regulations**

• Alcohol/Drugs/Driving .....	23-24
• Employment .....	24
• Housing .....	24
• Medical Issues/Smoking .....	24-25
• Shoplifting/Crime Stoppers/Violence .....	25-26
• Study Permits and Visitor Visas .....	26

#### **Section 5: Living in Canada**

• Information About Culture and Customs .....	27
• Canadian Customs/Social Invitations .....	27
• Accommodations for International Students .....	28
• Homestay with a Canadian Family .....	29
• Relationship/Schedules .....	29
• Homestay/Peerstay & Fees .....	30
• Roommates/Student Residences-Dorms .....	31
• Rental Living in Canada .....	31
• Living with Friends from Your Own Country .....	32
• Culture Shock/Symptoms .....	32
• Suggestions to Help You With Culture Shock .....	32

#### **Section 6: Nanaimo Services and Business**

• Banking .....	33
• Post Offices (Canada Post) .....	34
• Faxes/Telephones .....	34
• Newspapers .....	35
• Ethnic Food .....	35
• Health Services .....	36
• Cultural and Religious Groups .....	36
• Recreation & Sports .....	37
• Social Insurance and Tax Refunds .....	38
• Transportation Services .....	38-39
• International Education Staff .....	40

## **Section 1**

### **Getting Started at VIU**

#### **Orientation**

All students must attend orientation sessions. Bring your passport & study permit with you – the international office needs a copy for your file. When you arrive you will be given an orientation package including schedules and information. Please bring this package with you to your scheduled orientation sessions. For information on orientation visit [www.viu.ca/international/dates.asp](http://www.viu.ca/international/dates.asp)

#### **Why Attend?**

International students must follow policies and deadlines regarding course selection, registration, tuition deadlines, etc., that are different from domestic students. It is each student's responsibility to inform themselves of these policies. During orientation new students will also be assisted with a variety of valuable tasks including student cards, computer access, bus passes, library accounts, ISS list and will be taken on a campus and community tour.

#### **Can't Attend?**

Orientation is important to the success of your semester. If you cannot attend orientation due to your schedule, book an appointment in Building 255 at the Main Reception to see an Advisor.

#### **Need Extra Help?**

Peer Helpers are available to assist new students. If you would like to request a Peer Helper, email the International Student Activity Planner (see back page for contact details).

#### **VIU Student Card/Library Card**

- During Orientation you will be taken to photo ID in the Library (Building 305) to have your picture taken for your VIU student card. Be sure to take your passport and your student number with you, as you must show proof of ID.
- Keep this card close at hand as you will need it to prove your student status for a variety of reasons (bus pass purchase, gymnasium use, library loans, printing etc.).

#### **Your VIU Student Card is also your Library Card.**

If you lose your student card you must first pay a \$10.00 replacement fee at the cashier in Building 200. You then take your receipt to photo ID in Building 305 to have a new card printed.

### **Discovery Computer Account**

Once you have your student card you can log on to a campus computer and create your own computer account. Follow instructions listed on side of computer and **Login with:**

Username: **newaccount**

Password: **newaccount**

Domain: **Discovery**

IT Help visit [www.viu.ca/technology](http://www.viu.ca/technology) and/or call 740-6300.

### **Access Your Student Record for the first time**

Your address and contact information, along with the courses you take and your grades, make up your student record. To access your student record on-line and to change your contact information:

1. Go to the VIU website: [www.viu.ca](http://www.viu.ca)
2. Click on “VIU Students”
3. Click on “Access My Student Record” (see column on left side)
4. Type in your student number
5. Enter your PIN number as “YYMMDD” (the last two digits in the year of your birth/the month of your birth/ two digits for the day.

**Example:** Your date of birth is: June 23, 1986;  
you will enter: “860623” as your PIN number.

6. Click “Log into Student Record”
7. You will be asked to create a new PIN number.

This should be at least 5 characters new numbers.

**You must remember this new PIN.**

Use this PIN number to access your Student Record.

### **Change Your Address on your Student Record**

1. Go to Vancouver Island University website,
2. Access your Student Record (as explained above)
3. Click on the “Change Address” button
4. Type in your new address
5. Add your email address and telephone number
6. Click on “Submit New Address”
7. If you move, update your address on your student record.

**Please make sure you keep your address current on your student record. All communication will be sent to this address!**

### **How to Print**

You pay for printing with your Student Card. You can add cash value to your student card through self serve dispensers or at the Library Service Desk. You may need to choose the printer you wish to print to (since there are MANY on campus). To do this go to the File menu, select the Print command and wait for the Print dialogue box to appear. Click the drop down menu next to the “Printer Name” field and select the appropriate printer (if you look at the actual printer closest to your computer it will have its name taped to it – for example “305-300 hp”).

### **How To Set Your Language On VIU’s Computers:**

- Click on the “Start”.
- Click on “Setting”.
- Click on “Control Panel”.
- Click on “Regional and Language Options”.
- Click on “Languages”.
- Click on “Details”
- Click on “Add”
- Click down arrow under “Input Language” and choose your own language.
- Click “OK”.
- Click on “Apply” then click on “OK” to save it.

#### **You have now set the computer with your own language!**

- Click on the “EN” signal near the current time at the bottom right hand corner of the screen and switch between languages.

### **MBA Moodle**

Are you in the MBA/MSciB Program?

Have you Moodled yet?

Go to <http://mba.viuonline.ca>

Create a user account for yourself and get your noodle into Moodle!

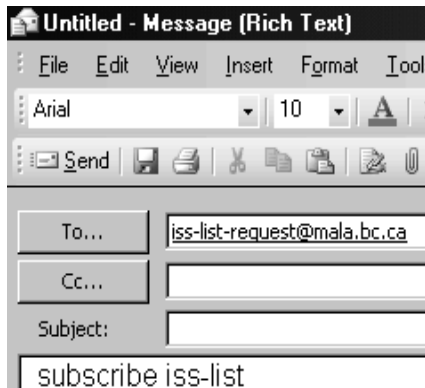
For assistance on Moodle contact online development.

### **List Serve**

The International Student List Serve (ISS List Serve) is the most efficient way to receive information from our office. Information about activities, courses, policy changes, news, scholarships, clubs, and meetings are sent to this list. **All international students must join this important information system.**

**To register on the iss-list, you must first open new mail in your email account:**

To Subscribe:



To Unsubscribe:



If you have any difficulty subscribing or unsubscribing, visit the Centre for International Education (Building 255).

### **Bus Pass: Building 193**

Bus passes are available for purchase at the Student Union Building 193. Students can purchase a monthly or semester pass and must show their VIU ID.

### **The International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

The ISIC Card is internationally recognized proof that you are a student. With this card you get discounts on: travel, cultural sites, entertainment, attractions, bars, accommodation, restaurants and shopping! This card also gives you access to a free 24-hour, multilingual [ISIC Emergency Help Line](#). Visit [www.istc.org](http://www.istc.org) or look in the back of your VIU Students' Union Day Planner. Apply for ISIC at the Student Union (Bldg 193). Bring your VIU Student Card, Passport and a passport size photo with you.

### **Paying Fees**

- Make sure you pay your fees by these dates:  
Intersession Summer: April 1  
Fall semester: August 1  
Spring semester: December 1
- You will be withdrawn from classes if fees are not paid before these dates.
- A \$200 late fee will be added to your fees after these dates.

## **How to Pay Fees**

### **From Canada:**

- You can pay by cheque, money order, bank draft, wire transfer, credit card, debit card, internet/telephone bank transfer (VIU is a registered payee with all Canadian banks), or on-line credit card payment (through your student record).
- **Do not** ‘direct deposit’ funds into VIU’s account. Use a wire transfer instead.
- When paying by wire transfer be sure to include **your name and birth date** under the ‘Details of Payment’ section on paperwork.
- When paying by credit card, phone your credit card company two days ahead of time and inform them you are paying tuition fees. Otherwise, the credit card company may block payment.
- Your debit and credit cards will often have a daily limit below the total tuition fee amount. You must begin payment several days before the tuition deadline or choose another payment option.
- Tuition fees may be paid at the Cashier in Building 200 or at the Center for International Education in Building 255.

### **From Overseas:**

- You can pay by cheque, money order, bank draft, credit card, wire transfer, or on-line credit card payment (through your student record).
- When paying by wire transfer be sure to include your name and birthdate under the ‘Details of Payment’ section.
- If you have any questions or concerns you can contact the International Education Finance Department (see back page).

## **Refund Policy**

Vancouver Island University’s tuition refund policy for current international students is as follows:

- 50% refund, if you withdraw before the beginning of classes;
- 25% refund, if you withdraw during the first or second week;
- No refund after the second week of classes;
- Please note that the refund policy for Intersession Semester is different. Refer to the Intersession Flyer.

**Please refer to your acceptance letter for details.**

## **Important**

- The Student Activity fee is not refunded.
- Refunds may be subject to a \$100 (CDN) administrative fee.

## **Student Conduct Policy**

- Students registering at Vancouver Island University are expected to behave responsibly, and to respect the rights of all students to receive instruction.
- If a student does not meet these expectations, the University reserves the right to take whatever action is appropriate, including legal action or suspension, as specified in the University Act.

### **Important**

- The Homestay/Peerstay program is a Vancouver Island University program, and the same rules of conduct apply.
- A complete copy of the student conduct policy and procedures is available from the Registrar in Building 200 or online at: [www.viu.bc.ca/www//crsinfo/calendar/studcond.htm](http://www.viu.bc.ca/www//crsinfo/calendar/studcond.htm).

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) the following acts:

- cheating during any type of examination, test or assignment, including electronic collaboration;
- asking or arranging for another person to take any examination or test in one's place;
- plagiarizing—using the work or words of someone else without giving them credit;
- the intentional use of invented information, research or other findings, to deceive.

## **Disciplinary Measures**

- Students who cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise commit academic misconduct may be assigned a grade of “F” for the work involved, or for the course. Students who commit academic misconduct may be suspended from the program.
- Students can appeal any disciplinary action through the general appeals procedure. A copy of the appeals policy is available at: [www.viu.ca/policies/policy.asp?rdPolicyNumber=99.02](http://www.viu.ca/policies/policy.asp?rdPolicyNumber=99.02).

**If you have any questions about the Student Conduct Policy or the Academic Misconduct Policy, please come to the Centre for International Education and speak to an advisor.**

## **Problem with a Class or Instructor**

- Talk to the instructor first, it might be a misunderstanding. If after speaking to the instructor there is no improvement, come to the International Education office to speak to an advisor in Building 255.

## **How to Contact VIU Staff/Instructors**

- Go to [www.viu.ca](http://www.viu.ca)
- Click on “*VIU Students*”
- Under the Student Information Section, click on “*Faculty and Staff Directory*”
- *Type in the name of the staff/faculty member*

## **Academic Students: Things to Know**

### **• New Student Registration**

All NEW students must be accepted to their program through International Admissions before registering in courses. All NEW ACADEMIC students must see an advisor before registering (Centre for International Education, Building 255). Space has been reserved for new students registering for the first time. Students who have already taken academic courses at VIU can register online or in-person at the Registration Centre in Building 200.

### **• Continuing Student Registration (On-line)**

You will be assigned a registration date and time for the fall semester. Once the date and time have been posted to your student record, you will be able to plan and save your timetable until it is time to submit. Submit your timetable promptly at the date and time given to get the best selection of courses. Register for both fall and spring semesters.

To register in classes:

- Go to [www.viu.ca](http://www.viu.ca).
- Click on *VIU Students*.
- Click on *Student Records/Web Registration*.
- Click on *Access My Student Record*
- Put in your student number and P.I.N.
- Click on *Course Enrolment History*
- Click on *Add/Drop/Claim Courses*.
- You can still register online if your GPA (grade point average) is low and if you are on academic probation,
- Your student record is blocked and you must see an advisor if you have outstanding fees or fines to be paid.

## **Waitlists/Registration in courses:**

- **Prior to the first day of class** the system will automatically enroll you in a waitlisted course if space becomes available. You will be responsible for payment of any additional fees immediately.
- **After the first day of class** you will have to claim a seat if it becomes available. You must do this before the end of the day in which your status first changes from “waiting” to “hold” or you will be removed from the waitlist. You will be responsible for payment of any additional fees immediately.
- Be sure you **remove yourself from a waitlist** if you are no longer interested in a course as you will be responsible for payment of fees for **all** courses that you are registered in.
- You will be able to make changes to your course registration without affecting your fee assessment providing you drop courses at the same time as you are adding new ones. The web-reg system will not permit you to register and waitlist for a total of more than 21 credits. The web-reg system will not process changes that would result in your record exceeding these totals even for a few minutes.

## **No Show Policy**

VIU students registered in an academic course will be withdrawn from the course if they do not attend the first class of each course. Students must inform the instructor or area secretary if they cannot attend the first class.

### **What is audit?**

Audit students attend classes and complete reading assignments, but do not have to participate in examinations. No grade will be given; “AUD” will appear on their transcript – therefore, an audited course will not be used to calculate GPA.

### **What is credit?**

The University measures the workload of students by assigning semester hours of credit. In general, one credit is defined as the equivalent of one hour a week for classroom instruction. Most courses carry 3 semester hours of credit; the credit value a full-time program, which extends over one semester, is normally 15 credits or more. If a course requires a lab in addition to your classroom hours, the number of credits will increase. (Most science courses will require a lab, and this will increase the credits to 4 from 3).

## **Withdrawal From Classes**

Students wishing to withdraw must do so officially by applying at Registration Services *within 8 weeks after commencement of the current term*. If no official withdrawal form is submitted, or you simply stop going to class, a grade of “F” will be assigned at the end of the semester.

## **How to get a Transcript**

Official transcript is a complete record of academic performance. Official transcripts have the signature of the Registrar and the University seal. You must go to Registration Services in Building 200 to request a transcript. Official transcripts will not be issued until all fees have been paid. Unofficial transcripts can be printed from your student record on the VIU website.

## **Math Learning Centre: Building 360, Room 303**

For students who need extra help with math.

- Hours of operation vary – please check schedule posted on the classroom door for office hours or phone 740-6361

## **Writing Centre: Building 305, Room 474**

Help for students to improve their writing assignments.

- Visit [www.viu.ca/writingcentre/index.asp](http://www.viu.ca/writingcentre/index.asp).  
Sign-up sheet and centre hours are posted outside the room.

## **Scholarships**

There are many scholarships available for international students taking academic and ESL courses.

- For more information check the VIU Calendar, be on ISS Listserve and visit [www.viu.ca/international/awards.asp](http://www.viu.ca/international/awards.asp)

## **Academic Probation**

- Students registered in any number of credits who earn less than a 3.00 GPA (“C”) average over the fall and spring semesters (combined) will be placed on probation for the next term.
- To have probationary status removed, students must obtain a GPA of 3.00 or better at the end of the probationary period.
- Students can have probation removed within 1 semester.
- Students on probation will not be allowed to register.

### **\*\* Important Information \*\***

You may only register in a total of 21 credits per semester (7 courses of 3 credits each), including waitlisted courses. Courses which span two semesters will have half the credit value assigned to each semester (i.e., a 6-credit course running from September until April will count as 3 credits for each semester). It is your duty and responsibility to respect the registration limits. Anyone found in violation of the 21 credit registration maximum risks being de-registered from ALL courses without prior notice.

**If you have registered for more than 7 courses per semester, please withdraw from the additional courses immediately.**

## **ESL Students: Things to Know**

### **Attendance**

- Attendance and class participation are important to ESL classes.
- If you are 1/2 hour late for class you will be marked absent.
- If you are sick, you must call the ESL secretary at 740-6318, who will inform your instructors that you will be absent.
- You are responsible for asking your instructors for any homework or assignments you have missed.

### **Important**

**Students who miss more than 20% of their classes will receive a failing mark and have to repeat the same ESL level again (there are some exceptions based on circumstances).**

### **Academic Courses and ESL**

Students entering AP3, AP4, and AP5 are eligible to enroll in an academic course. Please see an International Student Advisor.

### **ESL Grading System**

Students must achieve a minimum of “C” to pass to the next level.

A	85-100
B+	80-84
B	75-79
B-	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64 pass
F	59 and below

### **ESL Learning Centre: Building 305 Room 474**

The ESL Learning Centre is a place where you can get help from an ESL instructor with:

- Grammar, spelling, writing and speaking projects.
- Group assignments.
- Homework, presentations, essays and pronunciation.

The schedule of the Learning Centre varies each semester. Check with your instructor for a schedule at the beginning of classes.

### **Language Lab: Building 255 Room 282**

The Language Lab is open for practice and homework at certain times of the week. Ask your instructor for the schedule.

### **Repeating an ESL level and probation**

- Students who fail their course on the first attempt will be placed on probation for the next semester.
- To have probation removed, students must achieve a passing mark the next semester they register.
- While on probation, if a student fails the same level again they will not be able to re-register for ESL for one year (there are some exceptions based on circumstances).
- In most cases, students who withdraw from the same level of ESL twice will not be allowed to re-register for ESL.

## **Section 2**

### **Centre for International Education**

#### **International Education Department: Building 255**

International students are encouraged to visit the Centre for International Education, Building 255 to find out more about the following services. The International Education Department is located on the top floor and handles the needs inquiries and concerns of all international students on campus.

For a listing of the International Education staff, please see the last page of this handbook. Visit [www.viu.ca](http://www.viu.ca) and click on International Education for a full list of helpful information for International students.

## **Advising**

- An International Student Advisor is available to help international students with program and academic planning. Advisors do presentations for all of ESL to inform and prepare students for future academic studies. If you are a returning academic student you can also access advising services in Building 200.
- Advisors are available to see students who experience personal difficulties that interfere with their studies. An advisor will direct you to services that can assist you both on campus and in the local community.

## **Homestay/Peerstay**

This service provides international students with a supportive and welcoming environment in a Canadian family's home. It is an opportunity to learn and practice your English.

- In Homestay, students live with Canadian families where the food is provided for them.
- In Peerstay, students live with Canadian families but buy and cook their own food.

**(New students are encouraged to spend their first semester in Homestay or Peerstay)**

## **Peer Helper Program**

Peer Helpers are international students who are here to help you adjust to living and studying in Canada. Peer Helpers have been studying at VIU for more than one semester.

- To speak to a Peer Helper, please contact the International Student Activity Planner (see last page).
- If you are interested in becoming a Peer Helper, watch the ISS list serve for messages approximately one month before each semester.

## **LEAP Program**

The Language Enhancement Assistance Program (LEAP) matches an international student with a Canadian student for language and cultural exchange purposes.

- LEAP participants meet at least once a week, usually on campus, to talk and learn about their partner's culture.
- It is a great way to make a new friend, improve your English skills, and increase your understanding of Canadian culture.
- For more information, pick up a brochure and application at the Centre for International Education (Building 255).

## **Social Events**

VIU's International Education Department organizes many social events throughout the year including:

- Student BBQ's
- Multicultural week
- Special events (Halloween, Christmas, Easter)
- Free Friday movies
- Skating sessions, Hockey Games
- Garage sales
- Cooking classes, crafts and social events (Coffee House)
- Kayaking, White Water Rafting
- Horseback riding, Golfing and Swimming
- Sports, Skiing, Snowboarding, Hiking
- Various day trips

**For information on International Student activities visit the International Student Activity Calendar at:**

<http://www.viu.ca/international/studentactivity.asp>

## **Plan your own activity**

If you have an idea for an Activity, get a list of 8 or more people who want to participate. Then you can present your idea, the date, time, location, transportation required and estimated cost per student to the International Student Activity Planner (see back page for contact)

Planning your own activity is a great opportunity to connect with other students and have a chance to get out and do something active!

## **Student Focus Groups**

At different times during the school year, students may be invited to participate in student focus groups to discuss international student concerns and to suggest ways to improve the services at VIU for international students.

## **TOEFL**

- For information about writing the TOEFL exam, please visit: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)
- The institution code for Vancouver Island University is 9581. You must use this number to have your TOEFL results sent to VIU.

## **Section 3**

### **Nanaimo Campus, Facilities & Services**

#### **Bookstore: Building 305**

You can purchase textbooks and program supplies along with gifts, clothing, magazines, souvenirs, snacks, locker rentals and stamps.

(Please check with Bookstore for hours of operation)

#### **Campus News, Activities and Volunteer Links: Building 255**

There are many ways to stay active and/or volunteer on campus and in the community. A variety of upcoming activities can be viewed by following the information below:

- ◆ Go to Vancouver Island University website
  - ◆ Click *International Education*
  - ◆ Click *Living, Work and Fun*
  - ◆ Click the “*International Student Activity Calendar*” Link
  - ◆ Click each link of activities to get details
- Come to the International Education Building 255 Main Reception area and check out the student activity information board and brochure display wall.
  - Visit the main reception in Building 255 and ask for information on upcoming events and/or go to the International Education website at: <http://www.viu.ca/international/studentactivity.asp>
  - To view activities happening on campus, visit the VIU website and click on VIU students. Go to “What’s Happening” and click on “Events@Viu”.
  - VIU has its very own student newspaper “**The Navigator**”. Free copies are available every two weeks during Fall & Spring.

Check the International Newsletter, ‘The Right Choice’ - available at reception in Building 255 or the VIU website at:  
[www.viu.ca/international/student-services.asp](http://www.viu.ca/international/student-services.asp)

## **Be sure you are on the ISS List Serve**

Many upcoming events on and off campus, volunteer opportunities and helpful information for **International Students** is posted to this list. If you are not on this list come to the International Education Building 255 Main Reception for information on how to sign up.

(This list is recommended for International Students Only)

## **Links for upcoming Events and/or Volunteer Opportunities**

### **City of Nanaimo**

[www.cityofnanaimo.com](http://www.cityofnanaimo.com)

### **Downtown Nanaimo Partnership**

[www.nanaimodowntown.com](http://www.nanaimodowntown.com)

### **Downtown Nanaimo Street Map**

[www.cityofnanaimo.com/downtown/index.html](http://www.cityofnanaimo.com/downtown/index.html)

### **International Student Activity Calendar**

[www.viu.ca/international/studentactivity.asp](http://www.viu.ca/international/studentactivity.asp)

### **Vancouver Island University Gymnasium**

[www.viu.ca/campusrec/campusrec/index.asp](http://www.viu.ca/campusrec/campusrec/index.asp)

### **Nanaimo Parks Recreation and Culture Leisure Guide**

[www.city.nanaimo.ca/residents/](http://www.city.nanaimo.ca/residents/)

### **The Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce**

[www.nanaimochamber.bc.ca/](http://www.nanaimochamber.bc.ca/)

### **Tourism Nanaimo**

[www.tourismnanaimo.com/](http://www.tourismnanaimo.com/)

### **Volunteer Nanaimo**

[www.volunteernanaimo.ca](http://www.volunteernanaimo.ca)

## **Campus Safety/First Aid Service: Building 190**

- Need help? There is a first aid room in the Gymnasium (Building 190) or ask someone to call a first aid attendant at local 6600.
- If you are on campus and do not feel safe, go to a yellow emergency telephone located outside many buildings on campus. This phone is yellow and has *Emergency* on the front. Push the black button and tell the operator where you are (refer to locations # on individual unit). First Aid will come to help you.
- Yellow emergency phones locations are on all campus maps.

### **Campus Safewalk**

- Campus security will walk you from buildings to your car or the bus if you feel at all unsafe.
- To reach Safewalk, dial 6600 from any campus phone or phone 740-6600.

### **Computer Labs: Building 255, 356 and Library**

- Computer facilities are for the use of registered students only. There are two labs which are designated Student Access Labs. No classes are booked into these labs. The dedicated student access labs are in the first floor hallway area of Bldg 255 and the second floor atrium area of Bldg 356. These labs are open even on weekends during fall and spring semesters.
- There are many other labs that can be accessed when no class is taking place in them. Check the lab schedule posted outside the lab before you go in! This schedule is updated every week as the schedule is subject to change.
- You can check the computer lab schedule from home at [www.viu.ca/technology/general/labs.asp](http://www.viu.ca/technology/general/labs.asp)

### **Counseling: Building 200**

- If you have a personal problem and want to talk to someone outside International Education, you can see one of the counselors in Building 200. Counseling is **free** is kept **confidential**.
- Make an appointment at Student Services office in Building 200 and/or visit the website at [www.viu.ca/counseling](http://www.viu.ca/counseling)

### **Dental Cleanings: Building 180**

- Students can receive inexpensive dental cleanings from the Dental Assistant Department in April and May. To be eligible, students must be pre-screened. For more information contact the department at 740-6240.

## **Eating and Dining Facilities**

### **Discovery Room: Building 300**

The Discovery Room is a formal dining room that serves reasonably priced gourmet meals. It features daily luncheons Mondays through Fridays, and dinners, Tuesday through Friday. The Discovery Room is open year-round. Reservations are required, call (250) 740-6338.

### **Lower Cafeteria: Building 185**

This cafeteria serves meals, sandwiches, soups, snacks, beverages, and baked goods. Check with cafeteria for times of operation.

### **Upper Cafeteria: Building 300**

The largest eating facility on campus, this cafeteria serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. It has a large selection of meal, snack, dessert and beverage choices. For hours of operation visit the website at:

<http://www.viu.ca/Cafeteria/>.

### **Student Pub: Building 193**

The student pub is licensed to sell alcoholic drinks and it offers students and staff a relaxing atmosphere to meet friends, enjoy pub-style food, and socialize with others. Watch campus newspapers and notice boards for special events at the pub.

**(You must be 19 years of age or older to go into the pub)**

### **Jumpin' Java Coffeeshop: Building 305**

This great coffeeshop has a new home on the first floor of the Library. It sells regular and specialty coffees as well as snacks.

### **Subway Sandwich Shop: Building 165**

The Subway Sandwich Shop is open 12 months a year for breakfast lunch, and dinner, Monday through Friday. Grab a quick sandwich to go, or relax and enjoy your meal there. Watch for discount coupons in *The Navigator*.

### **Haircuts: Building 164**

Students can get haircuts for a reasonable price at the VIU Hairdressing Salon (740-6115) and Barbering Program (740-6250). Full salon services are available. Phone to make an appointment.

## **Gymnasium: Building 190**

Open year round. (\*You must sign a waiver to participate)

- You need a valid library/student card to use the facilities.
- Squash, racquetball, fitness/weight room, basketball, volleyball, badminton, indoor tennis/soccer are available.
- Outdoor programs include canoeing, kayaking, downhill/cross country skiing, rock climbing, caving, hiking & mountaineering.
- Intramural programs offer a number of sports leagues, one-day tournaments and other special events.
- Pick up a brochure at the gym or check the web site at:  
<http://www.viu.ca/campusrec/index.asp>

## **Human Rights Advisor: Building 200**

VIU strives to provide students with a learning environment free of discrimination. Students who think they may be experiencing discrimination or harassment should do the following:

- Make an appointment with an International Student Advisor by phoning 740-6315 or go to the main reception in Building 255.
- Make an appointment with a Human Rights Advisor by phoning 740-6430 or go to Building 200 Room 225.

## **IT Help Desk: Building 305**

Students needing assistance with their computer accounts and/or wishing to borrow equipment can visit the IT Help Desk or access the website at: <http://www.viu.ca/technology>.

## **Library: Building 305**

- 25-station computer room with Internet and access to word processing, spreadsheet and database applications
- Books, videos, CD's, magazines, articles and journals
- Quiet areas for individual and group study
- Photocopiers, laser printers and colour printers
- Multimedia production tools like scanners, image editing and web authoring software, and CD burners
- Photo ID (Students Cards)

**(Late fines are charged for books and materials not returned on time. Students who owe library fines or parking fines will not be able to register for courses until they pay their fines)**

### **Lost and Found: Building 193**

Lost articles can be claimed at the Students' Union Building 193. Check the Lost and Found for at least two weeks after losing an item.

### **VIU Students' Union: Building 193**

The VIU Students' Union Society provides the following services to all students, either free of charge or at a discounted rate:

- International Student Identity Card
- Lost and Found items are claimed here
- Fax service, discount photocopying, discount bus passes
- Information about student rights
- *The Navigator* student newspaper office
- *The Velvet Underground*, VIU's student pub
- Student club information
- *Used Textbooks (no-tax) - buy and sell*

### **Music Building: Building 320**

- Watch the list serve and bulletin boards advertising free concerts.
- Consider joining the VIU Choir. It is a great place to meet new Canadian friends who share your interest in music.
- Students who wish to take private music lessons should contact the Nanaimo Conservatory of Music at 754-4611

### **Nanaimo Art Gallery: Building 330**

The Nanaimo Art Gallery and Exhibition Centre features a gift shop and two galleries that display local, national and international exhibitions. Admission is by donation.

### **Okayama Gardens: Between Buildings 205 and 200**

This garden is a gift from our sister institution, Okayama Women's University in Kurashiki City, Southern Japan.

### **Parking and Security Office: Building 300**

- Pay parking is in effect 24 hours a day (including evenings and weekends) all year long.
- Discount parking passes are available at the parking office.
- Single day passes may be purchased from machines in each parking lot using cash or credit cards.
- Make sure you understand where you are allowed to park.
- Campus maps show general parking areas.
- Cars parked illegally can be towed away or given a fine.
- **Do not** park in Handicapped, Faculty & Staff, or Reserved parking spots.

### **Registration Centre: Building 200**

The Registration Centre keeps your permanent academic record.

**IMPORTANT:** Your grades and other important information will be mailed to you. If we do not have your correct address, you will not receive this information. If you change your address, please make sure you update it on your student record. For information on how to change your address on “Your Student Record” please see the “Getting Started at VIU” section of this book.

### **Tamagawa Gardens: Beside Building 350**

This garden is a gift from our sister institution, Tamagawa University in Tokyo, Japan. Great place to relax or enjoy an outdoor lunch.

### **Theatre: Building 310**

Show your student card and receive a discount at theatre events.

### **Tutors**

For additional tutoring (ESL or Academic) ask your instructor and/or check the bulletin board in Building 200 by Student Services.

## **Section 4 Canadian Laws and Regulations**

### **Alcohol**

- The legal drinking age in British Columbia is 19.

It is against the law to:

- have opened alcoholic drinks in your car or in public places.
- give alcoholic drinks to someone under 19.
- Drive after drinking alcohol.

### **Drugs**

- Possession and dealing of drugs is **illegal**.
- Severe penalties are imposed if you are convicted of the offence.
- For International students a drug conviction will result in deportation and possible imprisonment.

### **Personal Note**

Sometimes people drink too and become violent. Always be careful if a person looks drunk or is acting strange. If you are worried about your use of alcohol and/or drugs, see an advisor at International Education in Building 255.

## Driving

- To drive in Canada, you must have a valid driver's license—an International driving permit, or a BC driver's license.
- Driving without car insurance is **illegal**.
- Everyone in the vehicle must wear seat belts at all times.
- Drinking and driving is **illegal** and a **serious** crime in Canada.
- For driving lessons study the 'Safe Driving Guide'. Go to 'Driving Schools' in the yellow pages of the telephone book.
- For Driver information or to book a driving test visit one of the Motor Vehicle offices – See yellow pages in phone book.

## Employment

- For more information about on/off campus employment opportunities, visit the Campus Career Centre in Building 310 and watch for opportunities sent to the ISS List Serve or go to [www.viu.ca/career/](http://www.viu.ca/career/)
- Students wanting to work off campus must have a valid off-campus work permit. For eligibility requirements and application details refer to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: [www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp) Students working off campus will also require a Social Insurance Number (SIN.) available through Service Canada at [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca)
- Students taking a co-op program receive a work visa to complete course requirements.

## Housing

There are laws for renting houses or apartments in Canada.

- **Important rule to remember:** you **must** give one month's written notice before you move out, usually on 1st day of month. If you do not give notice, you **must** pay an extra month's rent.
- For information on the "Residential Tenancy Act", call their office toll-free at 1-800 665-8779 or visit their website: [www.rto.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/)

## Medical Issues

You **must** have either BC Medical Insurance or private insurance while studying in Canada. If you plan to stay at VIU for longer than one semester, apply for *both* BC Medical (MSP) insurance and private emergency medical insurance (StudentGuard) as soon as you arrive. The private insurance will cover you during the 3-month waiting period for BC Medical.

### **Why must I have medical insurance?**

- You are **required by law** to have medical insurance.
- Without insurance, it is very expensive to see a doctor, or to get immediate medical assistance.
- Students **cannot** go on any field trips, or participate in activities without medical insurance.
- Students **cannot** get any letters (study permit, banking, work permit etc.) from International Education without medical insurance.
- See the “Health Services” section in this handbook for a list of local medical clinics. Come to the main reception of Building 255 for more detailed information and upcoming medical purchase dates on campus.

### **Smoking**

VIU is a “smoke-free” environment, therefore, smoking is **not** allowed in public buildings on campus buildings. Always ask permission to smoke in someone’s home, car, or if you are having dinner with them.

### **Shoplifting (stealing from a store)**

**Don’t do it!** Shoplifting is **against the law**. If caught shoplifting and convicted you will be charged with a crime, deported and not allowed to return to Canada.

### **Crime Stoppers**

Crime Stoppers is an independent non-profit society and registered charity managed by a civilian Board of Directors working in partnership with the police, the media and local citizens. As an organization, Crime Stoppers is a vehicle that allow citizens to ANONYMOUSLY supply the police with information about a crime or potential crime of which they have knowledge.

If you are aware of criminal activity, you can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS(8477) from anywhere in British Columbia and report what you know. Or you can leave a secure tip online.

When you leave a Crime Stoppers tip, you are never identified. You never have to give your name or phone number. They don’t use call display and you never have to testify in court. You could receive a cash **reward of up to \$2000** upon an arrest and charge.

Crime Stoppers is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information about Crime Stoppers visit

<http://www.bccrimestoppers.com>

## **Violence**

- You have the right to be safe from violence.
- Sexual assault is when someone is forced to have sex against their will. It is a crime, even if people are married or of the same sex.
- Serious threats (saying to hurt or kill) are crimes too.
- If you see violent behaviour, please tell the advisor in the International Education office, your teacher, or call the police.
- Call the police immediately if you have been hurt, threatened, or feel afraid for your safety.

## **Student Authorization (Study Permit) And Visitor Visa**

### **Study Permit**

Your Study Permit is the document that authorizes you to be a student in Canada. Each study permit has different “conditions”.

- You must apply to extend your Study Permit eight (8) weeks before your current permit expires. Come to International Education main reception in Building 255 for information on how to renew your study permit and request a “student confirmation” letter. You must show proof of current medical insurance.
- If you do not get your new Study Permit within 8 weeks, phone the Call Centre toll free at 1-888-242-2100.
- It is your responsibility to ensure you are in possession of a valid Study Permit before attending any classes at VIU. You may be reported to Citizenship and Immigration Canada if you are in violation of the conditions of your Study Permit.
- Please notify the International Education department of any changes you may be planning with regard to your student status, such as transferring to another institution, taking a semester off from your studies, or returning home.

### **Temporary Resident Visa (Visitor Visa)**

- For information on applying for a new TRV (Visitor Visa), go to the International Education office for an information sheet.
- You can check the current processing times for applications sent to Seattle, WA at [http://geo.international.gc.ca/can-am/seattle/rightnav/visiting\\_info-en.asp](http://geo.international.gc.ca/can-am/seattle/rightnav/visiting_info-en.asp).

### **U.S. Visitor Visa**

- VIU does not assist with applications for U.S. visas.
- Ask at the main reception in Building 255 for contact information for the U.S. Consulate office in Vancouver.

## **Section 5**

### **Living in Canada**

#### **Information about Canadian Culture**

- BC's population is comprised of many different cultural groups. The best way to learn about Canadians and their customs is to ask lots of questions.
- French and English are the official languages of Canada.
- You may find that Canadians prefer to stand further away when speaking with someone, and they like to look you in the eye; this may make you feel uncomfortable.
- Usually Canadians do not hug people they do not know well.
- Canadians use the right side when they walk on sidewalks and stairs, or enter buildings.

#### **A few customs you should know about:**

- Shake hands when you meet someone for the first time. This is correct for both men and women. (Stand up for introductions).
- People sometimes hold hands in public.
- In Canada, men and women are treated equally.
- Canadians tend to be very direct when talking.
- During conversation, Canadians like to maintain eye contact about 90% of the time.
- Canadians appreciate politeness and honesty.
- In Canada, requests are preceded by the word “**please.**”
- Canadians say “**thank you**” when someone gives them something or does something for them.
- It is good to admit mistakes, talk about concerns you have, and to express your feelings openly.
- When you are not sure of something, you can say, “**I don't know.**” This is an excellent response and will be accepted well.
- Canadians tend to talk fairly openly about personal issues and, at times, make jokes that you may find are not funny or offensive.

#### **Social Invitations**

When Canadians invite you to their home for dinner or other social occasions, here are some hints to help you feel comfortable:

- Arrive on time for business appointments and social events. Canadians consider arriving on time a sign of respect.
- Usually it is polite to telephone people between 9am and 9pm. After 9pm it is considered ‘quiet time’ and many Canadians do

not make phone calls after this time. Talk to your homestay family about their custom and make sure to ask your friends about their Host families' customs.

- Only accept an invitation if you plan to go. It is better to say “no” than “yes” and not go. If you say “yes” and then can't go, phone the host and tell them your change of plans.
- It is very polite to ask if there is anything you can bring. Sometimes you will be invited to a “pot luck” dinner. This means you should bring some food or something to drink, to share with the other guests.
- Ask what time you should arrive, and make sure you arrive on time. It is nice but not necessary to bring a small gift for the host, such as a bottle of wine or flowers.
- Wear casual clothes unless otherwise informed.
- Treat children with kindness and respect.
- Dinner is in the evening and is the largest meal. It is usually eaten between 5pm and 7pm.
- You should try and taste everything offered, but if there is something you don't like, it's ok to say “**no thank you.**”
- Wait until everyone begins to eat, or until you are asked to begin.
- In Canada when you refuse the offer of more food, people think you are full, and may not offer you more food. If you are offered more food, say, “**yes please**” if you want more.
- In some families, conversation during dinner is important because it is a time when everyone meets as a group.
- It is polite to say you enjoyed the meal and thank the cook.
- It is polite to help clean up after dinner, or offer to help clean up.
- After dinner stay for a while and talk with the hosts, but leave before 10pm, unless it is a party and everyone is staying late.
- Do not smoke, unless your hosts say it is alright to smoke.

### **Accommodations for International students Important**

- Students living in Homestay, Peerstay, or with Canadian roommates are more likely to improve their English language skills than students living with students from their own country.
- No matter where you live, it's important for you to insure your personal belongings. You can buy “tenant insurance” through an insurance agency .

See “Insurance” in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book.

## **Homestay with a Canadian Family**

VIU encourages students to live in Homestay because it offers the best opportunity for students to rapidly improve their English language skills, adjust to Canadian life, finish the ESL programs and make close friendships with Canadians. The Homestay fee is paid to homestay families to pay for your food and room; Vancouver Island University receives no money from the Homestay/Peerstay program once you are placed with a family.

## **Relationship**

A good relationship with your host family requires communication. This communication needs honesty, patience, and a strong effort because language differences can cause misunderstandings. Canadians are very direct; this can make some people uncomfortable when they first meet. Remember this is a cultural difference and is not meant to offend or hurt your feelings. Try to respond with directness and honesty. (Honesty means saying exactly what you think and feel.)

## **Household Schedules**

Most families have a schedule they follow. You should ask what it is and be prepared to follow the family schedule. There is probably a certain time when dinner is ready, and a time when the family expects the house to become quiet for the night. Usually Canadians don't call each other after 9 pm or before 9am, but each family is different so you should ask what their customs are.

### **Important Notes: Tell your host family if:**

- you are not going to be home for a meal or want to bring a guest
- you will be arriving at home later than usual
- you decide to spend the night away from home

You may offend your host family if you ignore these customs, and they will become upset and feel concerned about your safety.

## **Peerstay with a Canadian family**

In Peerstay, a student lives in a Canadian home but has more independence than in Homestay. In Peerstay you are responsible for cooking your own meals, buying your own food and generally doing most things for yourself.

In Peerstay you still have contact with a Canadian family and, generally, have many opportunities to speak with them and learn about Canadian customs and culture.

## **Homestay/Peerstay Fees**

Check with the Homestay department in Building 255 for information on Homestay and Peerstay charges.

- Students are required to give their host family **30 days notice** before leaving Homestay or Peerstay. The refundable deposit is returned to students who give 30 days notice, within three weeks of their leaving Homestay or Peerstay. If 30 days notice is not given, outstanding fees may be paid out of your refundable deposit, with the remaining money returned to you.

**For example:** if you want to move on May 1st, tell your host family on April 1st. If you want to move August 7th, tell your host family on July 7th, etc. If you do not give notice, you will have to pay the regular Homestay/Peerstay fee for one whole month from the day you tell your host you will move, even if you leave earlier.

- You can give notice at any time during the month, but please make sure you talk to your host family, and they understand you are going to move and when you will move. If you are moving out of Homestay or Peerstay, **please pick up a Moving Notification Form from the International Education office.** This form must be completed and signed by both you and your host family, then returned to the International Education office within five working days.
- If you plan to be away from your Homestay/Peerstay for five nights or longer, the policy is for the host to charge you for each night you are away from the home. Students who are away for periods less than five nights must pay full fees for each night. You must tell your host before you go away, when you will leave and when you will return. Check with Homestay for fees/rates.
- Your Homestay/Peerstay application includes a contract that you must sign, agreeing to the conditions of the Homestay program. VIU has prepared this contract to ensure that students know what their responsibilities are. Your host family must also sign a contract agreeing to the VIU Homestay rules.

For complete details on Homestay and Peerstay, please see your [Homestay/Peerstay With A Canadian Family](#) handbook for students or visit [www.viu.ca/international/housing.asp](http://www.viu.ca/international/housing.asp)

## **Roommates**

This is the most common and cheapest style of living for students. Most students will find a house or apartment through a news ad and will share with friends or people they meet. This is an excellent way for international students to make Canadian friends, learn about Canadian life, and have a unique living experience. Usually there are many advertisements around campus from people looking for roommates. The notices will read “Roommate Wanted” and have a number to call for more information. It is not unusual for 3 or more people who have never met to live together as roommates. If you are interested in this style of living, you can ask at the International Education office for more information. For more information visit: [https://isweb.viu.bc.ca/housing\\_list/housing\\_list.asp](https://isweb.viu.bc.ca/housing_list/housing_list.asp)

## **Student Residence - Dorms**

Some students choose to live in student residence. The dormitories are a great place to experience University culture and meet students from all over the world. Students have their own bedroom and share a bathroom with another student of the same sex. If you are interested in viewing the dormitory rooms, or want a tour, please call 754-6338 and /or visit [www.VIUresidences.ca](http://www.VIUresidences.ca).

## **Rental Living in Canada: Where to Look:**

Classified Ads in the local newspapers contain listing of rental properties. Check out the following links:

- The Nanaimo News Bulletin visit
- The Nanaimo Daily News visit [www.nanaimodailynews.com](http://www.nanaimodailynews.com)
- There is also a link on the VIU website at:  
[https://isweb.viu.bc.ca/housing\\_list/housing\\_list.asp](https://isweb.viu.bc.ca/housing_list/housing_list.asp)

## **What does the ad mean??**

- F/S = Fridge and Stove    W/D = Washer and Dryer
- W/D hookup = washer/dryer not included but can hook up
- N/S = No smoking            S/W = Dishwasher
- N/P = No Pets                Bldg. = Building
- F/P = Fireplace
- Bachelor Apartment = small apartment with no bedroom
- High Rise = taller apartment building
- Utilities Included – rent includes lights, water and heat

## **Living with Friends from your Own Country**

If you come to VIU to learn English, it is advisable to live with people who speak English at home. This will have you practicing your English skills. ESL courses at VIU are based on the belief that students will use and practice English outside of their classes, during their free time. If you are not doing this, it will be very difficult for you to be successful in your ESL classes.

## **Culture Shock**

The first few days or weeks in Canada will be an exciting time for you. Adjusting to your new home, starting classes at VIU, and finding out about the food, people and customs are an adventure. After a few weeks you may think that all these strange and different ways of doing things are confusing and annoying.

**You may be suffering from “culture shock.”**

## **Symptoms of Culture Shock**

- feeling nervous and want to sleep a lot, even after you have recovered from jet lag.
- feeling very hungry, and trouble concentrating when you study.
- feeling angry towards Canada or VIU as the cause of your discomfort. Simple things can make you angry, worried or sad
- You may only want to be with students from your home country. Although these friendships are important, there are many benefits of making friends with people from other countries.
- You may start to think that coming to Canada was a bad idea. You may feel you have no confidence, or you may have doubts about your ability to do well in your courses and live up to the expectations of your family and friends back home.
- feeling reluctant to talk about how you are feeling, thinking that you are alone.

**Culture shock is a normal part of living in a different country or culture. If you understand that these feelings are temporary, you will recover more quickly from culture shock.**

## **Suggestions to Help You**

- Remember, thousands of foreign students have studied in Canada and have overcome culture shock. You will too!
- Try to make friends from different cultural backgrounds. Having friends from different countries lessens your chance of being involved in “Group Culture Shock.” This is where a group of people from one cultural background gathers and only talk about

the negative aspects of living in a new culture.

- Try to understand that all people have different customs, ideas and beliefs, which will be different from yours, just as your customs, ideas and beliefs are different from theirs.
- Try not to think of other cultures or customs as better or worse than yours.
- BE PATIENT. Learning to live in a new culture takes time.
- Often people feel better if they eat some of their own ethnic food.
- If you are having culture shock, try relaxing and doing something fun to help you forget about your culture shock.
- Don't sit at home and think about the things you don't like—go out and do something.

If you continue to be sad and depressed from Culture Shock and are having thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself, please see an International Student advisor in Building 255, or see a personal counselor in the Student Services Office in Building 200.

**These services are confidential and free of charge for students.**

## **Section 6**

### **Nanaimo Services and Business**

#### **Banking Services**

What you must do:

- Make appointment by contacting bank in person and/or by phone.
- Bring your passport, study permit and your letter of acceptance. (Your letter of acceptance is the letter you received from VIU)
- If you are in homestay ask your host family to write a note confirming that you live with them at their address.
- Chequing and savings accounts are the most useful accounts for students. You can pay for almost everything in Canada with the bank card you receive when you open your account.
- You will receive a P.I.N (personal information number) for your bank card. **Do Not** tell anyone this number.
- **Do Not** carry large amounts of cash with you.

For a full list of banks available in Nanaimo use the local telephone book and view the yellow pages listed under “Banks”.

**If you require additional assistance on how to find banking services go to the main reception in Building 255 and ask for assistance.**

### **Post Offices (Canada Post)**

- For a full list of locations look up “Canada Post” in the white pages of the telephone book or go to [www.canadapost.ca](http://www.canadapost.ca)
- In Canada, post offices are often inside drugstores in large malls.
- Services include mailing a parcel, register a letter, or buy stamps.
- If you want to mail a letter, there are large red Canada Post mailboxes in various locations around the city.

### **Special Services**

- If speed of delivery is important send “special delivery”, or if the letter is very important send it “registered mail”.
- You can also buy a “money order” from the post office if you want to pay for something through the mail.
- If you change your address within Canada, you should notify the post office, and they will send your mail to your new address. You must also change your address on your student record and notify friends and family.

### **Faxes**

There is a Fax machine in the Student Unions’ office in Building 193 where students can send and receive faxes. Make sure your name is clearly indicated on the Fax. For more information on how to use the Fax visit the student union office in Building 193.

### **Using the Telephone and Telephone Book**

**In case of emergency, call 911 to reach the Police, Ambulance or Fire Department. It is a free number to call; you will not need a coin if you use a pay phone.**

Emergency information is listed on the first page of the telephone book. Review these pages to understand the following:

- How to find a telephone number in the directory—make sure you have the right city.
- How to find an area code and make a long distance call.
- Long distance calls are expensive and easy to make—it is easy to run up a bill of \$300 or more. Use a discount calling card.
- The differences between the white, blue and yellow pages.
- Locating and using emergency numbers.

If you require assistance to become familiar with using the telephone book please go to the main reception of Building 255 and ask for help. The local Nanaimo telephone book contains some very useful information including street locations with maps which are found at the front of the book.

## **Using a Pay Phone**

- Calls within Nanaimo are charged a small fee (25 cents).
- Most Calling cards have instructions in French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and German.
- If you think you might want to make long distance calls from a public phone, ask for assistance on how to use a Calling Card.

## **Newspapers**

- Most national and international newspapers are available in Nanaimo. Some popular local and national newspapers include:
- *Nanaimo Daily News*, published daily except Sundays. To subscribe, phone 729-4200.
- *Nanaimo Harbour City Star*, a free newspaper published Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Phone 729-4200.
- *Nanaimo News Bulletin*, free newspaper published twice a week. Phone 753-3707.
- *Times Colonist* (Victoria), published daily. To subscribe call 1-800-663-6384.
- *Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver), published daily, except Sundays. To subscribe call 1-800-663-2662.
- *The Globe and Mail* (Canada's National Newspaper), published daily except Sundays. To subscribe call 1-800-387-5400.

**The Library has many of these papers for students to read**

## **Ethnic Food**

Many types of foods are available in Nanaimo, either at a grocery store, a specialty food shop, or a restaurant. Listed are just a few places that you might like to visit:

### **Stores**

- Real Canadian Superstore in North Nanaimo
- Fairway Market in Brooks Landing Shopping Centre
- Man Lee in Terminal Park Shopping Centre
- Dashmesh Food & Spice (walking distance from VIU)
- Ethnic Restaurants

Nanaimo has many ethnic restaurants: Chinese, Greek, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Mediterranean, Mexican, Thai and Vietnamese. Ask your friends, classmates, staff or host families to recommend a good restaurant, or you can look in the telephone book.

## **Health Services**

**The law requires that you must have either BC Medical or Private Insurance while you are in Canada.**

### **Reproductive Health Clinic:**

Options for Sexual Health of Nanaimo, doctors and nurses provide information and medical services for sexually active students. This clinic offers the following services:

- Sexual health education
- Birth control information and supplies
- Pregnancy testing and counselling
- Emergency contraceptive pills
- Testing, treatment and counselling for sexually transmitted diseases

All visits and information are kept confidential between the clinic staff and patient. Phone 753-9511 to make an appointment. Students must take proof of medical insurance to their appointment. This clinic is located at 202-285 Prideaux Street in downtown Nanaimo.

### **Health Clinics**

Nanaimo has several Health Clinics where students can make appointments to see doctors. You usually need to make an appointment to see a doctor. Remember to take your medical insurance card with you to your appointment. **See the main reception in Building 255 for a full list of medical clinics.**

#### **Important**

- Medical insurance does not pay for dental expenses; you will need private health insurance.
- If you plan to leave Canada for any period of time, please contact your medical insurance carrier (Student Guard, MSP) to verify your coverage. Your current medical insurance may not be adequate to cover all, or any expenses incurred outside of Canada, which can be 10 times more expensive than in Canada.

### **Cultural and Religious Groups**

There are many groups in Nanaimo that either represent a particular cultural group or promote multicultural understanding. As well, most of the major religions are represented locally.

For more information call the Multicultural Society at 753-6911.

## **Recreation and Sports in Nanaimo**

### **Community classes**

Many “general interest” courses and classes offered by VIU Community Education and the City of Nanaimo Parks and Recreation. You can take a variety of courses including cooking, sewing, woodworking, accounting, swimming, etc. For more information go to Community Education in Building 310 and/or visit the city of Nanaimo Leisure guide at [www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca)

### **Movies**

There are two large movie theatres in Nanaimo.

**Avalon Cinema Centre in Woodgrove.** Phone 390-5021 or visit:  
<http://www.tribute.ca/theatre/Avalon+Cinemas,+Nanaimo/AVALON>

**Galaxy Theatre in Rutherford Centre.** Phone 729-8000

<http://nanaimomovies.com/galaxy-movie-theatre/>

### **Nanaimo Events and Activities**

Events and activities that students might be interested in are sent to students by e-mail using the iss-List Serve. Also check the international student activity calendar on VIU’s website for activity ideas at <http://www.viu.ca/international/studentactivity.asp>

### **Sports**

There are many opportunities for participating in sports on campus. There are also opportunities for skating, soccer, swimming, skiing, canoeing, martial arts and other activities. The International Education department offers various activities throughout the semester such as ski trips, ice-skating, canoeing, BBQs and sporting activities.

### **Tourism Nanaimo**

For information on local events and festivals, please see the Nanaimo tourism website at [www.tourismnanaimo.com/](http://www.tourismnanaimo.com/).

### **The Port Theatre**

The Port Theatre is located at 125 Front Street, next to the Coast Bastion Hotel, on Nanaimo’s breathtaking waterfront. The Port Theatre is designed as a multipurpose facility that brings in a variety of local and top touring performing arts groups, including acoustic and amplified music, drama, comedy, symphony, musical theatre, children’s entertainers as well as conferences and symposia.

Check out the calendar of events on their web site:

[www.porttheatre.com](http://www.porttheatre.com).

## **Walking**

There are many places around VIU and Nanaimo for walking and hiking. Call 722-2882 or 758-2414 to join a hiking club.

## **Social Insurance Number (S.I.N) and TAX refunds**

- International students wanting to work in Canada need a Social Insurance Number (SIN). (Bring passport, study & work permit)
- This number is necessary before students can receive Canadian government services.
- To apply for a Social Insurance Number, please go to the Nanaimo Human Resource Centre, 201-60 Front Street. A map is available from the International Education office in Building 255.
- Some international students are eligible to apply for the GST credit and the BC Tax Credit. Check the Government of Canada website to see if you qualify tax specialist.

## **Transportation Services**

### **Air Service**

Air Canada Jazz flies from the Nanaimo airport to Vancouver International airport. Phone 245-7123. From downtown Nanaimo, at the harbour you can take a floatplane to Vancouver harbour. This is a fast and exciting way to travel to Vancouver—it takes only 15 minutes. There are several airlines to choose from including Baxter Aviation, phone 754-1066 for reservations and flight schedules; or Harbour Air Seaplanes, phone 714-0900 for reservations and flight schedules. Additional Air service can be found in the local telephone book in the yellow pages under ‘Airlines’.

### **BC Ferries**

Phone 1-888-223-3779 for ferry schedules, to make car reservations, or to make general inquiries, including if you think you lost something on the ferry. For more information visit the BC Ferries website <http://www.bcferries.com/>

### **Bicycles**

- If you ride a bicycle you should use the same rules as cars.
- Do not ride on the sidewalk.
- You can be given a fine for not wearing a helmet
- Always lock your bike.
- Nanaimo is popular for it’s riding and walking trails.
- Contact Pacific Rim Bicycle if you are interested in joining a biking club; phone 758-2118.

## **Buses**

Greyhound Coach Lines services most places on Vancouver Island and to Vancouver, via BC Ferries. For more information phone 753-4371 or visit: [www.greyhound.ca/](http://www.greyhound.ca/) The Bus Station is located by the Howard Johnston Harbourside Hotel, #1 Terminal Ave. North

## **Cars**

- You may use your driver's license from your home country as long as it is valid, and you have a valid student card.
- You **must** have car insurance.
- Driving lessons are available to obtain a BC Driver's License.
- All passengers must wear a seat belt at all times. The driver is responsible to make sure everyone wears a seat belt.
- For information about driving in British Columbia, go to the Motor License Office, located in the BC Access Centre, 460 Selby Street. Phone toll-free 1-800-950-1498 or go to the ICBC web-site: [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)
- It is possible to rent or lease a car if you have a valid Driver's License and credit card. For further information look under "Automobiles – Renting and Leasing" in the telephone book.
- Never buy a car if it hasn't been checked by a mechanic

## **City Buses**

- See the transit schedule (rider's guide) for bus service details
- The bus stops on the campus, across from Building 205.
- VIU students can buy individual trip tickets, a monthly bus pass, or a semester pass from the Students' Union (Building 193).
- For more information visit <http://www.bctransit.com>
- If you lose something on the bus, call Nanaimo Regional Transit System at 390-4531.

## **Taxi**

Taxicabs and Airport shuttle service can be found in the local telephone book in the yellow pages under Taxicabs including: A.C. Taxi (phone) 753-1231, Swiftsure Taxi (phone) 758-8911 (North Nanaimo), 753-3911 (South Nanaimo)

## **Trains**

- [http://www.viarail.ca/trains/en\\_traj\\_roch\\_vico.html](http://www.viarail.ca/trains/en_traj_roch_vico.html)

## **Travel Agents**

- Travel Agent information can be found in the local Nanaimo telephone book in the under "Travel Agent" in the yellow pages.

## **International Education Staff**

Graham Pike, Dean, International Education and ELC

### **ESL Office**

Jackie Foster, Instructional Director, MELC/Int'l Programs

Maxine Stewart, ELC Secretary

Rebecca Lin, Receptionist/Clerk Typist, ELC

### **Advising**

Tami Ney, International Student Advisor

Patricia Ilagan, International Student Advisor

Tania Merchuk, Secretary, International Student Service

### **Admission and Fees**

Jane Kelly, Director of Admissions

Elsie Thyssen, Financial Services Clerk

Debbie VanderHoek, Secretary – Admissions

Niki McDonald, International Admissions and Finance Clerk

### **Marketing/Recruitment**

Marco Qaqish, Coordinator, Marketing and Recruitment

Megan Shevchenko, Assistant, Marketing & Recruitment

### **Education Abroad**

Audrey Hansen, Manager, Education Abroad

Mackenzie Sillem, Coordinator, Education Abroad & Student Retention

Deborah Marshall, Administrative Assistant, Travel

### **Homestay**

Andrea Blakeman, Homestay Manager

Silvia Wende, Coordinator Homestay/Peerstay

Donna Nelson, Homestay Assistant

### **Activities**

Jennifer Jensen-Richards, Coordinator, International Student Activities

### **International Education Reception**

Shelagh Cronkite, Receptionist International Education

Tami Mullaly, Receptionist International Education

### **Group Programs**

Theresa Meyer, Manager, Group Programs

## **International Education**

900 Fifth Street

Nanaimo, BC V9R 5S5

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