

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

PASSPORT TO PEPPERDINE

International Student Arrival Guide





Greetings! We are thrilled you will be joining our Pepperdine community in California, which represents well over 75 nations of the world. This *Passport to Pepperdine* International Student Arrival Guide will help you prepare for your educational journey and your transition to the greater Los Angeles area and the United States.

Pepperdine is known for our welcoming community, which stems from our warm, Christian heritage and commitment to the highest standards of academic excellence. While our students pursue their degrees, students are also strengthened for lives of purpose, service and leadership. You, too, were selected to be among this network of dynamic service-minded leaders and we want to learn from and alongside you. We encourage you to engage with us, share your unique background and perspectives, and also establish a true sense of “home” here.

The Office of International Students Services is among a team of individuals throughout all campuses and offices committed to enhancing the international student experience. Our goal is to, like a lighthouse, guide you toward countless on-campus resources on your pathway to success at Pepperdine. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions or for help. It is our pleasure and our expertise!

Once again, welcome to the United States and to the Pepperdine family!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooke A. Cutler". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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Pepperdine University Overview

Introduction to [Pepperdine University](#)

- Locations of [Pepperdine Campuses](#) - The main campus is located in Malibu, California with additional campuses located in West Los Angeles, Calabasas, Encino, Irvine, and Silicon Valley for select degree programs.
- Map of [Pepperdine Main Campus](#) in Malibu (Printable)

1. Preparing to Study in the USA

Free Expert Advice - [Education USA](#) can offer you free expert advice at an [advising center located in your country!](#)

International Student Visa - The Pepperdine University Office of International Student Services (OISS) assists you with obtaining and maintaining your student visa and immigration status.

- [Visa Information](#)
- [Undergraduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Students](#)

Travel Assistance - For your airplane tickets and travel arrangements, students have recommended some of the following services.

- [StudentUniverse](#)
- [STA Travel](#)

2. Housing

On-Campus - Pepperdine offers housing for both undergraduate and graduate students on the Malibu campus.

- [Housing On Campus](#)
- [Packing List](#)
- To help you prepare for life on campus, students suggest ordering supplies online from [Bed, Bath & Beyond](#) or [Target](#) for in-store pick up or delivery to campus so that your package is waiting in the mailroom upon your arrival. Note mailroom hours [here](#). If you are shipping your items and arriving outside of these hours, be sure to pack essentials in your luggage.

Meal Plans - [Meal Plans](#) are available to all students for meals at the cafeterias on the main campus in Malibu and can be purchased by emailing housing@pepperdine.edu at any time.

Off-Campus - Local housing options are available to students who choose to live away from the campus community. Nearby communities including Calabasas, Woodland Hills, Agoura Hills, and Santa Monica. The least expensive housing in proximity to campus is in Woodland Hills and communities to the East of Woodland Hills. Students who attend the West Los Angeles, Irvine, or other campuses find plentiful housing options in communities nearby.

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- Los Angeles is known for heavy traffic, and this should be considered when you select a place to live. Free traffic App predictors such as [Waze](#) are popular to navigate around traffic and to plan your route to school.
 - Off-campus housing resources:
 - [Housing Listings](#)
 - [Rentspree](#)
 - [Apartment Search](#)

Policy Reminders

- **No Smoking** - Pepperdine cares for the health of the campus community, so smoking is not allowed on campus. A Smoking Cessation program is provided to students free-of-charge through the Student Health Center to help students who wish to stop smoking or vaping.
- **No Alcohol or Drugs** - Pepperdine fosters an alcohol and drug free environment to support a healthy campus. Alcohol, marijuana, and illicit drugs are prohibited on campus.

3. Airport, Transportation, and Hotels

[Los Angeles International Airport \(LAX\)](#) - LAX airport is recommended for your arrival to attend school at Pepperdine.

- **Immigration** - Students with F-1 visas should also have their Form I-20 ready to give to the officer. ***Do not use a B1/B2 visa or ESTA (Visa Waiver Program) to enter the U.S. to study.***
- **Secondary Immigration Inspection** - Secondary inspection is not common, but in the event that you are detained for secondary inspection, answer questions truthfully and patiently. If you are an F-1 visa holder and the officer wishes to contact your Designated School Official (DSO), his/her name is on your I-20, and the phone number during office hours is (310) 506-4246. The after-hours emergency phone number is (310) 506-4442.
- **Customs** - Go through the “Nothing to Declare” exit if you have no goods to declare (per your Customs Declaration Form). For questions in advance, contact OISS@pepperdine.edu.

[Airport Transportation](#) - Shared Ride Vans and Ride Share Services (Uber and Lyft) are often recommended by students as the best transportation from the airport to the Pepperdine campus or to other destinations. Rental cars are recommended if you are familiar with driving in the USA. Free hotel buses are available if you plan to stay at a hotel near the airport after arrival.

- **Arriving at the Malibu Campus** - Tell the Public Safety officer in the guard booth that you are a new student arriving for check-in and/or orientation, and you will be directed where to park or where your driver should drop you off. You will NOT be allowed to check in before your approved arrival date.
- **Student Visa Holders** - Within one week of your program start date, you must log in to the [International Student Portal](#) (with your Wavenet credentials) and complete the “Arrival Documents” form under the “Orientation” menu.

Hotels - If you need a hotel upon arrival to the U.S., we recommend you reserve a room several days or weeks in advance:

- [Hotels near the airport](#)
- [Hotels near the Malibu Campus](#)
- [Villa Graziadio Executive Center](#) accommodations on campus

4. Health and Safety

Health Insurance

- Each year, you must provide proof of a U.S.-based health insurance plan through the [online waiver system](#) OR enroll in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). We highly recommend that your plan includes care located close to Malibu or your campus.
- [Important Insurance Information and Deadlines](#)

Health Center and Immunizations

- The [Student Health Center \(SHC\)](#) functions like a family doctor's office and provides a wide variety of services including specialized clinics such as flu vaccination, travel medicine, allergy, and STI/HIV testing.
- [Immunization and Health Requirements](#)

Safety

- Download the [LiveSafe App](#) so you can be prepared and feel safe in any situation.
- [Department of Public Safety](#)

5. Daily Transportation

Free On-Campus Shuttles

- **Around the Malibu Campus** - Two shuttle circular routes (Blue and Orange) run throughout the school year. Download the [Pepperdine App](#) to see the live schedule.
- **Shopping Shuttle** - Four daily shopping shuttles go from the Malibu campus to the shops and grocery store down in Malibu during the academic year, from Monday through Saturday.
- [Transit Services](#) has more details.

Public Transportation to Campus - Public transportation to and from the Malibu campus is limited and it is difficult to walk or bicycle to the surrounding Malibu community. It is recommended that students use a personal car to travel to and from campus.

- **Public Bus** - Public bus transportation to and from Malibu is quite limited.
 - [Bus Timetable](#)
 - [Bus routes](#)
- **Shared Ride Services**
 - [UBER](#)
 - [Lyft](#)

Driver's License

- If you plan to drive a car, for a limited time you may be able to drive with a valid driver's license issued in your own country or a valid international driver's license. For more information, please visit this [U.S. Government website](#).
- To obtain your California driver's license, you must go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). For details, check the [California DMV website](#) and applicable [Driver License Handbook](#).
- DMV office locations closest to Malibu are in Thousand Oaks, Winnetka, Santa Monica, and Culver City. Appointments are available [online](#), or you may choose to walk in without an appointment and wait in line.

Buying a Car - Most students recommend that you buy a car while living in the U.S.

- **New cars** - Students recommend searching online at www.truecar.com which allows you to compare prices and choose the best dealer.
- **Used cars** - Students recommend searching online at www.autotrader.com which lists cars being offered by dealers as well as by private owners. If you buy from a private owner, we suggest you take the car to a mechanic and pay for an inspection to make sure it is in good condition.
- **Registration**- You must [register your car](#) at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in California.
- **Car Insurance:**
 - If you buy a car, the law requires you to buy insurance and keep a paper copy of your proof of insurance inside your car at all times.
 - Insurance costs (“premiums”) for international drivers may get quite expensive, since you would likely be considered a “new driver” in California. Be sure to compare quotes from at least 2-3 insurance companies (e.g. StateFarm, AllState, Geico, etc.) so you can get the best rate.
 - If you cannot afford insurance, you may be eligible for the California Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program. Find out at www.mylowcostauto.com or by calling 1-866-602-8861.

Renting a Car

- [Renting a car](#) can be a good option if you need a car just for a short time (e.g., several days or weeks).
- [Zipcar](#) - Pepperdine offers short-term car rentals from Zipcar with a [student discount](#).

6. Campus Policies

No Smoking - Pepperdine cares for the health of the campus community, so smoking is not allowed on campus. Vapes, tobacco, and pipes are also not allowed. A Smoking Cessation program is provided to students free-of-charge through the Student Health Center to help students who wish to stop smoking.

No Alcohol or Drugs - Pepperdine fosters an alcohol and drug free environment to support a healthy campus. Neither alcohol nor illegal drugs are allowed on campus.

Respectful Relationships - Pepperdine affirms that all members of our community are created in the image of God and all must be treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination of others in any way is not tolerated. We respect the worth of each member of our community.

7. Food

Cafeterias - Several cafeterias are available at the Malibu campus.

- **Cafeterias and hours** - The [HAWC](#) at the Malibu campus has late night food until 1:00AM and the Oasis in the Waves Cafe is open with Pizza and Noodles every night until 11:00PM.
- [Menu](#)
- [Meal Plan:](#)
 - Seaver College students are required to purchase a meal plan for the first two years on campus. Recommendations:
 - Start with the lowest meal plan because you can always increase but cannot decrease after the Add/Drop Deadline.
 - Download the [GET app](#) in order to buy and keep track of meal points.
 - Graduate students: download the [GET app](#) to place money on your student ID, instead of using a credit card. It's easier and tax free!

Food Delivery - Food delivery services are growing plentiful. Many local restaurants offer delivery, and students recommend [UBER Eats delivery service](#).

8. Student Services and Facilities

Pepperdine App - Download the App for live campus shuttle updates, campus maps, cafeteria information, and other tips. Upon arrival, you will receive a Student ID card with Campus Wide ID (CWID) number. With this card, you will be able to access all of the services and facilities listed below:

- **[The OneStop Office](#)** will provide your payment status, enrollment verification, and even discounted movie tickets!
- **[Mail Services and Shipping](#)** can receive packages up to 30 days ahead of your arrival; shipments can be picked up at Mail Services during regular office hours.
- **[Free Shuttle Service](#)** is available on-campus (see live schedule on the [Pepperdine App](#) or click [here](#) to view the full shuttle schedule including the “Shopping Shuttle” for off-campus grocery shopping).
- **[Campus Recreation](#)** offers sign-ups for casual sports teams, information on the sports and swimming pool facilities, fitness classes, and outdoor trips.
- **[Museum and Theater Facilities](#)** offer free admission to the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art and discounted tickets to many theater shows and performances throughout the year.
- **[Pepperdine Libraries](#)** have locations adjacent to each school and each campus for your research, study, copying and printing needs.
- **[Events Calendar](#)** includes lecture series, service/volunteering opportunities, athletic gatherings, and other ways to connect with your Pepperdine and Malibu community.
- **[Malibu Campus Church](#)** welcomes all students to attend a Christian worship service every Sunday. There are also many other places of worship in the Malibu and Los Angeles area communities.
- **Pepperdine Bookstores** are located adjacent to each school and campus, and offer a wide variety of products and services including textbooks, gifts, clothing, snacks, and school supplies. You can purchase your textbooks after your arrival to campus from one of the following locations:
 - [Seaver Bookstore](#)
 - [Drescher Bookstore](#)
 - [Law School Bookstore](#)
 - [West LA Bookstore](#)

9. Banking and Finances

Bank Accounts - Most students prefer having a U.S. bank account. When opening the bank account, bring your passport and an additional form of personal identification such as an ID card. Most students choose Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citibank, University Credit Union, or Chase.

On-Campus ATMs - There are two automated teller machines (ATMs) located on the Malibu campus for your convenience. One is located next to the Sandbar and the other is located adjacent to the second floor entrance of the Thornton Administrative Center (TAC).

Credit Cards - It is recommended you have a credit card (such as VISA or Mastercard) to make daily purchases.

10. Mobile Phones and Internet

Social Communication - Students in the U.S. prefer email and texting instead of other platforms like WeChat or WhatsApp.

Phone Reception - Due to the mountainous terrain of the Malibu campus, mobile phone coverage is not evenly spread. Verizon, Sprint, and AT&T offer good mobile phone coverage throughout the campus area. For more information, please visit [Phone and Mobile Services](#).

Discounts are available to all Pepperdine students who choose AT&T mobile plans.

WiFi is available across campus, and can be accessed from all campus buildings and facilities.

11. Social Customs

While living and studying in the U.S., you will interact with people from many cultural, social, ethnic, and national backgrounds. Despite all the differences, people generally greet each other by saying, “Hi, how are you?” followed by a standard response of “Fine, thanks.” During introductions, both men and women stand and shake hands. Friends or peers call each other by their first names. When interacting with staff or professors, use his/her title (“Dr.,” “Ms.,” “Miss,” “Mrs.,” or “Mr.”) and last name. To learn more about American social customs, visit [Culture Crossing Guide](#) and [About the U.S.](#)

Individuality and competition define the American character, but there is also a strong sense of teamwork to get things done. You may think that Americans are always rushed; however, if you ask for help, you will normally find a friendly attitude. As in most countries, customs vary across the country, and it will take time to understand and adjust to your new environment. It is normal to feel lonely, homesick, and overwhelmed, but don’t isolate yourself! Get to know your advisor and the Office of International Student Services team, stay connected, and use all the amazing on-campus resources.

We wish you a pleasant and successful experience!