



El Camino College Language Academy (ECLA)

Before You Leave Your Country

Three Easy Steps

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Welcome to El Camino College Language Academy (ECLA)!

El Camino College Language Academy is the premier intensive English language program for the international student who wants to learn new skills, experience a new country, and make new friends. We will help you achieve your educational goals. Follow these three easy steps to stay organized, be prepared, and make a smooth transition to the United States.

STEP 1: ACCEPTANCE LETTER, HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION:



- ◆ Read your acceptance letter, your I-20 and other information in your packet.
- ◆ Plan your flight to arrive here no later than the date shown on form I-20.
- ◆ Find a place to live BEFORE you leave your country. Apply through a home stay or apartment agency and arrange housing within walking distance or 30 minutes by car or bus from El Camino College (see Housing Information).
- ◆ Arrange for pick-up at the airport by home stay agency or take the airport shuttle or taxi from the airport to home stay or apartment.
- ◆ Check transportation between your housing and El Camino College (ECC). If you don't know how to get to ECC , please contact us—we will help you.

⇒ **Go to: www.visittorrance.com for information on the Torrance area.**



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STEP 2: MONEY MATTERS



- ◆ After you arrive in the U.S., it is advisable to open a bank account (checking account and savings account). **It is not safe to carry a large amount of cash with you at any time!** Most banks require a passport and one other form of identification to open an account for an international student.
- ◆ Banks have different requirements to open an account and different monthly fees.
- ◆ If possible, try to obtain a credit card (VISA, MasterCard) before you leave your country.
- ◆ **Personal Checks:** You will get personal checks when you open your checking account. You can pay bills by mail and purchase items with your personal checks.
- ◆ **Credit Cards:** Also called "charge cards" - allow you to make purchases and pay for them later. You will receive a monthly bill which needs to be paid on time or late fees will be charged against your account.
- ◆ Do not give out your credit card number or debit card number over the phone or on the Internet. Be sure you know and trust the person or business that asks for your number.
- ◆ **ATM Cards / Debit Cards:** Use an ATM card to get cash or deposit money in your account at an ATM machine. Your ATM card can be used as a debit card. Keep the receipt from the ATM as a record of your account.
- ◆ ***Some international debit cards cannot be used to pay tuition at El Camino College.***



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STEP 3: THINGS TO PREPARE—Check the List!



- ◇ Do you have your passport, F-1 Visa, I-20 form? Carry these items with you. They will be needed when you check-in at the airport.
- ◇ Do you have the name and phone number of the Language Academy Program Manager in your carry-on luggage?
- ◇ Have you made your housing arrangements (home stay or apartment)? This must be completed before you leave your country.
- ◇ Check the area where you will live: www.mapquest.com
- ◇ Money—don't bring a lot of cash. Traveler's checks are the safest way to carry funds.
- ◇ Credit Cards—Credit cards are often necessary for car rental/hotel reservations. El Camino College Language Academy accepts most credit cards for payment of tuition and other fees. The most common credit cards are Visa and MasterCard.
- ◇ Do not buy health insurance in your country. The health insurance fee is included in the tuition for the Language Academy and is less expensive than insurance purchased in your country.
- ◇ Complete medical and dental check-ups before you leave your country.
- ◇ Bring extra personal medicines, contact lenses, glasses and any prescriptions with you.
- ◇ Bring your international driver's license (if you have one) with you.
- ◇ Bring additional official copies of school records or transcripts with you.
- ◇ Bring your personal address book with you—stay in touch with your friends.

Cultural Note: Americans will ask you about your culture and your country

⇒ Check It Out: Information on American culture and customs:

www.usastudyguide.com/customshabits.htm



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OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- ◆ **SEVIS FEE:** You will need to pay the \$200.00 SEVIS fee if you were issued a Form I-20 to study at the El Camino College Language Academy.

Also, you will need to pay the \$200.00 SEVIS fee if you hold a valid F-1 student visa and you have been absent from the United States for a period of more than five (5) months and will re-enter the U.S. for a new program of study.

The SEVIS fee must be paid BEFORE your appointment at the U.S. Consulate and before your entry to the U.S.—go to: www.fmjfee.com and read the information.

- ◆ **INTERVIEW TIP SHEET:** Carefully read your acceptance letter and the "TIPS ON STUDENT INTERVIEW SHEET" to help you prepare for the interview.

- ◆ **NO SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:** Social Security numbers can be issued to international students after a student has been in the United States for one year or more and finds legitimate employment. This is a temporary Social Security number that will be valid for 18 months and cannot be renewed. [Useful web site: www.travel.state.gov/visa/index.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/index.html)

The El Camino Community College District is committed to providing equal opportunity in which no person is subjected to discrimination on the basis of ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, sex, race, color, ancestry, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or retaliation.