



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

International Orientation: Student Panel

Friday, January 8, 2021 (10:30 am MST)

This slide deck is a summary of the advice and experiences shared at the ISO student panel by student speakers. A full transcript is also available online.

International Student Services



Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the **Blackfoot Confederacy** comprising the **Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations**, the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, and the **Stoney Nakoda** including the **Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations**. The City of Calgary is also home to **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, and the traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “**Moh'kins'tsis**”, which we now call the City of Calgary.

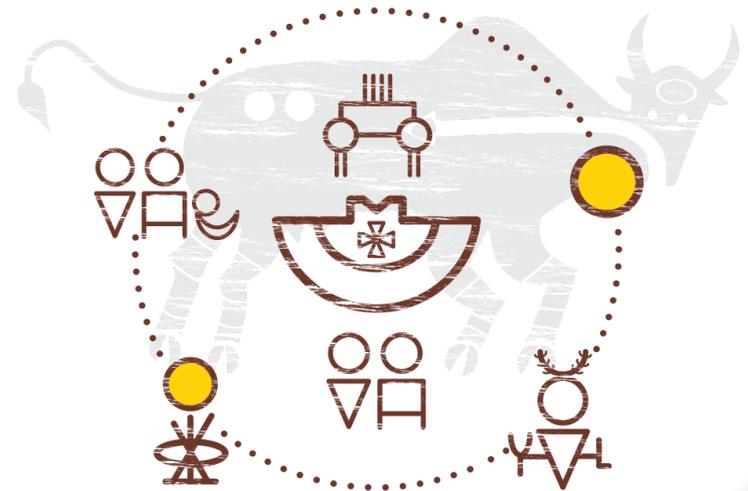


Image: The Cultural Model for the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy, ii' taa'poh'to'p

Kirsty Gruber, Advisor, International Student Transition Support

International Student Services

- Drop-in (& remote) advising to assist with getting settled in Calgary
- Coordinate International Student Mentorship Program
- Coordinate Orientation events for international students
- Kirsty.gruber@ucalgary.ca

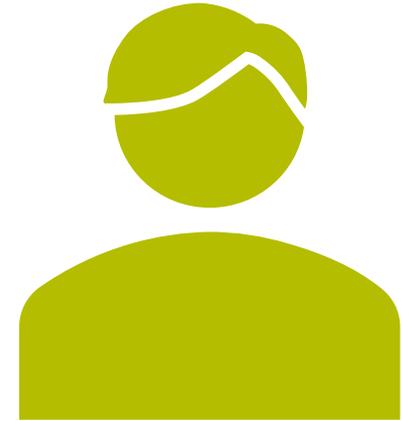


UCalgary Student Panelists



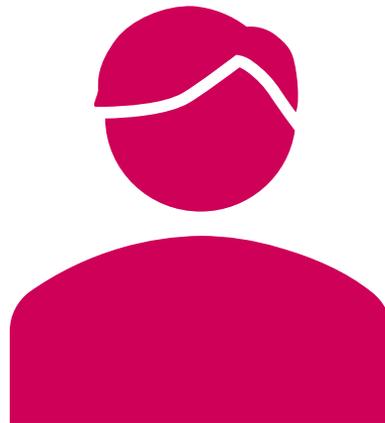
Denise

UCalgary Exchange Student
4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil



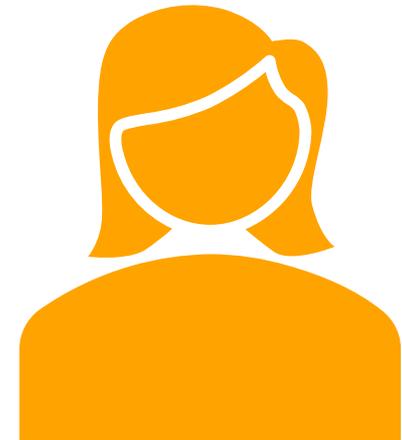
Caleb

Undergraduate Student
last year chemical & bioengineering student
Studying while in Calgary
Working as Program Assistant with ISS



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student
Masters student in physics & mathematics
Studying remotely from Austria



Anthonia

Masters Student
2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology
Studying while in Calgary⁴

What are the challenges of studying through online classes compared to traditional in-person classes?

- Do you have any tips?



Denise

UCalgary Exchange Student

4th year biological sciences

Studying remotely from Brazil

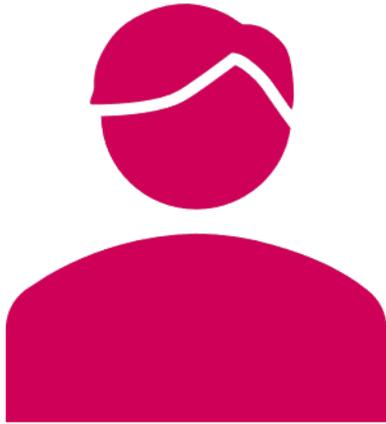
Online & Remote Learning

Biggest challenge:

- planning

Tips:

- Plan your schedule ahead, including leisure time
- I used a spreadsheet to assign time for different things I need to do
- This helped me not feel stressed or feel like I wasn't being productive during leisure or relaxing time



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student

Masters student in physics & mathematics

Studying remotely from Austria

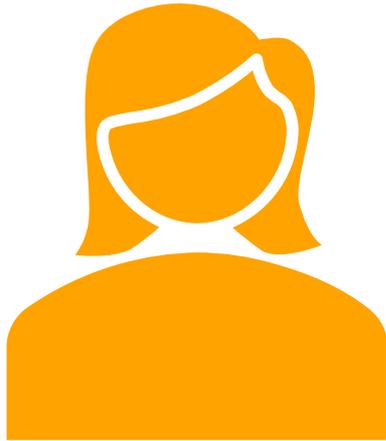
Online & Remote Learning

Biggest challenge:

- Staying focused while watching recorded lectures

Tips:

- Put your mobile phone away to reduce distraction
- Watch lectures in full-screen mode to reduce notifications or going to other tabs
- Take notes while watching to push yourself to engage with the topic (even if lecture notes are provided)
- Don't watch lectures from your bed—have a specific place to sit and work



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

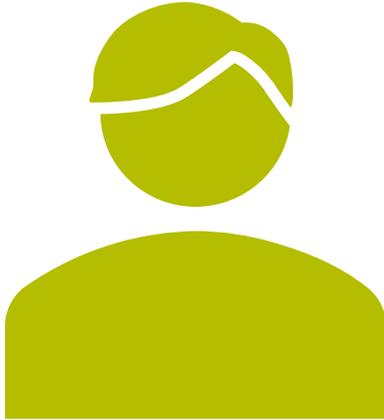
Online & Remote Learning

Biggest challenge:

- Staying motivated when attending multiple virtual meetings back-to-back

Tips:

- Break up your schedule by including breaks between work when possible
- Use a reward system: for example, after three hours of lectures, spend 30 minutes watching TV, trying out a new recipe (or your own favorite hobby), or a walk outside!



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

Studying while in Calgary

Working as Program Assistant with ISS

Online & Remote Learning

Biggest challenge:

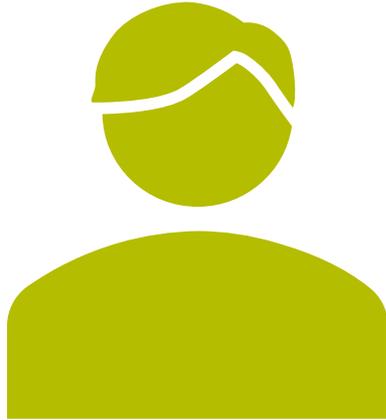
- Communicating with friends and peers, socially or especially if there's a topic in class that you don't understand
- Communicating with professors, especially if it's intimidating to attend a one-on-one Zoom call, in lieu of in-person office hours, where a few students can go together

Tips:

- Set up check-ins virtually with a classmate or friends
- Don't be afraid to ask questions during lectures, even if it's scary
- Remember, your friends, classmates, and professors want to help you

**How to socialize during
the current Covid-19
pandemic & public
health restrictions?**

**How can I meet people
or make friends in
Calgary?**



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

Studying while in Calgary

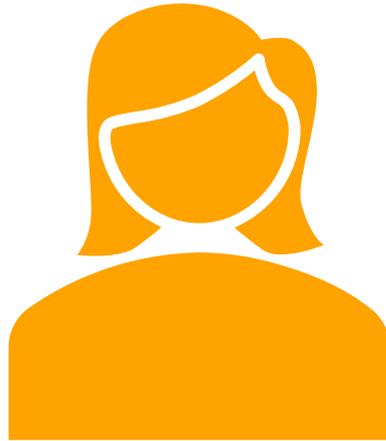
Working as Program Assistant with ISS

Making Connections during Covid-19

Helpful Strategies:

- As an international student, I live alone, so it can be intimidating to have a long period of time without talking to anyone, so I like to:
- Set up virtual check-ins with friends, like online board games. This is a great way to see each other, especially if you're in the same lectures but your videos/webcams are off so you don't actually "see" each other in class
- To meet new people, I attend social events offered through Leadership & Student Engagement office (Unwind events)

www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/leadership/student-life/unwind-events



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

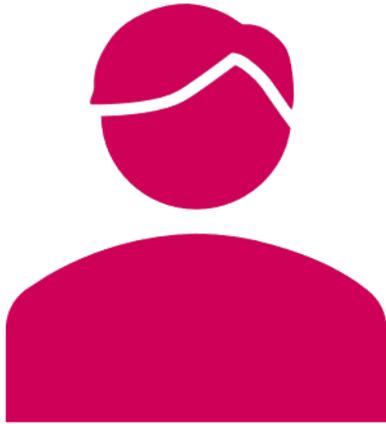
Making Connections during Covid-19

Helpful Strategies:

- Attend social events through the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and your departmental graduate association
- Introduce yourself to a specific person at an event and say “Hey, I’m an international student and I moved to the university.” They might be in the same position as you are.
- Go ahead and ask them, “is it okay if we keep in touch and check in on each other maybe once a week?” It might not work out, but that’s perfectly fine. Guess what? Sometimes it might work out and then you have a friend there that you can continue to check in with back and forth. If you do that, and they do that with somebody else, then you have three people in your circle and can grow from there.

<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/>

Making Connections during Covid-19



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student

Masters student in physics & mathematics

Studying remotely from Austria

Helpful strategies:

- This answer for is all the introverts out there (I'd count myself as one too), take advantage of the ways to connect, like sending a text, writing an email, or arranging an online meeting
- Remember, fellow classmates are in the same situation—new to university, in the same course, might have shared questions about course content or challenges with assignments—these are all topics you can use to connect and keep in touch
- Be brave and try reaching out. The worst thing that will happen is you don't get replies
- There is nothing to lose and many friends out there to win!



Denise

UCalgary Exchange Student
4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/student-life/uspeak-global>

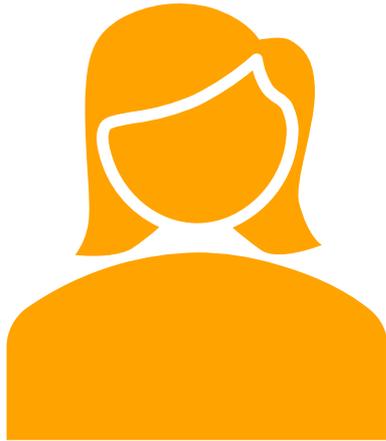
Making Connections during Covid-19

Helpful Strategies:

- Get involved with (free) programs and events, like USpeak Global—you can share knowledge in languages, different cultures, and I made really good friends in this program

What's life like in Calgary?

- What are some fun things to do ?
- How do you manage when the winter weather is so cold?



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

Life in Calgary

My perspective:

- Life in Calgary is amazing—there's lots to see and do
- Currently, with pandemic, there are some limitations, but still ways to explore safely following health restrictions or virtually
- Use online platforms to make the most of your time indoors, like learning new skills like cooking—I recently learned how to macramé, which is a very cool weaving technique
- Access digital exhibits and tours from museums across Canada
- What to do when it's cold? I like to stay indoors quite a bit, but there are outdoor activities like sledding, tobogganing, and skiing
- The GSA Newcomers and International Students Subcommittee (NISS) hosts events that can help you get used to life in Calgary, like "Tips and Tricks on living in Canada"

<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/>

<https://www.todocanada.ca/museums-virtual-online/>

www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx

www.calgary.ca/csps/cema/covid19/response-to-coronavirus.html



Denise

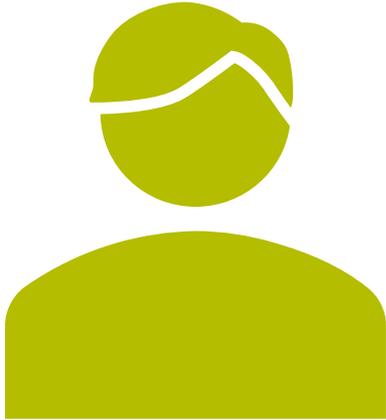
UCalgary Exchange Student
4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil

www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/leadership/student-life/unwind-events

Life in Calgary

My perspective:

- I haven't been to Calgary, but connecting with people remotely can help you get to know more
- Send emails to introduce yourself
- Attend events, like Unwind



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

Studying while in Calgary

Working as Program Assistant with ISS

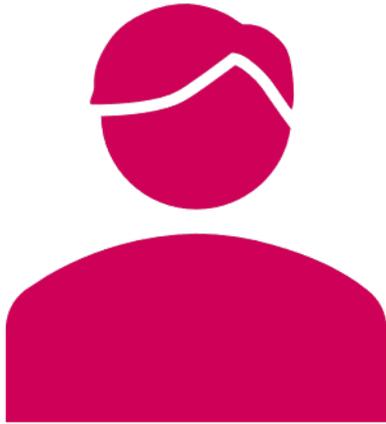
www.visitcalgary.com/things-to-do/stories-from-calgary/outdoor-winter-activities

www.travelalberta.com/ca/places-to-go/road-trips/

Life in Calgary

My perspective:

- If you like nature, Calgary is a perfect city for you since you're near several famous landscapes, like the Rocky Mountains to the West and the Drumheller badlands (looks like a mini grand canyon) to the east
- You can hike in the summer and snowshoe in the winter!
- I'm originally from a tropical country, so the cold was pretty intimidating in my first year in Calgary, but I learned to dress warmly and in layers
- There are lots of "Canadian winter" activities like skiing and ice skating to try
- Hopefully the pandemic is over soon so you'll have the opportunity to have these experiences



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student

Masters student in physics & mathematics

Studying remotely from Austria

Life in Calgary

Helpful strategies:

- This answer for is all the introverts out there (I'd count myself as one too), take advantage of the ways to connect, like sending a text, writing an email, or arranging an online meeting
- Remember, fellow classmates are in the same situation—new to university, in the same course, might have shared questions about course content or challenges with assignments—these are all topics you can use to connect and keep in touch
- Be brave and try reaching out. The worst thing that will happen is you don't get replies
- There is nothing to lose and many friends out there to win!



**What's one thing you
wish someone had told
you when you were
starting your studies?**



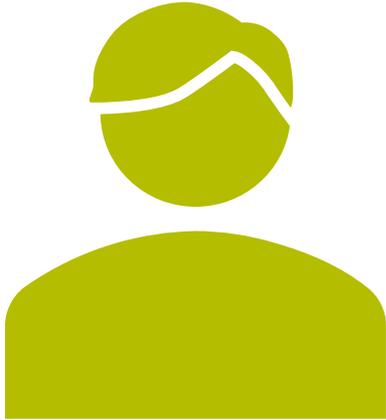
Denise

UCalgary Exchange Student
4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil

I wish I'd known...

My perspective:

- Have leisure time that's not on a screen
- We spend so much time looking at screens, it makes your eyes tired and can give you headaches
- Find hobbies that don't need a computer or phone



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

Studying while in Calgary

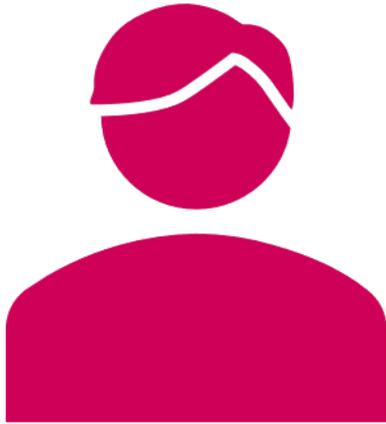
Working as Program Assistant with ISS

www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/online-learning-videos#Getting%20Started%20with%20Online%20Learning%20video
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I wish I'd known...

My perspective:

- Start early—university moves really fast in Canada
- Prepare and plan ahead so you feel prepared for midterms and finals



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student

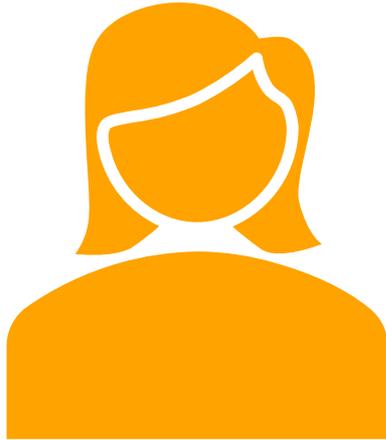
Masters student in physics & mathematics

Studying remotely from Austria

I wish I'd known...

My perspective:

- Don't be scared or demotivated by comparing yourself to other people
- In my first week of studies, there were people asking questions in lectures about topics I didn't even know about. This made my confidence drop, since I thought I should have all that same knowledge—but that's not true! Just by the statistics, it's likely someone in your lecture will be better in one particular skill or part of your studies than you—don't waste your time comparing
- The journey of starting your university career—learning and improving your knowledge and your skills—that's the most important thing. Comparing yourself just makes you unhappy and doesn't help you.



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/health-dental-services/>

www.su.ucalgary.ca/programs-services/student-services/health-dental

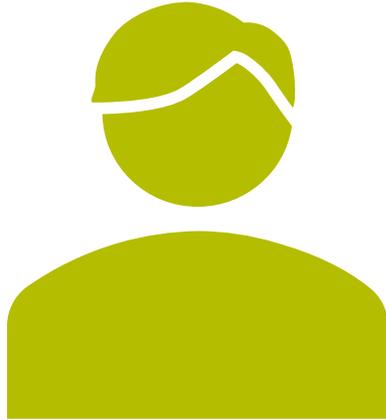
I wish I'd known...

My perspective:

- Take advantage of resources, funds, pools of money, and opportunities that diminish once you are done your studies
- Apply to a scholarship, even if you think other classmates are more eligible—go for it anyways
- Learn about the GSA or SU health and dental plans—take advantage of the coverage included

What's it like living in Calgary during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- What's open?
- Can we go to stores or do shopping for winter clothes and groceries?



Caleb

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last year chemical & bioengineering student

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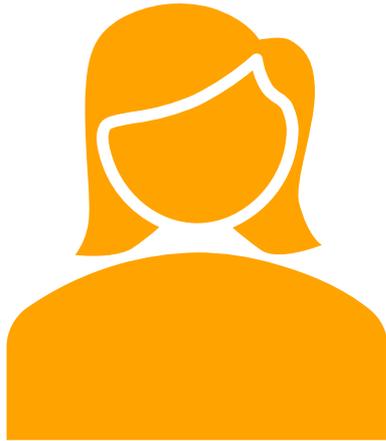
www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx

www.calgary.ca/csps/cema/covid19/response-to-coronavirus.html

In Calgary during Covid-19 pandemic...

My perspective:

- There are restrictions, like wearing a mask in public and in stores, one-way lanes in grocery stores, and limits on capacity for stores
- Remember to wear your mask and dress warmly in case you have to line up outside while you wait for entrance



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

In Calgary during Covid-19 pandemic...

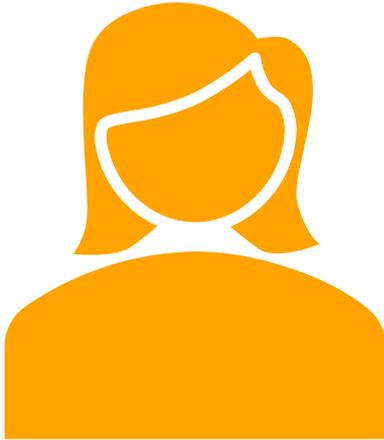
My perspective:

- Shopping malls and grocery stores are similar currently
- Capacity is reduced to 15-20%
- Currently salons for personal services like hair cuts or nails are not open
- Gym facilities for workouts and exercise are also closed currently
- Regulations and restrictions continue to change in response to the local situation; stay informed through news and regularly checking University and City of Calgary updates



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CALGARY

How does the semester system work at the University of Calgary?



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html

www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/

Semesters at UCalgary

My perspective:

- There are two main parts:
 - Fall and winter terms, which are approximately four months long each
 - Spring and summer terms, which are two months long
- From the start of the year, we have Winter running Jan-Apr, Spring is May-June, Summer is July-Aug, and Fall is Sept-Dec



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CALGARY

**What's your best advice
for taking care of your
mental health?**



Denise

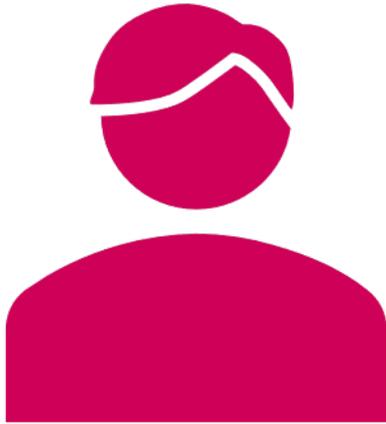
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4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil

www.visitcalgary.com/things-to-do/stories-from-calgary/an-insiders-guide-to-the-top-hiking-experiences-in-calgary

Supporting my mental wellness

Helpful Strategies:

- Being at home all the time is hard on my mental health—it's easy to feel isolated especially when you can only talk to friends virtually
- I found it helpful to get out for walks safely, distanced and marked
- Walks are a great way to get fresh air and get away from your desk or study area for a bit



Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student

Masters student in physics & mathematics

Studying remotely from Austria

[https://events.ucalgary.ca/
international-student-
services/](https://events.ucalgary.ca/international-student-services/)

[https://events.ucalgary.ca/
wellness-services/](https://events.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/)

Supporting my mental wellness

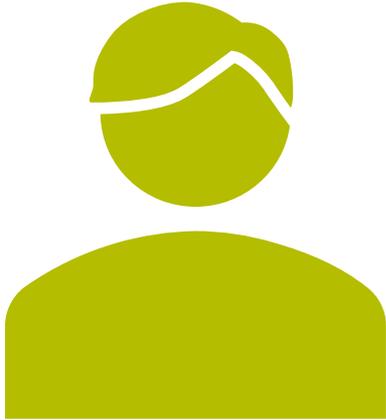
Helpful strategies:

- Since most sports are on pause, getting out for walks or fresh air is a great way to replace the endorphins you'd usually get from exercising
- Connect with other people virtually and check-in, ask:
 - How are you?
 - How are you doing?
 - Do you want to talk?
- Also, check out events hosted by ISS and Wellness Services—these are one way the university supports people to stay mentally healthy



**How can I get around
Calgary?**

**Does Calgary Transit
work well?**



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

Studying while in Calgary

Working as Program Assistant with ISS

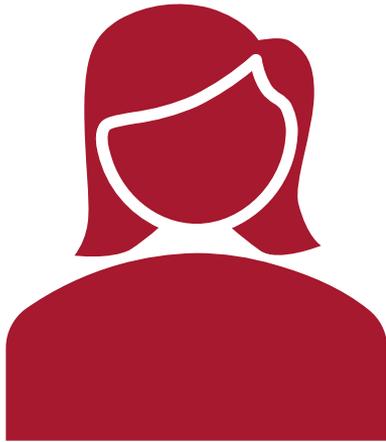
www.calgarytransit.com/

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/getting-around>

Getting around Calgary

My perspective:

- The public transit system is made up of busses and a light rail system (train)
- It's pretty good in my opinion
- Normally, as full-time students you'd get a UPASS which give you access to public transit (but it's suspended for this term)
- To travel around the regions surrounding Calgary (like to the mountains or Banff) often people rent cars, though there is a bus service



Kirsty

Advisor, International
Student Transition Support
(International Student
Services)

Getting around Calgary

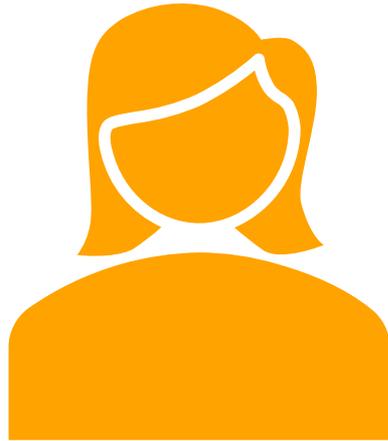
My perspective:

- Depending on where you're coming from, you might think the transit system here works really well—or you might disagree
- Make sure to start off by giving yourself lots of extra time when you travel and dress for the weather, in case you have to wait a long time or miss a bus
- You'll quickly learn what options are most efficient for you
- Be sure to use apps in advance to plan your travel route most effectively



Are people studying remotely from other countries because of visa delays?

Should I travel to Canada for the upcoming term?



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

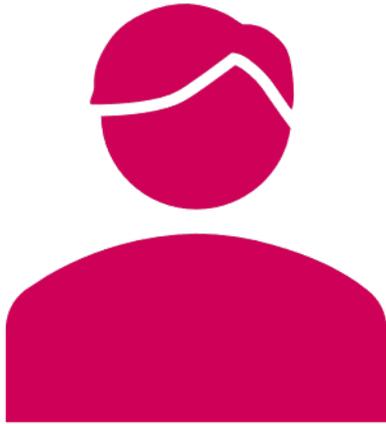
Studying while in Calgary

Studying remotely or relocating to Calgary

My perspective:

- People are studying remotely for a variety of reasons
- Some students might have travelled back home after the school year ended in April 2020 and decided to stay there to continue online

Studying remotely or relocating to Calgary

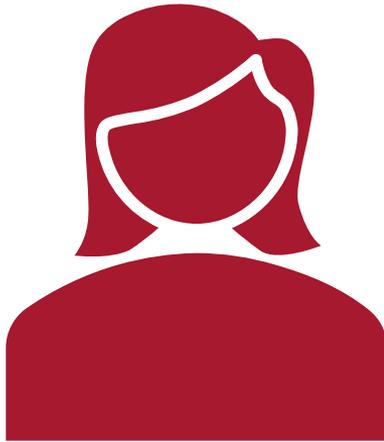


Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student
Masters student in physics & mathematics
Studying remotely from Austria

My perspective:

- I can't say what makes sense for your individual situations
- My experience was that my exchange to Calgary was combined with a scholarship, so they decided that wouldn't pay the scholarship if I wasn't physically studying in-person—for this reason I stayed in Austria



Kirsty
Advisor, International
Student Transition Support
(International Student
Services)

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/covid-19-faqs>

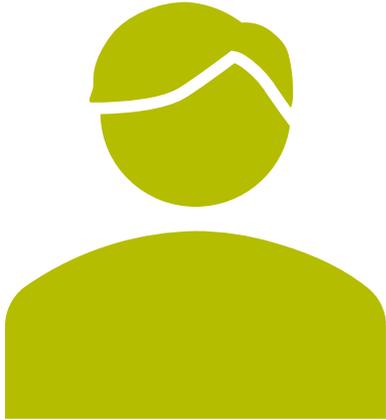
Studying remotely or relocating to Calgary

My perspective:

- Remember, there are currently travel restrictions in place to travel to Canada
- If you aren't familiar with what this means, visit the ISS Covid-19 FAQ page
- If you still have questions, contact the ISS Immigration Advisors (issimmigration@ucalgary.ca)
- We don't yet know the plans for Spring/Summer/Fall terms
- Carefully read any updates from the University in the coming months to help you plan your options



**What are your
suggestions for not
being homesick in
Canada?**



Caleb

Undergraduate Student

last year chemical & bioengineering student

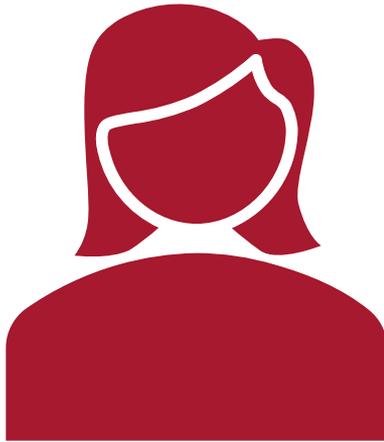
Studying while in Calgary

Working as Program Assistant with ISS

Strategies to manage homesickness

My perspective:

- Technology helps you stay connected—I'm able to talk with my parents almost daily through messenger apps and FaceTime
- I haven't felt super homesick at all because my friends, managers, and supervisors check in on me
- There have been times where they'll say:
 - "Hey, do you miss home? You want to set up a meeting to chat a bit about life or to catch up?"
- The snowy cold winter can feel isolating, especially if you live alone and have no one to talk to in-person—fill that time with activities
 - I started to read more books, or pick up a hobby like cooking or go for walks



Kirsty

Advisor, International
Student Transition Support
(International Student
Services)

www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services

Strategies to manage homesickness

My perspective:

- You might start off being really excited about the winter activities and enjoying a new environment, but you might start to feel you miss home, food, friends later on
- Or, you might be feeling really homesick and isolated at first, but then, as you build a network socially through events, shared interests, and lectures, you may start to feel more adapted to the new environment
- Not everyone's experience will be the same
- Ask for help if you need it
- Be kind to yourself



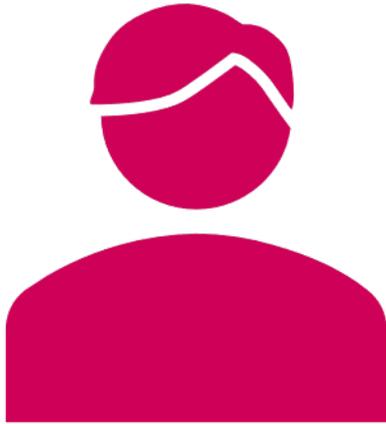
Denise

UCalgary Exchange Student
4th year biological sciences
Studying remotely from Brazil

Strategies to manage homesickness

My perspective:

- I haven't been to Calgary, but I do miss the in-person learning environment
- I miss going to the library, studying with friends, and sitting in the corridors and chatting about life
- A friend recommended I play a video on Youtube while I study that simulates ambience, so you can have library sounds, with a fireplace or people humming
- It can help you imagine you're somewhere else—even a beach or coffee shop



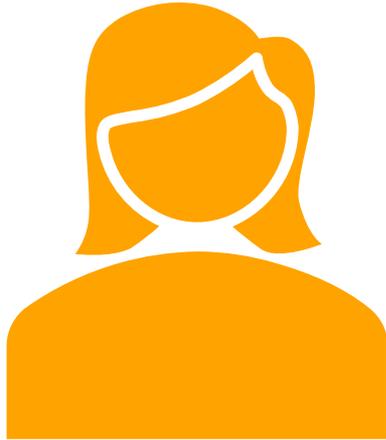
Florian

UCalgary Exchange Student
Masters student in physics & mathematics
Studying remotely from Austria

Strategies to manage homesickness

My perspective:

- I miss meeting with fellow students and discussing things we've learned or solving problems together
- Now, we try to meet online to still hold discussions, it's not a perfect replacement, but it makes the best out the current situation



Anthonia

Masters Student

2nd year biochemistry & molecular biology

Studying while in Calgary

Strategies to manage homesickness

My perspective:

- My family lives in Calgary, but I'm also from Nigeria
- I have found ways to bring my culture into my space especially when I feel homesick, so watching videos of people travelling to Nigeria, where they went and reliving that experience, I play Nigerian music, cook Nigerian food, or go to a store that sells specialty food from Nigeria
- Sometimes it's helpful to distract yourself, replace that emotion temporarily to lift your spirits, change up your space or do something you enjoy, like walk outside or a hobby

Other Ways to help make your adjustment to UCalgary studies as smooth as possible:

- *Carefully* read any **emails from the ISS team**—important reminders, events, and resources for you!
- Check out the **International Student Orientation Module information online**: ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/online-orientation
- Review the ISS **Immigration, Resources, & Events** tabs @ ucalgary.ca/iss
- Attend ISS virtual events & workshops throughout the term
- Attend GSA & SU events



ISS is online

To access advising services, you must contact iss@ucalgary.ca using your **UCalgary email account**. Our advisors will reply to you during advising hours (9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 4 p.m. MST).

[View our COVID-19 FAQs](#)

New to UCalgary?

The Welcome Centre is here to support you as you transition to studying at UCalgary, virtually or in-person.

[Visit their virtual front desk](#)

ucalgary.ca/iss

Our Services



Immigration Information

Important information on visas, study permits and work permits.

[Learn more »](#)



Resources

From arriving at the Calgary International Airport to setting up a Canadian Bank Account, we have resources to assist you!

[Learn more »](#)



ISS Programs

Our programs and events are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of international students.

[Learn more »](#)



Advising

A wide range of support is available to all UCalgary International students.

[Learn more »](#)

Upcoming ISS events

Aug 31



Sep 3



Sep 13





Sign up for the ISS Newsletter

Keep up-to-date with the latest news and upcoming events at ISS, around campus and in the community.

First Name:

ucalgary.ca/iss

Last Name:

Email Address:

Submit

Collection of personal information

Your personal information is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and is required for updating your email subscription preferences. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Office of Advancement at digital@ucalgary.ca





Online videos, information, & resources:

www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/online-orientation



Welcome



Immigration &
travel



Stay healthy &
safe



Navigate a new
classroom culture



Get settled in
Calgary



Resources to start
with!

Upcoming ISS Welcome Webinars

- **Finding Off-Campus Accommodation**
 - Friday, Jan. 15 (10-11 am MST)
- **Finances and Planning for the Year Ahead**
 - Monday, Jan.18 (9-10 am MST)
- **Healthcare & Insurance in Alberta**
 - Tuesday, Jan. 19 (9-10 am MST)
- **Navigating Culture Shock (with Wellness Services)**
 - Tuesday, Jan. 26 (10 - 11:30 am MST)
- **Health Insurance System (with Alberta Health Services)**
 - Tuesday, Feb. 2 (10am-11 am MST)
- **Your Health Care Choices (with Alberta Health Services)**
 - Wednesday, Feb. 3 (10am-11 am MST)
- <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/international-student-orientation>
- <https://events.ucalgary.ca/international-student-services/>



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

**Questions we didn't get
to during the live event...**

Can I enroll a dependent anytime (in the GSA or SU health and dental plans)?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- You must make changes during the “Change of coverage” period, which is typically the first month of your studies (Sept, Jan, or May)
- Learn more on the GSA or SU websites here:
 - <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/health-dental-services/>
 - www.su.ucalgary.ca/programs-services/student-services/health-dental

I'm hoping to arrive in Calgary in August— what orientations should I attend?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- You should attend:
 - International Student Orientation
 - Undergraduate Orientation OR Graduate Student Orientation
 - Any sessions hosted by your program or faculty
 - Social events to start building your network
 - Additional webinars to support your transition to life in Calgary or as a remote learner
 - Faculty of Graduate Studies
 - Leadership and Student Engagement
 - International Student Services
 - Student Success Centre

Can I find a virtual job while I study remotely from outside Canada?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- Typically, in order to receive employment income in Canada, you must have a Social Insurance Number (SIN). This is a confidential nine-digit number.
- You must have a **permanent address in Canada** and a **study permit or work permit** in order to apply for a SIN
 - Therefore, your options would be quite limited for remote work. However, if you find a position you are interested in, you can contact the employer to see if there are any remote opportunities that you are eligible for
- If you're located in Canada, but are studying remotely, there are remote opportunities available, including through the University:
- Browse job opportunities on online job boards/resources and identifying remote opportunities: <https://careers.ucalgary.ca/>
- Careerlink.ucalgary.ca → click on career services → job board (look for University of Calgary job postings)
- <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/finding-job-campus>
- If you have further questions, contact Liliana Gonzalez, Career Development Specialist at: gonzalml@ucalgary.ca

What resource would be best to look for roommates?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- If you are planning to live off-campus, a good option is to use the Students Union curated list of accommodation:
 - <https://www.places4students.com/Places/School?SchoolID=NL3VyhL1KVM%3d>
- It's best to always meet prospective roommates and landlords in-person (safely, distanced, with a mask) before agreeing to any rental arrangement
- Let family or friends know where you are going when you meet prospective roommates or landlords (or bring a friend if possible)
- During the winter months, I also always suggest meeting during the daytime, as opposed to evening, so you aren't traveling in the dark (since the sunsets much earlier in Calgary in the winter, at times close to 4:50-5pm at the earliest)
- More information is also available here: <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/housing>

How has public transit been during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- Due to many people currently working from home, some transit routes are running less often; be sure to check scheduled times before you start your trip
- People still try to keep distance while on the bus or train; but, at peak times this might not always be possible
 - Wear a mask, wash your hands often, and stay off public transit (and at home) if you feel unwell
- Review the Calgary Transit rider resource here:
 - <https://www.calgarytransit.com/news/covid-info-rider-resource>

Is the transportation system efficient for travelling outside Calgary (to go hiking)? Is it essential to rent a car?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- There are buses or private tour companies that you can use in order to get to the mountains without renting a car; prices and quality of experience will vary
 - <https://www.visitcalgary.com/things-to-do/stories-from-calgary/exploring-calgary-and-banff-without-a-car>
- Normally, there are a few ways to get to the mountains by carpooling with other students, attending a group trip hosted by ISS or another office or student club (such as the SU Ski Club) ; offerings are currently limited due to Covid-19
- Many people will rent a car; please note that driving in the winter in Canada can be challenging if you are new to driving in snowy and winter conditions
 - Rental companies also have restrictions based on driver age (sometimes it's limited to 25+)
- Exploring Calgary without a car is definitely doable--just dress for the weather

How do students form study groups with classmates?

Answer provided by International Student Services

- This will depend on the course and your cohort of fellow students
 - Some courses have embedded platforms to help with connecting to your peers, through Discussion Boards on D2L (Brightspace) or other external platforms
 - Some have formal study groups or supports, like Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)
 - Student Success Centre runs virtual study hall: <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/virtual-study-hall>
- You can definitely reach out to classmates to see if they'd like to connect either through a chat group, video call, or another means
- Keep in mind any communication must be in line with student code of conduct and academic integrity regulations. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with what is acceptable and not:
 - <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>
 - <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Thanks for attending!

ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/international-student-orientation