Welcome Guide
for International Students

IEC
International Education Center
Changing Lives in the
Global Community through
Excellence in Education
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Welcome to Santa Monica College. SMC opened in 1929 with just 153 students. Today, SMC is home to over 30,000 students involved in more than 80 fields of study. Among those 30,000 students, over 3,000 are international students representing over 100 countries from around the world. That’s one of the largest international student populations at any college in the U.S.!

You’ve made a great decision to come to SMC. You will find that the college provides many outstanding services and resources especially for you. The International Education Center (IEC) staff includes

- Immigration advisors to help you manage your F-1 student status;
- International academic counselors to guide you through your educational program;
- And specialists who plan social and cultural activities that will introduce you to the LA area and help you meet new friends.

SMC is also the number one transfer institution in California. SMC students transfer to great universities in California like UCLA, USC, the CSUs and Loyola Marymount; as well as colleges and universities throughout the U.S. Other students complete AA degrees, Certificates in their professional fields, or study for personal enrichment. Whatever your academic goal, the IEC staff is here to support you.

We know you’re going to have a wonderful experience here, and we hope that this Welcome Guidebook is helpful as you prepare for your arrival on campus.

Sincerely,

International Education Center
Applying for an F-1 Student Visa

As an international student in the U.S., you will need to have F–1 Student Visa status. If you are in your home country now, and don’t already have your F–1 Student Visa, you will need to apply for one at an American Embassy in your country. There are specific instructions included in your Admission Packet about how to obtain an F–1 Student Visa on the page titled, “How to Process Your I–20.” For more information, you can visit the U.S. government website at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/.

Travel Documents

Most Santa Monica College (SMC) international students arrive at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Upon arrival at the Port of Entry, have the following immigration documents ready for a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer to review. While the officer is inspecting your original documents, students also may be asked general questions. Always answer the questions clearly and honestly. Don’t get nervous, it is a routine procedure.

- **I-20** – SMC has sent you an I–20 form. Please check Section 1 of the form very carefully to be sure that all of your personal information is correct and the spelling of your name matches your passport. Also check that your birth date is correct in the form of Month/Day/Year.

You will need to show this original I–20 form to:

- Obtain an F–1 Student Visa
- Enter the United States every time you travel
- Prove your legal student status throughout your stay in the U.S.

*Be sure to enter the U.S. with your SMC I–20. Do not use the I–20 of another school to enter the U.S. if you plan to study at SMC.*
• **Passport** – A passport is the required identification document for international travel. You will need to show your passport every time you travel, when you report to Santa Monica College, and on many other occasions when official identification and travel documentation are needed. Additionally, there are two very important documents that need to be in your passport at all times: the F–1 Student Visa Stamp, and the I–94.

*Be sure to keep your passport valid at all times. You may renew your passport at your country’s embassy or consulate while you are here in the U.S. Your passport must be valid for at least six months into the future every time you travel internationally.*

• **F-1 Student Visa Stamp** – In order to enter the U.S. as an international student, you must have a valid F–1 Visa Stamp in your passport. When you enter the U.S. on an F–1 Visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status. That means that you may stay in the U.S. as long as you maintain full-time student status. Your visa status will be valid as long as you are a full-time student, even if the expiration date on your visa stamp passes. If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., that is okay. You do not need to make a special trip to renew your visa. However, if you travel outside of the U.S. with an expired visa (or if you changed your status to F–1 while you were already in the U.S. and never received a visa stamp), you will need to obtain a valid F–1 Student Visa Stamp in your passport before you may re-enter the U.S.

*Do not enter the United States on a B–1/B–2 visitor visa or with a Visa Waiver. You will be prohibited from studying in the U.S. prior to obtaining approval of a change to F–1 student status.*
- **I–94** – The I–94 is your Admission Card. If you are flying into the U.S. from another country, you will receive the I–94 on the airplane before landing. You need to fill out the card and present it to the Port of Entry officer along with your passport and I–20 upon arrival at the airport.

The Port of Entry officer will make notes on your I–94 and will usually staple it in your passport. The notes on your I–94 should include “F–1” and “D/S.” These notes mean that you are in the U.S. with F–1 Student Status and that you are able to stay for the Duration of your Status. You must keep the I–94 in your passport at all times.

If you have any questions or concerns about immigration, visit one of the immigration specialists in IEC.

**Health and Dental Care**

Before you leave your country you should have a complete physical and dental examination. You should tell your doctor that you will be in the U.S. to study. Get copies of your medical records if needed. Make sure the records are in English.

Have your teeth examined thoroughly by your dentist. Get any work done before you leave your home country. Dental work in the United States can be very expensive and isn’t covered by SMC health insurance.

**Money Matters**

When you arrive in Santa Monica you will need enough money for immediate expenses including food, transportation, and living arrangements. Do not bring large amounts of cash! There are many safer options available. If you are receiving assistance from your government or private agency, it also may take some time before your funds are distributed to you. Do not bring a lot of money in foreign currency because it is difficult and expensive to exchange. It is a good idea to carry a
combination of U.S. currency, traveler’s checks, cashier’s checks/bank drafts, and credit cards.

- **Cash** – You should bring some of your money in cash. If possible, bring $25 in $1 bills. $1 bills are easy to use for tips for taxis, hotels and restaurants, or taking public transportation. Again, do not carry a lot of cash because if you lose it, it is gone.

- **Traveler’s Checks** – If the checks are in U.S. dollars, the money is available for use immediately. They can be replaced if lost or stolen. You should bring checks in various denominations because checks in large sums can be difficult to use. In addition, checks in any foreign currency may be subject to exchange fees. Once you arrive in the U.S., you can safely and easily deposit checks into a bank account.

- **Cashier’s Checks/Bank Drafts** – These are useful for large sums of money; however, the money may not be available immediately.

- **Credit Cards** – You can pay for your tuition and fees at SMC with a major U.S. credit card (Visa or Master Card). You can also use these cards in the SMC bookstore and for many other purchases in the U.S. It is very difficult for foreign citizens to open credit card accounts in the U.S. If you want to use a credit card from your home country, you will probably need to make arrangements with your family to pay the bills for you. Not all U.S. stores and businesses accept international credit cards.
Packing Your Luggage

What you bring depends largely upon how long you plan to study in the United States and who you are. Make sure you clearly identify your luggage inside and outside with your name and U.S. and overseas address. In your carry-on luggage, keep a change of clothes, toiletries, money, valuables, important documents (passport, visa, 1–20, SMC acceptance letter, arrival instructions), and medications in their original containers.

Do not bring fresh fruit, produce, meat or plants as you are not allowed to bring these items into the U.S.

- **Clothing** – Everyone has personal preferences when it comes to fashion and clothing, so you should bring whatever you feel comfortable wearing. The culture at SMC is casual. We do not have an official dress code at SMC. Most students choose to wear denim jeans and cotton t-shirts. You should bring clothes that are lightweight and heavyweight. You need clothes you can wear in any weather and at least one formal outfit for interviews and formal occasions. In addition, since the campus is near the beach, it is advisable to bring a bathing suit. Once you arrive, you can purchase additional clothes.

- **Footwear** – Typically, most students pack a variety of shoes depending on their preference. These include sandals, hiking shoes, athletic shoes, and dress shoes.

- **Toiletries** – Don’t overstock on personal hygiene products as you can purchase these when you arrive in the US. Any medication should be stored in your carry-on. You may wish to bring an extra pair of eyeglasses and/or contacts in case yours are lost or broken.
LAX Airport

LAX airport in Los Angeles is the closest airport to SMC. Upon arrival, collect your luggage then proceed to the ground transportation. Depending on when your flight arrives, LAX can be quite crowded and overwhelming. Ideally, students should plan to have someone pick them up at LAX. However, if this is not an option, there are alternative forms of transportation available. We have listed a few of your options. For more information on other forms of ground transportation, you can visit the LAX website: http://www.lawa.org/welcomeLAX.aspx.

- **Shuttle Service** – Generally, most shuttle companies operate continuously and can take you from LAX to your housing accommodations. Shuttle vans are shared and seat about 7 people and their baggage. Shuttle stops are designated by an overhead sign bearing the name of the shuttle company.

- **Taxis** – Taxis are available at curbside (inside lanes), right outside baggage claim. If one is not available, you can also order a taxi at one of the kiosks inside of the terminal. Unlike shuttles, taxis do not make stops on the way to drop off other passengers. They take you directly to your destination. Therefore, they may be expensive.

- **Buses** – Although riding on the bus may be the most affordable option for transportation, it is not recommended since you will be traveling with luggage. Buses that service the LAX area include the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, the Metro and Culver City Bus.
Hotels, Motels, and Hostels

Listed below are several hotels, motels, and hostels close to SMC. If you have not already arranged a place to live, be sure to make a reservation prior to your departure. Prices and availability are subject to change. For additional housing resources including temporary or permanent housing, visit the International Education Center homepage: www.smc.edu/international and click “New Student Housing.”

$250 and Higher Range

**Hotel Casa del Mar**
1910 Ocean Front Walk
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone: (310) 581–5533
Toll-free: (800) 898–6999
Fax: (310) 581–5503

**Hotel Shangri-La**
1301 Ocean Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Phone: (310) 394-2791
Fax: (310) 451-3351

**Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel**
1700 Ocean Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Phone: (310) 458–6700
Fax: (310) 458–6761

**Hotel Oceana Santa Monica**
849 Ocean Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Phone: (310) 393–0486
Fax: (310) 458–1182

$150 to $250 Range

**Best Western Gateway Hotel**
1920 Santa Monica Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Phone: (310) 829-9100
Fax: (310) 829–9211

**Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel**
1707 4th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Phone: (310) 395–3332
Fax: (310) 458-6493

**Sheraton Delfina Hotel**
530 West Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone: (310) 399–9344
Fax: (310) 399–2504

**Travelodge Santa Monica**
3102 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone: (800) 231-7679
Fax: (310) 450-8843
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$150 and Lower Range</th>
<th>Hostels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfort Inn Santa Monica</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Youth Hostels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2815 Santa Monica Boulevard</td>
<td>1436 2nd Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90404</td>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (310) 828–5517</td>
<td>Phone: (310) 393–9913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (310) 829–6084</td>
<td>Fax: (310) 393–1769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days Inn</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hostel California</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3007 Santa Monica Boulevard</td>
<td>2221 Lincoln Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90404</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (310) 829–6333</td>
<td>Phone: (310) 305–0250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations: (800) 591–5995</td>
<td>Fax: (310) 305–8590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (310) 829–1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holiday Inn/Beach at Pier</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hostelling International</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 Colorado Avenue</td>
<td>1436 2nd Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90401</td>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (310) 451–0676</td>
<td>Phone: (310) 393–9913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (310) 393–7145</td>
<td>Fax: (310) 393–1769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea Shore Motel</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2637 Main Street</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (310) 392–2787</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: (310) 392–5167</td>
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Here is a checklist of the things that you will need to do in order to begin your study program at SMC.

**Intensive English Program (IEP)**

If you will be starting in the Intensive English Program (IEP), there are 3 steps that you need to take before you begin your classes.

- **Step 1 – Check-in and Take the Level Placement Test**
  First, you will check-in with your documents. Bring the following documents with you:
  - I–20 form
  - Passport (with I–94 Admission Card and F–1 Student Visa Stamp)
  - Local U.S. address

  Next, you will take the level placement test. The test will help determine the best level of Intensive English course for you.

- **Step 2 – Attend Your Information Seminar**
  Before starting your classes, all new international students attend a required Information Seminar. The dates and times of your Check-In, Placement Test, and Information Seminar are included in your Admission Packet.

- **Step 3 – Pay Your SMC Tuition and Fees**
  You will receive an invoice for your program fees at your Information Seminar. Once you have your invoice, you will pay your fees at the Bursar’s office on campus.
If you will be starting in the Academic Program, there are 6 steps that you need to take in your enrollment process.

- **Step 1 - View the Online Orientation & Pre-Enroll in Up to 6 Units**
  You can access the online orientation from the SMC International Student webpage. The online orientation will introduce you to the helpful programs and services that are available at Santa Monica College. The advising portion will provide you with the basic information about enrolling in courses. You should Pre-Enroll in up to 6 units right now. There are detailed instructions on how to pre-enroll in your admission packet.

- **Step 2 - Check-In at SMC**
  Upon arrival, you need to check-in at the International Education Center. Bring your I-20, your passport, I-94 Card and your local US address with you.

- **Step 3 - Attend Your Information Seminar**
  All new international students must attend a mandatory Information Seminar. You have already selected the date of your seminar and a confirmation is included in your Admission Packet. At the seminar you will receive more in-depth information and meet the staff members who will assist you in becoming a successful student at Santa Monica College.

- **Step 4 - Take the Assessment Tests**
  You will take assessment tests in English/ESL and math after you have attended your Information Seminar. These tests will help to determine which classes are right for you. Visit the SMC Assessment Center for study guides.
Step 5 – See an International Student Counselor
After the assessment tests, you will meet with an international student counselor who will help you develop a First Semester Education Plan of recommended courses. If you have college or university transcripts from your home country, bring a copy of your transcripts in English to show your counselor.

Step 6 – Finish Enrollment and Pay Your SMC Tuition and Fees
The last step is to finish enrolling in the remainder of your units. You will enroll in your classes and pay your fees online with Corsair Connect.

Additional Items for all Students

• Ride the Big Blue Bus for Free after purchasing your SMC student ID and current enrollment sticker at the Bursar’s office.

• Purchase your textbooks at the SMC bookstore. Your professors will give you a course syllabus with a list of required texts.

• For Academic Program students, maintain your F–1 status by enrolling and completing 12 units per semester.

• For Intensive English Program students in order to maintain your F-1 status, you must adhere to the IEP Attendance Policy.
Cultural Adjustment

Most people who travel to another country to work or study for a significant period of time go through an adjustment period to the new culture. It’s important to remember that adapting to a new environment takes time, and students should be prepared for high points and low points. Although no two people will experience it exactly the same, there are some common stages to the cultural adjustment process. Knowing about the stages ahead of time may help prepare you to cope with them when you arrive.

The typical pattern of cultural adjustment consists of four distinct stages: **Honeymoon, Crisis, Recovery** and **Adjustment**. Later, this cycle is repeated upon re-entry to one’s own country when he or she returns home. These stages of cultural adaptation often affect students’ moods. The stages’ effects on students’ mood are illustrated in this "w-curve."

![W-curve illustration](image)
Four Phases of Adjustment

- **Honeymoon** – Many students feel very happy for some time immediately after their arrival. In this phase, you feel excited and fascinated by your new experiences and the new environment.

- **Crisis** – When you reach the crisis stage, you are experiencing "culture shock." This is the most difficult stage in the process. The "honeymoon" is over and the realities of academic, social, and everyday life might seem overwhelming. You might feel alienated, confused and depressed by the cultural differences between your home and the U.S. You may feel angry because you might think the customs of the new culture are unreasonable or unfavorable. You may also feel disappointed and discouraged because you think you are not “fitting in.” During this phase, students often restrict their social interactions to only fellow international students.

- **Recovery** – The third stage is marked by recovery. You find you can understand cultural clues better. Your attitude towards American culture and life in general improves. You might even find yourself laughing about stage two, or helping other international students who are suffering from culture shock.

- **Adjustment** – In the adjustment phase, your anxiety is largely in the past and you find yourself in a stage of equilibrium. You feel comfortable enough to assess your host country objectively, and you feel free to express both negative and positive opinions about your experience. It is during this stage that many students acknowledge that surviving culture shock has been a source of insight and personal growth.
"Culture shock" is not "shocking" at all! It is a perfectly normal part of learning to live in a new cultural environment. At some point during your stay in the United States, it is likely that you will feel overwhelmed and frustrated by the differences between your culture and the U.S. culture. The symptoms may range from mild to serious, but don’t despair! There are strategies for you to try in order to cope with your culture shock.

**Culture shock symptoms include:**

- Uneasiness/general anxiety
- Loss of appetite
- Homesickness
- Low energy
- Irritability
- Depression
- Hyper-sensitivity
- Insomnia
- Loss of perspective
- Headaches
- Digestive problems

**Strategies to Cope with Culture Shock**

- **"Be prepared”** – Understand the phases of cultural adaptation, and expect that culture shock will probably affect you in one way or another.

- **Know yourself** – Clarify your own values and examine your own assumptions. Your responses to situations and people in the new culture will make more sense if you have a clear idea of what is important to you personally.
• **Be philosophical** – Understand that this is a learning process and that you will benefit from it.

• **Listen and observe** – Since there are new rules, norms, and cues that may be unfamiliar, you need to listen and observe communication behavior very carefully. Analyze verbal and nonverbal messages like a scientist. When something surprises or confuses you, investigate!

• **Ask questions and be honest** – You cannot assume that you always know what is going on, or that you always understand a particular communication. Most Americans will be very helpful if you need an explanation of something, but you need to be honest and ask.

• **Try not to judge** – You will see many things that are different from your own culture. Don't label anything as "good" or "bad" in comparison to your own culture. Most customs, habits, and ideas are simply different from the ones that you know.

• **Try to empathize** – Try to put yourself in another person's place, and look at the situation from his/her perspective. Culture influences how different people interpret the same situation.

• **Be open and curious** – Avoid isolating yourself with people from the same cultural background. Try new things and talk to different people. Discover how and why certain things are done.

*The more you explore, the more you'll learn.*
• **Keep a sense of humor** – It is likely that you will make mistakes as you explore a new culture. Laughing at your mistakes will encourage others to respond to you in a friendly manner and help you learn from them. Often the first sign of recovery from culture shock is the reappearance of one's sense of humor.

• **Try to accept frustration** – Learning to function in a new culture is not easy, and it is natural to feel anxious and frustrated at times. Realize that these feelings are normal.

• **Get involved** – The more you put into the experience, the more you'll learn from it. Make an effort to meet people, get involved in activities, and learn about the people and their culture.

• **Stay positive** – Don't complain about your experience, try to find someone who has gone through this experience and can offer you good advice and comfort.

• **Talk to someone** – Find friends who are going through a similar process, call your family back home, or see a counselor. If your culture shock symptoms are difficult to manage, or are interfering with your daily activities, visit the Psychological Services office. The trained counselors are from many cultural backgrounds and can help you through the difficult parts of cultural adaptation. In the U.S., it is very common to talk with a counselor about personal difficulties. Take advantage of the resources available to you at the college- *there are many people who are here to help you!*
Housing

Comfortable, safe housing is an important concern for our international students. Although Santa Monica does not provide on-campus housing or on-campus student dormitories, the International Education Center — Counseling (IECC) is happy to assist students with many housing options the Santa Monica area offers. Please remember that securing housing is your responsibility, therefore, we strongly recommend that you arrive in Santa Monica early enough to have adequate time to find suitable housing and to get settled in your new environment before beginning your studies. Temporary housing should be arranged at a local hotel or youth hostel, while you are searching for a more permanent home.

- **Homestay Programs** – If you prefer to live with an American host family, you may wish to look into a Homestay Program. These programs are arranged through private companies that charge a fee to match you with a compatible, pre-screened family. Your room and board accommodations will depend on your personal preferences as well as those of the Homestay Program. Please visit the SMC international website: [www.smc.edu/international](http://www.smc.edu/international) for a list of Homestay providers. You should plan to apply for a Homestay 6-8 weeks before arriving in the country.

- **Apartment Rentals** – There are a variety of apartments available for rent in Santa Monica and the surrounding neighborhoods. Free lists may be found in local newspapers, on the internet, or at the IECC.

- **Shared living space** – Some students choose to share housing while attending SMC. IECC maintains a list of rooms available for rent. Individuals who wish to share their apartment/house make their own terms, so be prepared for any move-in costs including first and last month’s rent, as well as a security deposit. Keep in mind, however, that this list is offered as a free service and SMC
does not endorse or guarantee the availability of these listings. Remember to always bring a friend with you when you visit a private home that offers a room to rent.

- **Dormitory Style Housing** – Students sometimes also choose to live in a more traditional student housing setting. These programs are arranged through private organizations that charge a fee based on the services provided. Examples include Fish Living, University Cooperative Housing Association, and Universal Student Housing. Typically, the living accommodations are furnished and meals may be provided. For more information, contact IECC.

### Banking

Once you arrive in the U.S., you should open a bank account as soon as possible to keep your money in a secure location. In the U.S., you can make purchases and pay bills through a combination of check writing, ATM (automated teller machine), check or credit card. A checking account is the type of bank account most students have. It will allow you to deposit your money and then write checks against the balance. To open a bank checking account, you will need your passport, 1–20, 1–94, a secondary form of identification, a U.S. address, and some money to deposit into your account. The following are just a few of the banks local to SMC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank of America</th>
<th>Chase Bank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3320 Ocean Park Blvd.</td>
<td>1333 4th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 247–2080</td>
<td>(310) 458–1468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB 6, 8, and Sunset</td>
<td>BBB 2, 4, 9 and Downtown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City National Bank</th>
<th>Wells Fargo</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1620 26th Street</td>
<td>2940 Ocean Park Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 264–2900</td>
<td>(310) 450–0749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB Pico, Crosstown, 5</td>
<td>BBB 6, 8, and Sunset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** BBB—Listed are Big Blue Bus lines that can take you to or near these businesses
Restaurants

There are lots of places to eat and a wide variety of foods available in Southern California, especially in and around Santa Monica. We have everything from high-end cuisine, vegetarian/vegan friendly restaurants, to burgers and fries. For more information, visit: http://www.santamonica.com/where-to-eat/.

Grocery Stores/Supermarkets

There are many grocery stores/supermarkets located in Santa Monica and the surrounding areas. They sell a wide range of foods and merchandise including fresh produce, organic/international/ethnic foods, household items, etc. The various types of places are listed below. Try them all to get an idea of what is available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Albertsons</th>
<th>Trader Joe’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2627 Lincoln Blvd.</td>
<td>3212 Pico Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90405</td>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 452–3811</td>
<td>(310) 581–0253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB 3, Rapid 3</td>
<td>BBB 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Opportunity</th>
<th>Vons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1525 Broadway</td>
<td>1311 Wilshire Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90404</td>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 451–8902</td>
<td>(310) 395–4510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB 1, 10, Crosstown</td>
<td>BBB Pico, Crosstown, 2, 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ralphs</th>
<th>Whole Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1644 Cloverfield Blvd.</td>
<td>500 Wilshire Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90404</td>
<td>Santa Monica, CA 90401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 582–3900</td>
<td>(310) 395–4510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB 5, Pico, Sunset</td>
<td>BBB Downtown, 2, 4, 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smart and Final</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12210 Santa Monica Blvd.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(310) 207–8688</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB 1, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** BBB—Listed are Big Blue Bus lines that can take you to or near these businesses
Convenience Stores

These are small stores open late that sell items such as snacks, soft drinks, newspapers, toiletries and some groceries. The largest convenience chain is 7–Eleven Food Store.

Farmers’ Market

These markets are held outside where local farmers sell goods such as organic fruits, vegetables, fresh flowers and other products. They are usually located in public areas, on certain days and times during the week. There are several farmers’ markets in Santa Monica. To find times and locations of a particular market, visit: http://www01.smgov.net/farmers_market/.

Transportation

There are a variety of options to commute to Santa Monica College such as walking to campus, riding a bicycle, driving a vehicle or taking public transportation. Students who drive may either park on the main campus or park at one of the satellite campuses. Parking is limited. Street parking in the surrounding neighborhood is restricted and SMC parking decals are not valid on these streets.

- **Riding your Bicycle** – Santa Monica College has an active bicycle community. Riding your bike is a great alternative to driving to campus. It is environmentally friendly, economical and healthy. However, biking in Los Angeles can be challenging. Be sure to plan ahead by mapping the safest route possible and following basic safety measures. For more information on bike paths, you can visit the Santa Monica College Transportation and Parking website at: http://www.smc.edu/transportation/.
• **Driving a vehicle** – If you plan to drive a car while in the U.S., you must have a driver’s license. California law states that if you are visiting and have a valid driver’s license from your home state or country, you may drive in our state without getting a California driver’s license as long as your home state/country license remains valid. However, if you are a student, take a job in California or move here, you must get a California driver’s license if you want to drive. Please note that liability insurance is required for all drivers of motor vehicles in California. You must carry your insurance card, driver’s license, and current registration with you at all times while driving. For more information, you can visit the California DMV website: [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

• **Public Transportation** – There are three different forms of public transportation SMC students use to commute to and from campus. The most widely used form is the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus.

• **Big Blue Bus** – The Big Blue Bus is **Free** to all SMC students with an active SMC student ID and current enrollment sticker. The Big Blue Bus provides local service in Santa Monica and West Los Angeles. Service extends to the Pacific Palisades, UCLA, LAX, Venice, and Downtown Los Angeles. Visit the Bursar’s Office to obtain an SMC student ID and enrollment sticker. Timetables can be obtained at: [http://www.bigbluebus.com/smc/](http://www.bigbluebus.com/smc/).

• **Metro Bus and Rail** – The Metro System offers close to 200 bus and rail lines to take you where you want to go in LA County. Exact change is required. Timetables and fares can be obtained at: [http://www.metro.net/around/](http://www.metro.net/around/).
• **Culver City Bus** – The Culver City Bus system serves the Westside communities of Venice, Westchester, Westwood, West Los Angeles, Palms, Marina Del Rey, Rancho Park, Mar Vista, Century City, and Culver City. Exact change is required. Timetables and fares can be obtained at: http://www.culvercity.org/Government/Transportation/bus.aspx.

**Weather**

Santa Monica enjoys mild temperatures and clear skies during most of the year. The average daytime winter temperature ranges from 60 to 75 °F (16 to 24 °C) and evening temperatures are about 20 degrees cooler. Typically, it rains during the end of the winter months and the beginning of the spring. During the late spring to beginning of the summer, the weather is mild, often overcast and rainy. Summers can be dry and hot, reaching 95 °F (35 °C) during the day and dropping to 60 °F (16 °C) in the evening. The breeze from the Pacific Ocean blows year round, therefore temperatures can change unpredictably.

**Places to Visit**

The city of Santa Monica has plenty to offer. There are a wide variety of events and activities happening in Santa Monica as well as in the local surrounding communities. Take a stroll on the Santa Monica Pier or ride the historic Carousel and solar-powered Ferris Wheel. Shop and dine at the 3rd Street Promenade, a large outdoor shopping area that stretches three blocks. Drive to the Santa Monica Mountains and enjoy the great outdoors. For more information, you can visit the Santa Monica Tourism website at: http://www.santamonica.com/.
SMC Health Insurance

Health care in the U.S. is very expensive. Insurance is necessary to manage the costs of treatment in the case of illness or injury. All international students at SMC are required to purchase the International Student Health Insurance Plan through SMC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your health insurance is provided by:</th>
<th>And managed by:</th>
<th>Claims are administered by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy #: CHH0058771</td>
<td>1437 7th Street Suite #400 Santa Monica, CA 90401 (800) 537–1777 <a href="http://www.renstudent.com">www.renstudent.com</a></td>
<td>P.O. Box 6040 Agora Hills, CA 91376 (800) 468–4343 <a href="http://www.piaclaims.com">www.piaclaims.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After you pay a $25 co-pay for each visit to a doctor, and a $100 deductible per year (waived if you obtain a referral from the Health Services Center), your health insurance will pay for 100% of the Allowable Charges for a Preferred Provider or 70% of Reasonable and Customary charges for a non-Preferred Provider for covered medical conditions. Please see the International Student Health Insurance Plan policy brochure or contact Personal Insurance Administrations (PIA) for questions or information about benefits, or what conditions are covered.

In order for your bills to be paid, you must follow these basic rules:

- You must visit the campus Health Services Center first, unless it is closed or your situation is an emergency. The Health Services Center will give you a referral form to see an off-campus doctor, if necessary.
If you need to see a doctor off-campus or go to the hospital, be sure the doctor or hospital is a member of the Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). For a list of providers, visit: www.renstudent.com/smc.

Be sure to fill out and sign your claim forms, and then mail them along with your bills to Personal Insurance Administrators, Inc.

For detailed information about your health insurance, please read your policy brochure. For answers to Frequently Asked Questions, you may pick up a list at the International Education Center. And for any further questions or assistance in using your health insurance, please visit International Education Counseling Center.

Health Services Center at SMC

Phone: (310) 434–4262
Location: Northeast corner of the Cayton Center Complex
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.*

* First Friday of every month open at 9:00 am.
Summer and winter session hours may vary.

The Health Services Center provides cost-effective primary health care services to currently enrolled Santa Monica College students. They focus on health promotion, illness treatment and prevention, referrals for needed services, health education, and other services most needed by college students. They are staffed by registered nurses, health assistances and clinical psychologists.
SMC Health Service Center services include:

- Blood pressure screening
- Dental insurance info
- Emergency/first aid treatment
- Free condoms
- Gynecological services
- Health related pamphlets and literature
- HIV/STD testing & counseling
- Immunizations/vaccinations
- Over-the-counter medication
- Medical care and intervention
- Red Cross blood donation
- Referrals to specialists
- Tuberculin skin test

Psychological Services at SMC

Phone: (310) 434–4503
Location: Liberal Arts building, room 110.
Office Hours: Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Psychological Services is staffed by licensed psychologists and provides personal counseling services for SMC students. To schedule an appointment, you may go directly to the office or call.

SMC Psychological Services include:

- Crisis intervention
- Individual psychotherapy
- Referral services
- Substance abuse counseling
Local Medical Centers and Hospitals

If you need medical attention, but the SMC Health Services Center is closed, you can go to an urgent care center. Santa Monica Bay Urgent Care is the nearest center to SMC.

**Santa Monica Bay Urgent Care**

**Phone:** (310) 827–3700  
**Location:** 4560 Admiralty Way, Suite #100, Marina Del Rey  
**Office Hours:** Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

If your situation is an emergency, you should call 911 or go directly to an emergency room. There are two emergency rooms near campus:

**Nethercutt Emergency Center at Santa Monica/UCLA Medical Center**

**Phone:** (310) 319–4870  
**Location:** 1225 15th Street, Santa Monica

**St. John's Health Center Emergency Room**

**Phone:** (310) 829–5511  
**Location:** 1328 22nd Street, Santa Monica
Health and Wellness Tips

College students lead very busy lives, and sometimes taking care of your health doesn't seem like a very high priority. However, maintaining good physical and mental health is essential to achieving student success!

- **Get enough sleep** – When it comes to balancing busy schedules, students tend to sacrifice their sleep time first. Don't do this. Lack of sleep can affect your ability to concentrate in your classes, and it can weaken your immune system which will make you more vulnerable to colds and the flu. So try to stick to a regular sleeping schedule, and aim for 7 to 8 hours a night.

- **Eat sensibly** – Attending college can make it hard to eat a healthy diet. Students often eat late at night and consume too much junk food. A bad diet can result in low energy and weight gain. To maintain a healthful diet, you should:
  
  - **Choose nutritious foods** – Limit the amount of fast food and processed foods that you eat. Those foods are high in fat, sugar, and salt. Replace those foods with alternatives like fruits, vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and yogurt.
  
  - **Always eat breakfast** – Skipping breakfast actually contributes to weight gain and makes it hard to concentrate in class. You don't have to eat a big breakfast; a bowl of cereal or a cup of yogurt will make you a happier and healthier human being.
  
  - **Eat enough** – Many college students have problems with eating disorders. If left untreated, eating disorders can be dangerous. If you think you might have psychological issues with food or body image, seek help at the Health Services Center or Psychological Services at SMC.
- **Drink water** – Most people do not get nearly enough water. Get a refillable water bottle and carry it around with you.

- **Don't drink too much alcohol** – Excessive drinking can lead to addiction, alcohol poisoning, and unsafe behavior. Know your limit! Remember the U.S. legal drinking age is 21 years old. Alcohol is not allowed on campus.

- **Don’t smoke** – We all now know the dangers of smoking and the damage that it does to your health. However, the temptation to smoke can be great during college. Avoid starting, and if you are already a smoker, the single most beneficial decision you can make for your health is to quit. Please note that SMC is a non-smoking campus.

- **Get regular exercise** – Physical activity helps you stay healthy in both body and mind. It can help you maintain healthy body weight, focus better in your classes, and manage your stress! Even if you’re busy with schoolwork, there are many ways to incorporate regular exercise into your schedule.

  - Take full advantage of walking opportunities! Even if you have a car, make walking your main form of transportation to, from, and on campus.

  - Enroll in one of the many physical education classes at SMC such as tennis, boxing, or yoga.

  - Visit the SMC/Santa Monica City Swim Center for SMC student swim hours.
• **Learn to relax** – This can be a difficult goal for college students, but do your best. Learn to put things in perspective and plan relaxation activities into your schedule.

• **Get psychological counseling if you need it** – College students frequently suffer from anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addiction, and homesickness. Although these conditions are common, they can be debilitating and dangerous. The campus Psychological Services Center offers free counseling to help with these issues.

• **Have safe sex** – You've heard this lecture before, but it's a lecture you need to remember. Communicate with your partner. Always use a condom. Know the physical and emotional risks that come with sexual activity. Behave respectfully and responsibly toward yourself and your partner.

• **Visit the campus Health Services Center** – The Health Services Center offers many free and discounted services to help you stay well, including free annual gynecological exams for female students. The Health Services Center is your first stop if you think you may need any kind of medical care.

**SMC Police Department**

**Phone:**  (310) 434–4300 (non-emergency)
9–1–1 (emergency)

**Location:**  1718 Pearl St.

**Hours:**  Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

* After 3:00 p.m., use the yellow call box located on the west side of the office for assistance.
SMC Police Department services include:

- Lost and found
- Reporting a crime/crime statistics
- Parking information
- Emergency preparedness

Safety Tips

- Report all crimes.
- Do not leave valuables unattended. Theft is the most common crime on campus. Always watch your textbooks, laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players.
- Always lock your car and do not leave valuables in your car.
- Do not carry a lot of cash or expensive valuables with you.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- At night, walk in well lit areas and do not walk alone. Walk with confidence. If you would like a SMC representative to escort you after dark from campus to your bus stop or car, call (310) 434–4300.
- Yellow emergency phones/call boxes are located across campus.
- Alcohol and illegal drugs are not allowed on campus.
International Education Center/Counseling

1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone: (310) 434-3962
Fax: (310) 434-3651
Email: intled@smc.edu
Website: www.smc.edu/international

SMC Departments

- Academic Programs
  Click the link “Academic Programs” on the SMC website: www.smc.edu

- Assessment Center
  www.smc.edu/assessment

- Associated Students
  www.smc.edu/associated_students/

- Homepage
  www.smc.edu

- Student Life and Services
  Click the link “Student Life and Services” on the SMC website: www.smc.edu

Immigration

- F-1 Visa Information
  http://travel.state.gov/visa/

Other

- Big Blue Bus Line
  www.bigbluebus.com

- City of Santa Monica
  www.smgov.net

- LAX
  www.lawa.org/welcomelAX.aspx

- U.S. Postal Service
  www.usps.gov
International Education Center
1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, California 90405
www.smc.edu/international

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