International Student Mentorship Program Information Session for new UCalgary International Students

Kirsty Gruber
Program Coordinator | Mentorship Program
International Student Services
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

imentor@ucalgary.ca
Session Agenda

• Introduction to International Student Services
• Overview of the Mentorship Program
  • What is a mentee?
  • What is a mentor?
  • What do a mentor/mentee do together?
  • Why should you participate?
  • What’s the timeline?
• Questions
UCalgary International Student Services (ISS)
MSC 275= International Student Services
International Student Services & Programs

- International Student Mentorship Program
- ISS Events
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Advising & Student Support
- USpeak Global Program
- Orientation Events
- Global Families Program

- Website Resources
- Welcome Centre
- Social Media
Connecting with ISS

• In-person MSC 275 or remotely
  • Monday-Friday, 9:00-12:00 pm & 1-4:00 pm
  • No appointment necessary

• Website: www.ucalgary.ca/iss

• ISS COVID FAQ: https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/covid-19-faqs

• E-mail: international.advice@ucalgary.ca

• Immigration E-mail: issimmigration@ucalgary.ca

• Newsletter: weekly updates www.ucalgary.ca/iss

• Events calendar: https://events.ucalgary.ca/international-student-services/

• Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/UCalgaryISS/

• Instagram: @ucalgaryiss
Support Network across Campus

- Career Services
- Wellness Centre
- Leadership & Student Engagement
- Student Success Centre
- Academic Faculties & Departments
- Community Resources

International Student Mentors
What is a mentee?
Fall 2020: unexpected circumstances

Instruction in the fall term of the University of Calgary will be provided through a combination of face-to-face and online or remote learning. We have arrived at this approach after review of public health guidelines, consultation with public health experts and consideration of our unique circumstances.

- President and Vice-Chancellor Ed McCauley, May 14, 2020

International Student Mentorship Program

• This program matches new international students with current UCalgary students. The goals are:
  • To welcome new international students to the University of Calgary community
  • To provide peer-advice about adapting to studying at the University of Calgary (remotely or in-person) and adapting to life in Calgary
  • To build connections among new international students starting their studies (online or in-person) and current UCalgary students
What is a mentee?

A new-to-UCalgary international student starting studies in Fall 2020 *in Calgary or remotely*
What is a mentee?

Remote Studying for foreseeable future

Delayed arrival due to COVID-19

Arriving in Calgary in time for unique Fall 2020 term
Common Experiences

- Adjusting to a new culture
- Managing Finances as a student
- Away from Family
- Remote Learning
- Things to do in Calgary (or remotely)
- Getting settled in Calgary
- Meeting new people
- Adjusting to a new climate
Navigating a New Experience

Starting UCalgary Studies

Physically arriving in Calgary
Why might a mentee sign up?

• Get advice about settling in Calgary
• Learn about social things to do in Calgary
• Get advice about studying in their program or faculty
• Learn about UCalgary resources (remote/in-person)
• Meet new people and build social network
What is a mentor?
What is a mentor?

A mentor is a “trusted friend or guide”.

An International Mentorship Program Mentor is a student who has experienced life at the University of Calgary and wishes to be a resource or helping hand to another student as they navigate their own UCalgary experience.
What does a mentor do?

With you (as a mentee)
1. Send you a Welcome Email
2. Remotely reach out to you at least once a month
3. Remote “Welcome Reception” each term
4. Try to attend a remote social event each month with you

With coordinator
1. Remote group “Mentor Check-in” each term
2. Submit surveys to report on experience
3. Add position to CCR

Questions? Contact imentor@ucalgary.ca or visit ucalgary.ca/iss
How are mentors matched with mentees?

1. Level of Study (undergrad+undergrad; grad+grad)
2. Area of Study (same faculty or program)
3. Shared Interests (based on application)
4. In Calgary or Expect to be soon
What do a mentor and mentee do together?
A mentor will...

• Listen to your experiences and share their own
• Share student life tips
• Provide helpful recommendations for services, resources, activities, and more
• Help you get connected to important resources on campus for specific situations
• Ask you questions to learn more about you, your interests, and study plans
What will you do with your Mentor?

• Emails or Video Meetings
• Zoom Mentorship Meet & Greets
• Attend virtual events together “choose your own adventure”
  • UCalgary
  • Community
Remote Communication

• Using email and Zoom
• There may be time & technology differences
• Remember: your mentor is a student too!
• Be clear and honest: clarify misunderstandings right away
• If you have any concerns about any communication or anything along the way, I’m here to help (imentor@ucalgary.ca)
Mentor Limits

• Mentors are **not counselors**.
  • ...they *can* help get you connected to Student Wellness Services if you need confidential mental health support

• Mentors are **not academic advisors**.
  • ... they can provide advice about their own experiences in classroom or learning environments and recommend who to contact with questions

• Mentors may not know all the answers and are not available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  • ...they *can* refer to you places that can help
Mentor Limits

• Mentors are not allowed to answer any questions about **Canadian immigration**
  
  • *they can help you contact our friendly ISS immigration advising team*

• Mentors are not **Alberta Health Services representatives**
  
  • *they can advise you how to access online and physical health services related to covid or just general wellness*
When to contact the program coordinator?

• You haven’t heard from your mentor
• You have a question you don’t think your mentor can help with
• You have concerns about how your mentor is communicating with you
• You are changing your plans (eg. deferring your studies)
• You’re mentor has been exceptionally helpful and you want to recognize them
Summary: why to participate!
Why should you participate as a new student?

• A personalized welcome (remotely)
• Connection with an upper year student in a similar area of study who can share their experience as a UCalgary student and about living in Calgary/Canada
• A way to make social connections remotely and connect with other new students too
• Attend specific events within the program or that interest you & your mentor
• It’s free!
• Many mentees choose to participate in their later years too
Program timeline
Timeline

• Matches are happening now through start of September (the sooner you apply, the quicker you are matched)

• You’ll receive a welcome email from your mentor

• You’ll be invited to attend a remote welcome event in late August/early September

• Communication and events continue throughout the term

• You’ll receive the odd email from me to check-in and a survey at the end of the program for your feedback
Questions?

*Please type them in the chat box.*
Other Ways to help make your adjustment to UCalgary studies as smooth as possible:

• ISS Resources, the New International Student Checklist, & the Self-Guided Tour* page (*up next week)

• Attend other New International Student Information Series Sessions (See next slide)

• Review the International Student Orientation Module information online August 25! Includes short videos and advice from staff across campus specific for you.

• Attend the live panels for international students (and submit your questions in advance):
  • Undergrad/exchange students: Sept 1. 9:30 a.m. MDT (Calgary time)
  • Grad students: Sept 2. 9:30 a.m. MDT (Calgary time)

• Parent & Family orientation (for your parents/family): August 25

• Attend campus-wide orientation events remotely Sept 2-4

• Learn more at: https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/international-student-orientation
Other Upcoming Sessions & Events:

- **How to Prepare for Your Arrival in Calgary during the Covid-19 Pandemic:** Thursday, August 13 (11 am MDT)
- **Resources for Students with Families:** Tuesday, August 18 (11 am MDT) & Tuesday, Sept 22 (11 am MDT)
- **Finances and Planning for the Year Ahead:** Wednesday, August 19 (11 am MDT) & Thursday, Sept 17 (11 am MDT)
- **Finding Off-Campus Accommodation:** Wednesday, August 26 (11 am MDT)
- **Healthcare & Insurance in Alberta:** Thursday, August 27 (11 am MDT) & Tuesday, Sept 15 (11 am MDT)

Learn more or register at [https://events.ucalgary.ca/international-student-services/](https://events.ucalgary.ca/international-student-services/)
Thank you
Please sign up if you’re interested.

Coordinator contact details:  
imentor@ucalgary.ca

Kirsty