

What to/What Not to Bring to the U.S.

OIS has compiled a list of items recommended by most USC international students that new international students should bring from their home country:

WHAT TO BRING

- **Travel documents:** Passport, U.S. Visa in the passport, I-20 (for F-1 students) or a DS-2019 (for J-1 students), any previous I-20s/DS-2019s.
- **Academic documents:** Previous transcripts, degrees/diplomas/certificates
- **Driver's license:** The state of California recognizes a foreign driver's license as long as it is valid, and the holder is a resident of the country issuing the document. The California [Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) website provides more information on this topic. The procedures for obtaining a driver's license in the state of California are provided at the [California DMV](#) website.
- **A good dictionary:** Purchase a reliable dictionary that explains American English in native language
- **Cash:** Bring some U.S. currency - around \$200 - in small denominations (\$5, \$10, \$20) to help through the first few days before traveler's checks are cashed. This will come in handy during the flight to Los Angeles, to pay for transportation to USC, a couple of meals, a phone card, etc.
- **Pre-paid phone card:** While this is not a necessity, it is one of the handiest items to have, especially during the first few days in the U.S. for students who do not have a cell phone upon their arrival. Having a pre-paid phone card removes the need for coins, which are not easy to obtain upon arrival but needed to use the public phone. The phone card may be ideal when students want to communicate with designated or emergency contacts, or to inform friends and family in the U.S. of their arrival.
- **Photocopies of travel and academic documents:** Students should have photocopies of the main pages of their passport with expiration date, passport number and date of birth, visa page in passport, I-20/DS-2019, transcripts, degrees/diplomas/certificates. Students should keep a set of photocopies in each piece of luggage, in case one of their bags are misplaced or lost in transit.
- **Important numbers:** Students should note their passport number, travelers' checks numbers, flight number, and an emergency contact number on a single sheet of paper. They should keep it with them so they don't have to take out all the important documents every time they need to fill out a form. Students should leave a list of all these important numbers with someone in their home country as well.
- **Proper clothing:** The weather in Los Angeles during the summer is about 85 degrees Fahrenheit (about 30 degrees Celsius) during the day and about 65 degrees Fahrenheit (about 18 degrees Celsius) during the evening. Students should plan ahead so they are dressed appropriately for the weather.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- **DC or 220-240 appliances:** In the U.S., 110-120 electricity and AC power is the standard. Plugging in an appliance with different electrical standards can ruin appliances or cause other damage.
- **Local foods and pots and pans:** A wide variety of food and cuisines are available in LA. The local grocery stores and supermarkets around USC are well-stocked with international ingredients and kitchenware.
- Fruits, vegetables, meats and other prohibited items set by the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#)