

**COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE**

Global Education Office

*Welcomes You*



**PRE-DEPARTURE  
HANDBOOK**

*Congratulations on your admission to*



**Community Colleges of Spokane**

**Spokane Community College**

**Spokane Falls Community College**

*We look forward to meeting you  
on campus very soon!*

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

• <b>Pre-Departure Checklist</b> ..... 3	• <b>Getting Around in Spokane</b> ..... 8	• <b>Probation and Dismissal Policies</b> .. 12
• <b>Welcome Week</b> ..... 4	Airport Pickup	Academic Warning
Test	City Transportation	Academic Probation
Register	Cycling around Spokane	Academic Suspension
Books	Driving a Car	Final Academic Suspension
First Day of Class	<i>Rules of the Road</i>	Avoid Academic Problems
• <b>Schedule of Costs</b> ..... 5	• <b>Getting Around Campus</b> ..... 10	• <b>School Terms to Learn</b> ..... 13
Schedule	• <b>Academic Matters</b> ..... 10	• <b>Living and Studying</b>
Have Funds Available	CTCLINK and CANVAS	<b>in Spokane, WA, USA</b> ..... 14
Housing Payments	Syllabus	Weather
Personal Spending Money	Attendance	Culture Shock
• <b>Immigration Matters</b> ..... 6	Being Late to Class	• <b>American Customs and Culture</b> ... 16
What SEVIS Means For You	Things to Remember	Food and Eating Habits
• <b>Getting Settled in Spokane</b> ..... 7	Study Skills and Good Habits	Personal habits and grooming
Housing Options	Grades	Household Habits
<i>Homestay</i>	Z/W Grades	Gift giving and Holidays
<i>The CHI</i>		American Money
		• <b>Global Education Staff</b> ..... 18

# PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

*Plan ahead for a successful start!*

*Please Bring:*



- All Documents (*Form I-20, passport, visa*)**
- Money for first month housing, books, stationery, personal needs**
- Laptop computer, ipad or other device besides cell phone**
- Backpack for books**
- Personal items such as contact lens, medicines, etc. Bring your prescriptions**
- Arrange your housing before you leave**
- Arrive to Spokane on time! Check the Orientation Schedule before purchasing airfare.**
- Be well rested – arrive a few days in advance to allow time to rest and acclimate**
- Review college math or equivalent to prepare for your math placement test**
- Visit the doctor and dentist before departure (*no immunizations required.*)**
- Inform your advisor if you have allergies or other conditions to note**

# WELCOME WEEK

## *New Student Orientation/Testing/Registration*

### *What to expect when you arrive to Campus*

As soon as you arrive to campus you will be very busy! You will enjoy an orientation presentation, campus tour and learn about how to be a successful international student.

You will also learn more about the responsibilities that go along with holding an F1 student visa, and being a guest of the United States Government. During orientation you will make many new friends who have just arrived to the USA, too!

### **If you are an Academic Student:** *(English proficiency met)*

#### **TEST**

You will take an assessment test to best determine your English levels and math levels. All students must take this test. The testing fee is \$30 and you will pay this fee at campus before your scheduled testing.

After you test, you will meet with an academic advisor to discuss your program of study and assist you with choosing your classes. Please note that international students arrive to campus very close to the class start date, so the first quarter class selection may be limited. This may only happen your first quarter due to the limited arrival time dictated by your F1 visa regulations.

#### **REGISTER**

Once you register for classes, you are required to pay your tuition in full.

You are required to register for 12 credits or more to remain in good standing with your F1 student visa. This is considered a 'full-time' schedule and you will learn more about the credit system when you arrive to campus.

During orientation, you will learn how to access CTCLink and CANVAS. These are student portals where you access your class schedule, class assignments, and other details about your student account.

#### **BOOKS**

After you complete your class registration, you will purchase your books at the campus book store. Books are very expensive, so please plan to spend at least \$300 on books per quarter.

#### **FIRST DAY OF CLASS**

This is an exciting day but it can also be stressful. You will not yet be comfortable with understanding campus in full— remember! Everyone is experiencing the same thing at the beginning of the quarter so try to enjoy and have fun! Take it one day at a time, stay organized and make your school work your priority and you will be a successful international student!

### **If you are an English Language Student** *(beginning in intensive English)*

#### **TEST**

You will take an English language placement test to best determine your English ability upon arriving to campus. This test will be over a 2 day period testing speaking, reading, writing and listening. The Intensive English Language Program (IELP) is housed within the English Department on SFCC and SCC campuses and is taught by instructors with Master or PhDs. Your instructors all have traveled the world and will provide an energetic lively classroom atmosphere.

After you test, your placement in an English language level will be determined to best suit your ability but to also challenge you! There are 4 levels in the IELP: Level 50 (beginner) Level 60 (high beginner) Level 70 (upper intermediate) Level 80 (high). You study in each level for one quarter. If you pass the level, you move up to the next level in the following quarter.

#### **REGISTER**

Your instructor will register you in the appropriate level and will give you an orientation overview of the IELP program and syllabus.

During orientation, you will learn how to access CTCLink and CANVAS. These are student portals where you access your class schedule, class assignments, and other details about your student account.

#### **BOOKS**

Your instructor will guide you on the books you may need for each particular level.




#### **FIRST DAY OF CLASS**

You will join other international students in your class level – both new students and continuing students. This cohort will become your friends and peers so make the most out of the connections you make on campus.

# SCHEDULE OF COSTS

*For your first quarter at CCS*

## Cost Breakdown

	<b>Tuition</b>	<b>\$3,150</b>
	<b>Housing/Meals</b>	<b>\$1,950</b>
	<b>Books/Insurance/Fees and other costs</b>	<b>\$900</b>
<b>Total per Quarter</b>		<b>\$6,000</b>

### SCHEDULE

At CCS, you will attend classes in quarter sessions. There are 4 quarters in one year – fall, winter, spring and summer. Each quarter is approximately 11-12 weeks. Between each quarter, there is normally a short break in which no classes are held.

### HAVE FUNDS AVAILABLE

When you arrive to campus, you will need money to pay your tuition in full on or before the first day of class. If your family or placement agency is wiring money to you, please plan ahead for this so your payment can arrive on time to avoid being dropped from classes.

Academic students will need \$30 for the placement testing fee, as well as approximately \$300 for books. Purchasing your books before classes begin is important so you do not fall behind in your class and miss important information. Intensive English Language students will need approximately \$75 for books.

### HOUSING PAYMENTS

Home stay payment must be made at the beginning of each month, and you will be required to make your first payment when you arrive to the home. These payments must be made on time, and directly to the family, not to the school.

### PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

Remember to budget in personal spending money for your first quarter in Spokane. If you arrive for winter quarter in December, for example, you may need to acquire warm clothing such as gloves, hat and boots for colder weather. Up to \$100 per month of discretionary money is adequate.

# IMMIGRATION MATTERS

## *Maintaining Student Status*

*Your F1 student status is your responsibility!*

## U.S. Immigration Regulations for International Students

*It is YOUR responsibility to be familiar with and follow all immigration rules.  
Remember to read page 2 of your I-20 carefully.*

### SEVIS and your Form I-20

#### Overview of SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System)

SEVIS (Student Exchange and Visitor Information System) is an integrated database used by schools, immigration, ports of entry and consulates abroad. Information that will be tracked includes your enrollment status, date of entry to the U.S., contact information, address, and internship/training status.

## What SEVIS means for you

It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** to speak with your International Advisor before doing anything that may affect your immigration status, for example, returning to your home country for family issues, enrollment questions, dropping classes, etc.

#### ***Important Things to Remember:***

You must be registered full-time (at least 12 credits) per quarter. Online classes have restrictions so please ask your international student advisor for guidance.

You must make academic progress. You are required to complete every quarter with a minimum 2.0 grade point average (GPA).

You must maintain a valid passport. Your passport must be valid for at least six months into the future at all times. It is your responsibility to contact your embassy or consulate to renew your passport, so be aware of the expiration date.

You must pay your tuition by the deadline. Failing to pay tuition will result in you being dropped from your classes. If you are not enrolled in at least 12 credits and not eligible for vacation,  
**YOU ARE OUT OF STATUS.**

Your Form I-20 and I-94 documents are two very important documents which you must keep with your passport in a safe place at all times. You need these documents whenever you travel in and out of the United States. Two weeks prior to leaving the United States, you must bring your I-20 to The Global Education Office for a signature to prove that you have been a student at SCC and are planning to return to school after your travel. Be sure not to lose the documents. It is very inconvenient and costly to request a replacement of your passport.

**NOTE:** *Your Form I-20 has an expiration date. It is your responsibility to renew your I-20 at least 30 days before expiration. See the International Programs Office for a new I-20.*

# GETTING SETTLED IN SPOKANE

## Housing Options

### HOMESTAY

Homestay is living with an American family. You can join homestay for just 1 quarter or for your entire length of study time at SFCC or SCC. It's a great opportunity to practice English and to learn about American culture. We're here to help find a Homestay that's just right for you and help you with anything of concern regarding your Homestay experience while at Spokane Falls Community College.

**Your application for homestay must be received 30 days before your arrival date for best placement options. There is a \$200 non-refundable placement fee.**

For information or assistance contact:  
Teresa Gay or Wannaporn Phipps

### Teresa Gay

*Immigration/Student Success Manager*  
(Homestay, Study Abroad, Peer Mentors, J Visas, PDSO, special projects)  
Teresa.Gay@ccs.spokane.edu

**SFCC 509-533-4131 / SCC 509-533-8201**  
or Cell **509-385-1113**

### Wannaporn (Aew) Phipps

*Homestay Coordinator/Administrative Assistant*  
wannaporn.phipps@ccs.spokane.edu  
**509-533-8671** or Cell **509-944-1458**

### The CHI (*Collegiate Housing International*)

The CHI is a Residence Hall/Apartment style living for college students in Spokane. Rooms are fully furnished, with a TV lounge, on site laundry, 24 hour security and a live-in Manager. This building is located close to city center and very near supermarkets, cafes and shopping. This is a great option if you are not interested in the host family option.

Contact the Manager, **Grace Wadlington** for rental availability and cost details:

2315 W. 2nd Ave. Spokane, WA 99201  
**(509) 262-8253**  
Chispokane@yahoo.com  
[www.spokaneinternationalhouse.com](http://www.spokaneinternationalhouse.com)

It is highly recommended that you choose between these options before you travel to Spokane. Renting an apartment is expensive, difficult and time consuming especially when you first arrive to Spokane.

**More Homestay information is at the SCC Housing Webpage below:**

<http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/GlobalEducation/International-Students/Current-students/Homestay.aspx>

*DISCLAIMER: CCS provides this information for your convenience only and does not own or operate the housing options listed. Students are responsible for verifying the appropriateness of housing and selecting the housing option that meets their individual needs. In no event shall CCS be liable for any damages resulting from the provision of this information on student housing.*

# GETTING AROUND IN SPOKANE

Spokane has a population of about 750,000. The city is located in a valley, surrounded by mountains, lakes and has the Spokane River flowing through the middle. Each campus is situated on the Spokane River.

The city reaches out to the east (*Spokane Valley*) and west (*toward Seattle!*) and you may hear people referring to their neighborhoods as areas of Spokane. For example, if you live in the north part of Spokane, this is referred to as “**The Northside**”, south Spokane is “**The South Hill**”, city center can be “**Browne’s Addition**” and **Spokane Valley** is the eastern most part of the city.

Spokane has lots to do and most every weekend there is a special event, festival, concert or celebration in Riverfront Park located in city center. There are art galleries, international restaurants, world class shopping, and an effervescent night life. If you love the outdoors, Spokane is located just minutes from winter snow skiing, hiking, boating, fishing, and home to over 150 parks. You will have plenty of fresh clean air and will experience true Four Seasons with a lovely spring, moderate summer, colorful fall and a snow-filled winter.

*You will learn so much more about things to do in Spokane once you arrive to campus!*

*We will give you a city map to help you get oriented!*



## **AIRPORT PICKUP AND GETTING SETTLED**

You will be required to arrange your housing before you board the airplane for Spokane. This ensures that you have a comfortable place to stay as well as someone to meet you at the airport when you arrive.

- If you are staying with a homestay family, they will meet you at the Spokane International Airport.
- If you are staying in an apartment at The CHI, the management can arrange free pick up service, be sure to discuss this with The CHI before you depart.
- In the case that you must find a ride from the airport to your housing choice or to a hotel, there is a taxi service booth at the airport to help you. (See list of hotels in this handout.)
- To ensure you do not have to spend the money on a hotel for a number of nights, be certain to arrange your housing in advance with our office!

For current prices (fares) and schedules visit:

**[www.spokanetransit.com](http://www.spokanetransit.com)** or visit the GE office if you have questions. If you do not have a bus pass, it is \$1.50 for each trip, including your transfers.

## **To take the bus to the College:**

- Catch the bus that is most convenient to your home address
- You may ‘transfer’ at the Plaza, the main station  
If you paid cash or used a ticket you will need to ask the bus driver for a transfer.
- Show the transfer to the bus driver when you get on the next bus
- Always remember to check when the last bus is running so you can get home. Weekend and evening hours vary.

*During orientation, you will learn about our **Safe Ride Taxi Program** that is available to all international students, providing free taxi rides if you find yourself lost or in an unsafe situation.*



## **CITY TRANSPORTATION – CITY BUS**

Most students take advantage of our excellent city bus system called Spokane Transit Authority (STA) Your Student ID card is also your bus pass.

*... continued on next page*





## CYCLING AROUND SPOKANE

Cycling is a fun way to get around and get some exercise. If you are staying with a homestay, they may have a bike you can use.

- You must always wear a helmet when you ride a bike; it is the law in Spokane.
- Be careful to always lock your bike.
- Cyclists must follow the same rules as car drivers; do not ride on sidewalks.
- Walk your bike across streets using crosswalks.
- Most city buses have racks to carry your bike while you ride the bus.
- Many city streets have clearly marked lanes for bikes; use them when you can.

Normally you can ride a bike from April through November, though some people ride their bikes through the winter. If you plan to do this, make sure you have the proper equipment to ride a bike in the snow!



## DRIVING A CAR

You need a license and insurance to drive a car in the U.S. In all of North America, people drive on the right side of the road.

If you have a valid driver's license from another country or province and you're registered as a full time CCS student, your license may allow you to drive in Spokane for 6 months. If your license is in a language other than English or French you must also carry a certified translation of it (sometimes called an "International Driver's License").

Owning a car is very expensive and is a great responsibility. Do not plan to buy a car until you have lived in Spokane for at least one year so you can become familiar with the area, requirements and other important details of owning a car.



# Rules of the Road and City Experiences

## *Safety first!*

### SPEED LIMITS

The speed limit on most city roads is 35 mph unless you see a sign for a different speed. Park and school areas have a slower speed limit and are highly patrolled by police. Driving in the USA is much different than in your city! Please be aware of what happens around you at all times for your safety.

### SEAT BELTS

Seat Belts are required in Spokane and in the U.S. You may be fined if you are seen not wearing a seat belt. Please make safe and healthy choices!

### PARKING

Never park a car in front of a fire hydrant or in zones that are marked no parking. No parking in cross walks, alleys or blocking driveways. Parking fines in Spokane are expensive!

### PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians (people walking) always have the right of way! Watch for them at all times.

### EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Emergency Vehicles such as fire trucks, ambulances and police cars always have the right of way. When the vehicle has their lights or sirens on, you must safely move out of the way by pulling to the side of the road as quickly and safely as possible to let them pass.

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

Drinking and Driving and Texting and Driving are against the law and can kill. DO NOT drink, text and drink and do not ride with someone who makes this choice.

### CROSSWALKS

Always use the cross walks. In Spokane, drivers are not accustomed to people walking in front of cars as it is generally done in other international cities.

### HITCHHIKING

NEVER hitchhike or accept a ride in a car from someone you do not know! This is extremely dangerous and is not culturally accepted.

### GOING ALONE

NEVER go out alone at night. Always walk with a friend or in a group of friends. Wear light clothing if you walk at night so drivers can see you.

# GETTING AROUND CAMPUS

**The Spokane Community College Campus (SCC)** is compact and easy to get around on foot. It is located in the central part of Spokane. The main area is a park-like setting and campus is formed in a circle. The main student area is called “**The Lair**” building 6, which houses the cafeteria, bookstore, game room, coffee bistro, lounges, student government and more.

**The Global Education Office** (*your home base!*) is in Building 15, room 114.

**The Spokane Falls Community College Campus (SFCC)** is also very easy to navigate. It is located in the west part of Spokane. The main student area is in Building 17 called the SUB (*Student Union Building*) The game room, bookstore, cafeteria and Global Education Office is also in this building.

**Each of the buildings are numbered and named. Your class schedule will look like this:**

**ENGL 101 1-1218** (*this means the location is Building 1, Room 1218*)

Both the **SCC** and **SFCC** campuses are situated on the Spokane River with walking trails and lots of green space to relax and enjoy the outdoors on your study breaks or meeting up with friends.

## *Other Campuses in the Spokane area:*

Spokane is a true ‘college town’ in that it is home to many universities in the region. Gonzaga University, Whitworth University as well as Spokane Falls Community College and Spokane Community College are all located in Spokane proper. Washington State University is located only 1 hour drive from Spokane and also offers a Spokane campus location. Eastern Washington University is located 15 minutes from Spokane and also has a Spokane campus location. You will make many college friends while living in Spokane from around the USA and the globe!

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# ACADEMIC MATTERS

## **CTCLINK** and **CANVAS** your online student portals!

**CTCLink** is the name of the student portal system. When you arrive to campus, you will create a log-in with security questions in order to access your class information, schedule, payments, registration and other student services.

**CANVAS** is the portal where you can communicate with your instructors, access your assignments, submit quizzes, etc. You will learn how to navigate these systems when you arrive to campus and register for classes.

*... continued on next page*

## SYLLABUS

On the first day of class, your teacher will hand out a syllabus which explains the guidelines of the class, such as:

- Your teacher's name and contact information
- Grading policy
- Test dates and homework deadlines
- Class expectations
- Save every syllabus  
*you may need it later if you transfer schools*

This syllabus will also be available on **CANVAS**, the online portal where students access their homework assignments, calendar, email and other course work needs.

## ATTENDANCE

Go to class every day. Your grade will be lower if you miss the class. If you miss a class too often, your grade will be dropped. Your instructor will tell you how many classes you can miss before you fail the class. If you fail the class you do not make academic progress, which is a regulation of your visa.

When you are absent, you must ask the teacher what you missed. This is an American custom.

If you are very unwell, it is alright not to go to class, but you must inform your instructor in advance before the beginning of the class. Taking a friend to the airport and missing the bus are not good excuses. If you miss the first three days of class, you will be automatically dropped from the class.

## BEING LATE TO CLASS

When American students go to class late, they go in very, very quietly. In other cultures, students knock on the door or talk to the instructor upon late entry. Please do not knock on the door or speak with the instructor. Sit at a seat near the door and put your books down quietly. After class, you can explain to the instructor why you were late.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR CLASSES

Cell phones off - no exceptions!

**NEVER** copy someone else's work - this could result in dismissal.

Leaving class to use the bathroom is okay, do so quietly and discreetly.

Leaving class for a medical appointment is okay, be sure to inform instructor beforehand.

If you are having trouble with your coursework for any reason, speak with your international student advisor immediately! We can help prevent issues from getting worse!

Communicate in class - this is expected and very good for you, too!

Meet with your instructor regularly especially if you would like extra guidance-your instructor appreciates your extra effort and motivation!

Be involved in group efforts, do your part and ask questions! Participation equals higher grades!

Interrupting shows poor etiquette; please allow others to finish speaking before responding.

Show respect to everyone!

## STUDY SKILLS AND GOOD HABITS

Arrive to class on time and be prepared, every day.

Ask questions and take notes use your time wisely!

Check **CANVAS** every day for class updates and instructor communication.

If you miss class, contact your instructor to find out what you need to do for make-up work.

**NO CHEATING!** Plagiarism is illegal and has serious consequences. Do your own work and do not copy work from internet, books, or submitting work of others as your own.

You will need a laptop or access to a computer at your home - **plan accordingly!**

## GRADES

Grading is based on the 0.0 to 4.0 scale. 0.0 is the lowest grade and 4.0 is the highest. Your instructor will tell you his/her grading scale on the first day of class and in the syllabus.

## Z/W GRADES

If you must stop going to school in the middle of the quarter or want to drop or quit a class, please do not drop any class until you meet with your international student advisor.

- You do not want to get a **"Z"** grade. This could cause problems with immigration.
- The grade **Z** could mean that you have disappeared and the teacher dropped you from the class because you were not attending the class.
- The grade **W** means that you dropped the class yourself.
- If you earn less than 12 credits due to a **Z** or **W** grade, you will be *Out-of-Status*.
- If you wish to get a **Z** or **W**, see your international student advisor!
- All **Zs**, **Ws**, and 0.0 GPA may have a bearing upon academic standard requirements. Failing to maintain satisfactory academic program may result in you be coming *Out-of-Status* with Immigration if the appropriate steps are not taken.

*When in Doubt,  
Ask your International  
Student Advisor!*

# PROBATION AND DISMISSAL POLICIES

Once you become a current student, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the academic standards policy at CCS. Your school will attempt to notify you by letter if your grades fall below a 2.0GPA. It is recommended that you check your own grades every quarter to determine if you are on academic warning, probation or suspension. There are 3 warnings that come with Academic Probation:

## ACADEMIC WARNING

If you get below a 2.0 GPA for one quarter you will receive an academic warning.

## ACADEMIC PROBATION

If you have two consecutive quarters below 2.0 you are placed on academic probation. You will need to sign an academic contract, and submit grade check forms to your instructors. You will also be blocked from registration and will have to meet with a counselor before your block is removed.

## ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

If your GPA is below 2.0 for three consecutive quarters you will be placed you on academic suspension. CCS academic standards policy requires that you are suspended for one quarter. If you are not eligible for an annual break, you will be dismissed from campus and will need to return home for the quarter.

## FINAL ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

Please note that a fourth consecutive quarterly GPA below 2.0 will place you on final academic suspension: you will be suspended from attending CCS for one full year (four quarters).

If you achieve at least a 2.0 quarterly GPA in the following quarter after your academic warning or probation, you will be cleared from academic probation or suspension respectively.

## *Avoid Academic Problems!!!*

You will learn about many helpful resources available to you here on campus such as the Learning Support Center (*Library!*) Media and Computer Labs, Language Labs, Tutoring Centers, Student Success Workshops and so much more!

Please talk to your international student advisor the moment you feel as if you are struggling.

**English Language support is available to you!** If you are having difficulty in any of your classes due to language barrier, please speak with your international student advisor immediately so that we can help you find tutoring or other services available.



# School Terms to Learn

**Freshman:** First year of college.

**Sophomore:** Second year of college.

**Junior:** Third year of college.

**Senior:** Fourth year of college.

There are **four quarters** in one academic year: *fall, winter, spring and summer*

**Quarter** is usually ten to eleven weeks long.

**Transcript** is a paper that lists all the classes you've taken and your grades.

**Major** is the main area you want to study. (*Business, Computer Science, etc.,*)

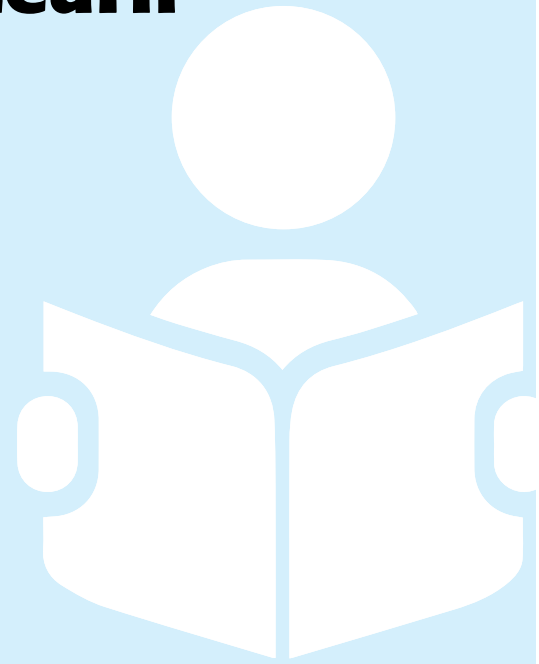
**Withdraw** or **"W"** means that the student officially dropped the class.

**Quarterly grade report** is the paper that lists your grades for the current quarter.

**Plagiarism** - copying ideas, arguments, phrases or sentences from the internet, books, or other students; submitting work as your own that is not yours.

**Dead Day** – Dead Day is usually the day before final testing begins. On Dead Day all classes are canceled so students can study for final exams.

**President's List** – List of students' names who earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher each quarter. The President of the college receives this list of names and sends a congratulatory note to each student.



# LIVING AND STUDYING IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, USA

## Staying Healthy in Spokane

Staying healthy is an important way to reduce stress and to enjoy your new life in Spokane. The adjustment when you arrive will be very challenging, because almost everything is different – food, water, weather, cultural interactions, your schedule, and language barriers. You will experience Culture Shock, which we will address later in this manual.

- **Get your rest!** Beyond jet lag and being a student, rest is very important as you will be very busy as a college student!
- **Stay hydrated!** Drink lots of water to fight jet lag and boost your immune system.
- **Try American style foods!** – There are many markets where you can buy foods from your home country if you miss them.
- **LIMIT your 'fast food' intake!** This food choice is extremely unhealthy.
- **Get moving!** Getting exercise is helpful to clear your mind, reduce stress and improve your sleep!
- **Explore!** Take the time to make friends and explore beyond your own neighborhood. Spokane has so much to offer *Go Find the Fun!*
- **If you feel alone,** sad or homesick, please talk to someone! The Global Education staff is your second family and we are here for you every step of the way!

## Weather in Spokane

You are fortunate to live in Spokane to experience 4 Seasons! Enjoy each season by trying something new!



### Winter

November - February

20° F to 38° F / -6° C to 3° C  
*average temperatures*

You will experience snow, ice and very cold days! You can purchase winter boots, gloves and hats when you arrive to Spokane if you cannot bring them with you. This is the time of year to go ice skating with friends, try snow skiing, and enjoying hot tea by the fireplace! If you come from warm climates, adjusting to winter time may take some patience and dressing warmly.



### Spring

March - June

50° F to 70° F / 10° C to 21° C  
*average temperatures*

Early spring can be very rainy and cool. By March and April, days are sunny and nights are still cold. Light jackets and umbrellas are useful and it is best to dress in layered clothing.



### Summer

July - August

75° F to 85° F / 23° C to 35° C  
*average temperatures*

Summertime in Spokane is close to perfect – not too hot and long, warm nights. Sandals are appropriate for this season only.



### Fall/Autumn

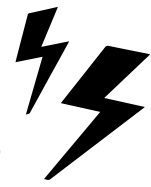
September - October

55° F to 70° F / 12° C to 21° C  
*average temperatures*

September often has very summer-like temperatures, October cools down fast! You will need light sweaters and jackets for your days on campus.



# CULTURE SHOCK



*and what it means for your new experience*

Culture shock is how we react to a new place or surrounding. When we travel, we bring with us our own habits, beliefs and cultural comforts, which to us feels and is very normal. Culture shock is what happens when we notice how our cultural habits and norms can be very different from others.

To have the best experience and be successful, you must learn to take new experiences with an open mind and lots of patience. Learn from the new perspective that you may have and respect them, even if they feel different and at first, you may not be comfortable with them. Experiencing Culture Shock is very normal and almost everyone experiences this when they travel!

## *Here are the phases of Culture Shock:*

### **HONEYMOON**

Living in the USA is so great! I love everything about it – it is so exciting! This phase of excitement may last a week up to a month or two.

### **FRUSTRATION**

You miss your family and friends, and you miss the food a lot! Small things seem like big problems and you feel sad and worried, tired and confused. You are focusing on how different everything is in the USA compared to your home. In this phase you will experience home sickness and have a negative attitude toward USA.

### **ADJUSTMENT**

You start to feel better, and things are getting smoother and more natural for you. You understand how to get to school and to get around Spokane, you are making friends and are experiencing new things and people. In this phase you begin to feel more comfortable in your new surroundings and daily tasks.

**A SECOND PART OF ADJUSTMENT** phase you may experience is feeling like you are missing your home again, but this time you feel more disconnected from your family and friends at home. You find it hard to go out and meet new people here and may feel sleepy and unhappy.

### **ACCEPTANCE**

You are feeling better and you feel like you fit in well in all of your surroundings. You have a great network of friends, you are doing well in college and you know the city and venture out for social activities regularly.

**One of the most important things you can do with Culture Shock is understand that this will happen to you, so be ready, be easy on yourself and communicate with those around you who want to help!**

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER!**

- Eat well, rest well, and stay active – even if you don't feel up for it!
- Explore, walk around – talk to people and make new acquaintances
- Relax and give yourself a break! Reducing your stress will help ease frustration, take time to relax.
- Stay in touch with family, they know you best and support you no matter the circumstance.
- Reach out if you are feeling sad – you have a network of people here in Spokane that are ready to help you and care about your well-being.

### **What should you do if you have a very personal problem that does not involve college or classes?**

Talk to someone that you are comfortable with – not just a friend. Speak with an advisor or teacher, especially if you are feeling depressed. Advisors or staff can connect you with great resources to help you feel better!

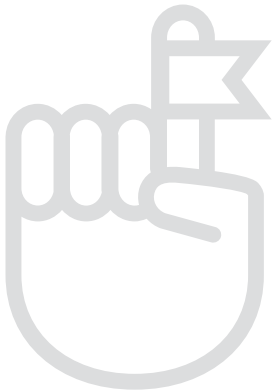


# American Customs and Culture

The best way to learn proper manners, actions and etiquette is to observe those around you. When in doubt, just ask! Americans may not tell you directly if you are doing something that is socially unacceptable or incorrect, because many consider it rude to call attention to these things, and Americans are very independent people.

*Here are basic things for you to remember:*

- Show eye contact when speaking with people; no eye contact is considered suspicious and rude.
- Smile and say hello if someone greets you. Spokane is a very friendly city!
- Say thank you when someone does a kind favor for you.
- Stand about 2 feet away from another person when talking with them. Standing too close is considered socially unacceptable and makes people very uncomfortable.
- Be on time! Americans are punctual and consider being late very disrespectful.
- Do not burp, fart, yawn or blow your nose very loudly in public. This is very socially unacceptable! If these things happen, say 'excuse me' and go to a bathroom or away from people if you need to.
- **DO NOT SMOKE** in someone's home or car without asking. Smoking is not allowed in most public places. *Smoking is only allowed in specific locations on campus.*
- Americans are very private and independent! You may ask about general things such as college classes, or type of job, but it is considered inappropriate to ask about someone's age, appearance (weight or height) or financial status.
- Avoid staring at people; this is considered suspicious and rude. Pointing at people is also not socially acceptable.



*Please contact us with any questions or concerns that you may have, and we'll see you on campus soon!*

*– Global Education Staff*

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## FOOD AND EATING HABITS

Always wash your hands before sitting down for a meal.

Feel free to politely decline a food or drink offered to you, but always be willing to try something new. If you do not care for this food, politely decline and say, 'thank you, but I am not fond of this taste/flavor.'

Do not begin to eat until everyone at the table has their food and the person preparing the meal has started to eat.

Eat quietly! Slurping, chewing with your mouth open, talking with your mouth full, etc., is rude and socially unacceptable.

Thank your host for the meal, even if you did not care for it.

It is customary to leave a tip or gratia when you eat at a restaurant. Normally this tip should be 15-20% of your bill. This may be left on the table in cash, or given directly to your server.

## PERSONAL HABITS AND GROOMING

Americans are generally very concerned about germs and bacteria. Many household products are formulated to combat germs such as 'hand sanitizers,' anti-bacteria room sprays, etc. This may be different than what you are accustomed to.

If you live with a host family or have a roommate, you may need to talk about a shower schedule and discuss the length of your shower so that there is enough hot water for everyone in a small time period.

Americans shower daily, sometimes 2 times per day. While you do not have to adjust to the 2 times per day, it is recommended that you shower daily, wash your hair regularly and keep your nails clean.

Do not wear strong perfumes or colognes, some people are very allergic to fragrance. Be sure to use deodorant/anti-per-spirant to help combat body odor.

Practice proper dental health! Brush your teeth twice a day and try to floss.

Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze always!

Spitting in public is considered inappropriate.

Whistling, snapping or shouting to call attention to someone in a public place such as a restaurant or café is not socially acceptable.

Wash your clothes regularly; ask for instructions on how to use the washing machine and dryer if you are unfamiliar.

If you live with a host family or roommate, leave the bathroom clean after you use it. Wipe up excess water, put away your items and hang up your towel.

## HOUSEHOLD HABITS

In America, most families do not have a maid servant or cook; clean up after yourself at all times! Men and women both help with cooking, cleaning and other chores.

It is polite to offer to help clean the table and kitchen after a meal.

Always knock if a door is closed to ask permission to enter; do not just walk in unless you know this is accepted.

If you live with a host family or roommate, respect others by keeping your music or computer volume low and heed to quiet hours after 10PM.

## GIFT GIVING AND HOLIDAYS

Only close friends exchange gifts for birthdays or Christmas. You are not expected to give a gift unless you talk about it with your friends or host families.

If someone gives you a gift, it is customary to respond graciously with a 'thank you' and to act surprised and excited even if the gift is not to your liking.

If you want to give a gift to a new friend, make it small and modest; avoid giving expensive or lavish gifts, this can make the person uncomfortable.

## AMERICAN MONEY

Money is also referred to as cash, bills, and coins. There are 100 cents in 1 dollar bill.

Common paper money (bills) are \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

### U.S. coin system:

**Penny** = 1 cent (\$0.01) **Nickel** = 5 cents (\$0.05)

**Dime** = 10 cents (\$0.10) **Quarter** = 25 cents (\$0.25)

When you open your bank account upon arrival to Spokane, you may receive a Debit Card which can be used in place of cash in most all locations. You can also use this card at ATM Machines to extract cash from your bank account. Use ATM machines that are connected with your bank to avoid extra fees.

Thank you for taking the time to read this manual carefully. We hope that you are eager to begin your new journey with us at Community Colleges of Spokane.

To learn more about studying in the USA, visit this informative link: [studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students](http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students)

# GLOBAL EDUCATION STAFF

## *SCC and SFCC Locations*

Student Advisor/DSO, *SFCC*..... Mrs. Ashley Ding – **Ashley.Ding@ccs.spokane.edu**

Student Advisor/DSO, *SCC*..... Mrs. Julie Hands – **Julie.Hands@ccs.spokane.edu**

Manager of Immigration/Student Success, PDSO, *CCS*..... Mrs. Teresa Gay – **Teresa.Gay@ccs.spokane.edu**

Dean, Global Education, *CCS*..... Mrs. Hadda Estrada – **Hadda.Estrada@ccs.spokane.edu**

Vice Provost, *CCS*..... Mr. Kevin Brockbank – **Kevin.Brockbank@ccs.spokane.edu**

Recruiter and Admissions Specialist, *CCS*..... Ms. Trina Allen – **Trina.Allen@ccs.spokane.edu**

Recruiter and Admissions Specialist, *CCS*..... Ms. Katherine Thompson – **Katherine.Thompson@ccs.spokane.edu**

Administrative Assistant, *CCS*..... Mrs. Wannaporn (Aew) Phipps – **Wannaporn.Phipps@ccs.spokane.edu**

## *Contact Us*

### **Spokane Community College (SCC)**

Global Education Office, Mail Stop 2151  
1810 N. Greene Street, Spokane, WA 99217 USA

### **Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC)**

Global Education Office, Mail Stop 3011  
3410 W. Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane WA 99224 USA

**For online information:** [www.ccs.spokane.edu/globaleducation](http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/globaleducation)

**For General Inquiries:** [globalprograms@ccs.spokane.edu](mailto:globalprograms@ccs.spokane.edu)



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