



RESOURCES:

ON CAMPUS:

- International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC)
Tel: 306-966-4925
- International Student Associations see ISSAC for details
- University of Saskatchewan Language Centre
Tel: 306-966-4351
learnenglish.usask.ca
- Student Learning Services
Tel: 306-966-2886
usask.ca/ulc
- Student Counselling Services:
Tel: 306-966-4920
students.usask.ca
- Student Health Services:
Tel: 306-966-5768
students.usask.ca

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- Global Gathering Place
Tel: 306-665-0268
globalgatheringplace.com
- Saskatoon Open Door Society
Tel: 306-653-4464
sods.sk.ca
- Saskatchewan Intercultural Association
Tel: 306-978-1818
- International Women of Saskatoon
Tel: 306-978-6611
- Tourism Saskatoon
Tel: 306-242-1206
tourismsaskatoon.com
- Newcomer Information Centre
Tel: 306-343-8303

Dealing with culture shock

WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?

Culture shock refers to the challenging process of adjusting to a new country or culture. Adapting to a new culture takes time and often involves going through the following stages, possibly a number of times.

1. Newness and excitement
2. Disenchantment and homesickness
3. Rejection of the host culture
4. Growing understanding of the host culture
5. Reverse or re-entry culture shock

WHAT MIGHT YOU EXPERIENCE IN THE HOST COUNTRY?

1. Newness, excitement. At first everything is new - people, sights, food, climate, language, social customs, expectations, etc. The initial excitement usually overrides the stress and anxiety of being in a new country and culture.
2. Disenchantment, homesickness. As the excitement wears off the realities of living in another country sinks in. Speaking another language all day, being far from home and missing the support of friends or family may drain you. You may begin to feel sad, critical and frustrated and doubt your ability to adjust to this new place.
3. Rejection of the host culture. Things frustrate you more than usual and you find yourself disliking and withdrawing from the new culture. You may develop an 'us versus them' view and want to return home.
4. Understanding, confidence. With time, a growing understanding of the new culture usually develops. Social customs, norms and expectations become clearer. You begin to settle in and start to feel confident and successful. You are becoming bi-cultural.
5. Reverse or re-entry culture shock. Returning home to your home country may also involve a significant adjustment. Difficulties adjusting to life back home are not unusual.

Additional suggestions if you are experiencing culture shock in Saskatoon:

- Make an effort to seek out and join groups that interest you. For information on groups in the city see the resource list on the first page, the student handbook and PAWS.
- Make an effort to talk with Canadian students. Join programs such as the International Student Friendship Sponsorship program (the International Students Office has information on this).
- Try to find a friend who is willing to be your “cultural informant” and help you understand customs, social rules, slang sayings, etc.
- **If you are struggling, ask for help. Talk to family, friends, teachers or advisors. Students at the University of Saskatchewan may also talk to counsellors at Student Counselling Services when they need help managing difficult situations or dealing with stress. Services are free for all students and appointments are booked by phone or in person. Services are confidential (see contact information on the first page).**

WHAT MAY HELP YOU ADJUST?

- Before you leave, read as much as you can about the country and culture you will be visiting.
- As appropriate, talk with others about your experiences of adjusting to the new country. Talking may help you make sense of these experiences and may help you feel less alone. Other international students are likely to have similar experiences. As well, friends and family back home may find it easier to provide support when they know what you are going through.
- Be patient with yourself as you adjust. Remember to take care of your body, mind and spirit.
- Make a conscious decision to succeed and adapt. Tell yourself positive things like: “I will give myself time to adjust,” “I will keep trying,” “I will adapt,” “I will learn,” “I will succeed.” Develop endurance and also resiliency, the ability to adapt.
- Trust that you will make the needed adjustments. Believe that you will come through this as a more rounded, more experienced and more international person than you were before.
- Remember your reasons for coming to this new country. Remember your original goals. Your goals will help you decide how to spend your time.
- Try new things. Invite others to join you. This will help build new relationships and a ‘future’ of shared experiences together.
- Stay in contact with friends and family back home. Talk to them about your experiences and keep up to date on what is happening for them.
- Give yourself time to adjust before making important decisions.
- For tips on handling your return home please see the *Dealing with Reverse Culture Shock* handout.