

International Student Buddy Program Handbook



THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BUDDY PROGRAM!

Moving to a new country can be a frightening experience, especially when you have no one here to guide you. This is why becoming a Buddy for an International Student at UPEI is so important. So you help them with things for examples: getting a simple sim plan to figuring out how to do your banking as it can be different from the way they do it back home. As their Buddy, you get to help them adapt to Canadian and Island culture. As a Volunteer, you need to be there for your Buddy. Answer their questions, help them make friends, and just spend time with them. You'll be amazed by the difference your friendship will make.

“Volunteers don't necessarily have the time they have the heart” – Elizabeth Andrew

COORDINATOR

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What is the International Student Buddy Program?

The primary goal of the International Student Buddy Program is to provide assistance to new International Students for a smooth transition to Canadian culture. By assisting these new students with things such as adapting to a new country, culture and environment, and create a more relaxing and hospitable atmosphere for the new International Students. We also hope that Volunteers would have the opportunity to exchange their cultural experiences with the International Students while developing both the buddy and volunteers cross-cultural communication skills. This program is all about exchanging experiences, making international friendships and learning about different cultures. This program is open to all returning UPEI students to be.

If you choose to be a buddy

- Opportunity to exchange their cultural experiences
- Develop cross-cultural communication skills.
- Volunteers who are planning to go on an exchange program in the future will have a sense of the country that they are about to visit in the future.

When will I meet my buddy?

Most International Students arrive a week before orientation. This is because they will have a lot of things to do such as opening a bank account, trying to adjust to the environment and others. Therefore this is when you step in as a friend. You are expected to meet quite often at the beginning of the semester and attend most if not all of the planned events.

What is my main role as a volunteer?

There are four main roles as a volunteer:

- a. An information resource/Guide- UPEI and PEI/ Canada
- b. Fulfill your volunteer commitment-Your volunteer to commitment is helping your buddy while keeping the code of conduct in your mind at all times.
- c. Contribute to building a more cohesive culture of diversity at UPEI
- d. Sincere desire to build a friendship with an International Student

What can I do with my buddy?

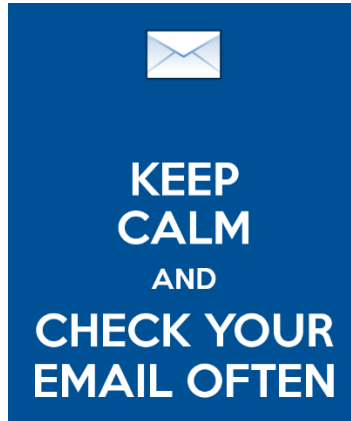
- May need to assist your buddy with their accommodations, course registration, cultural adjustment, etc.
- Ask your partner out for coffee or shopping
- Ask about their experiences
- Invite them to the things you usually do

- Ask if they have any bank or registration issues
- Beware of your buddy's adjustment needs
- Organize your own activities on the weekends such as movie night or have coffee together
- Keep in touch with your buddy as often as possible
- If there are any issues such as health, financial, immigration issues or issues you are not comfortable dealing with, please contact the Coordinator (buddy@upeisu.ca).

Role of Communication in this Program

In this program communication is key. With the regular communication we help

our buddies to settle in smoothly and improve bonds with them. The coordinator will e-mail



you when there is an upcoming social event. Please inform your buddy about all social events as reminder.

How much should I put in this program?

Time

At the beginning of the program, you tend to spend more time with your buddy because your buddy is trying to adapt to the unfamiliar environment. It is very understandable that a student can have a very busy schedule; therefore the program hopes that you will make time for the events and try to plan your schedule to incorporate your buddy!

Financial

Please do not over spend in this program. We are not expecting you to take your buddy for fine dining. You may want to discuss this matter with your buddy, so that your buddy will pay for his or her share.

Cultural Differences

There will be cultural differences between you and your buddy. These differences may not be obvious at first but as you get to know your partner you will become more aware of these differences. Here are some examples of possible cultural differences that you may encounter:

- Washer and Dryer; How to use them? What are they?
- Sorting Garbage (what goes in compost, waste, recycle?)
- Words: Cab- Taxi, Plaster- Band-Aid, Fries- Chips
- Grocery Shopping: How to grocery shop? Where do you get certain foods?
- Vegetarians: there are many types of vegetarians. Therefore if your buddy says that he or she is a vegetarian please ask what kind of vegetarian diet him or her practices.
- Splitting the Bill: in many cultures it is common for one person to pay for the bill during a meal out with friends, and then the next time a different person would pay for the bill. If you and your buddy choose to split costs this way it is important that each one of you takes financial responsibility. As so no one is spending more than the other, etc.
- Saving Face; to be called out of the group as an individual in many cultures can be offensive. It is important that you avoid embarrassing your partner by being aware of what they are socially comfortable with.
- There are many more cultural differences that you will become aware of. The most important part is that you are trying your best to be aware of these differences.



Cross Cultural Communication

One of the things many volunteers may have difficulty with is communicating with your buddy. Sometimes it may seem that neither of you are understanding what the other is saying. Instead of getting frustrated try to keep these tips in mind:

1. Be aware of assumptions/expectations you hold about roles and responsibilities.
2. Make your expectations and reactions clear. Ask about the expectations and reactions of your conversation partner. If you are not sure what something means, ASK!
3. When a conversation becomes an interrogation, stop and consider alternative approaches.
4. Explore ways to communicate and relate visual cues (pictures, charts, diagrams) and shared activities.
5. Be aware of differences (i.e. status, age, and gender, public vs. private discussions) between you and your conversation partner.
6. Listen actively.
 - a. Avoid jumping to conclusions about the message being delivered after listening to the person for a few minutes.
 - b. Be patient and listen carefully to the message delivered at the end of the exchange, as this may be the key point the person is trying to make.
7. Avoid slang, jargon, and colloquial expressions.
8. Be aware of acronyms.
 - a. Many acronyms change in other languages (i.e. AIDS is SIDA in French)
 - b. They may cause the listener to lose confidence in the speaker
9. Tell personal stories instead of jokes.
 - a. English humor and jokes often depend on subtle nuances of language.
 - b. Telling personal stories is often an effective way to build rapport.
10. Expect delayed reactions.
11. It may take time for your partner to think of the appropriate words.
12. Avoid filling silence with chatter which may distract your partner.
13. It is often easier for people to write than say what they mean.
14. When using examples, relate to common experiences or specific situations- general examples from your home country might not be understood.

CULTURE SHOCK

What is Culture Shock?

Every culture has its own similarity and differences. The “connecting point” of the two cultures is when one cherishes the similarities and learns to understand and appreciate the differences. Before International Students reach the “connecting point”, he or she will experience culture shock. Culture shock refers to the feelings of stress and anxiety that an International Student or a traveler experiences when living or visiting a different culture (Source: York & You: Mapping the International Student Experiences, 1999).

Symptoms of Culture Shock

There are several symptoms and stages to culture shock. Some of the symptoms may include:

- *feeling very angry over minor inconveniences*
- *irritability*
- *withdrawal from people who are different from you*
- *extreme homesickness*
- *overeating or loss of appetite*
- *sudden intense loyalty to your own culture*
- *boredom*
- *depression*
- *a need for excessive sleep*
- *headaches*
- *upset stomach*
- *lost of ability to work or study effectively*
- *unexplainable crying*
- *marital or relationship stress*
- *exaggerated cleanliness*
- *feeling sick much of the time*
- *small pains really hurt*

How can I help to ease the Culture Shock?

As a buddy, there are many ways to ease your partner's culture shock. Here are some suggestions:

- *be a good listener; look for non-verbal and verbal cues*
- *be patient*
- *smile while talking*
- *be clear and precise when asking and answering questions*
- *talk at a reasonable pace and take your time, using simple terminology*
- *suggest to them to write letters, keep a journal, listen to favorite music, stay healthy, etc.*
- *keep in touch with your partner as often as possible; asking how things are going?*
- *help them to fill in their spare time, such as during weekends. For example, ask them to join you at the gym or for a movie night*
- *remember that culture shock is a process*

PLACES TO TELL YOUR BUDDY ABOUT

Around Campus

- All the Buildings on Campus
- The Wave
- Health Centre
- Student Affairs
- Chaplaincy Centre(different rooms)
- Student Union
- Bookstore
- Gym
- Bell Alliant Centre(Cari complex)
- W.A Murphy Center
- Schurman Market Square
- Their Faculty/ Department
- Robertson Library
- Writing Centre
- Webster Academic Services
- Registrar's Office
- Math Help Centre
- Residences
- Dining on campus
 - Samuel's Café,
 - The AVC Café,
 - The Courtyard Café,
 - Wanda Wyatt Dining Hall,
 - Mickey's place.

Off Campus

- Banks (CIBC, tell them about RBC, TD, etc.)
- Grocery Stores (Atlantic Superstore, tell them about Sobeys, Walmart, etc.)
- Shopping Malls(Charlottetown Mall and Confederation Court Mall)
- Restaurants (Cedars, Sadat's cuisine, Joe's, Himalayan curry, Canton, etc.)
- Health Clinics (Sherwood Drug Mart, Charlottetown Walk In Clinic, etc.)
- Cafes (Tim Horton, Kettle black, David's tea, etc.)
- Drug stores(shoppers, murphy pharmacy, tell them about pharmacy in grocery stores)

Buddy Language Assistance (Optional)

Some international students are not only foreign to the country they are foreign to the language as well. For that we would encourage you to strengthen your bond of friendship by helping them learn English. It could be a learning experience for both the buddy and the volunteer. **How to assist them in their language skills?**

Helping them will depend on you and how far you want to go with your friend. Although if you are paired with someone who speaks another language you are fluent with other than English we would ask you to have your conversations in English.

Jenny Zhao from china shared her experience as a buddy coming to Canada for the first time said "I learned a lot of daily vocabulary when I hanged out with my buddy. We went to Charlottetown mall for shopping and chatting, and at the same time I asked words and I tried to remember them in our conversation and the real situations. That was really helpful."

Buddy Online Assistance

Sometime you and your buddy might not be able to meet often, in that situation you can talk to your buddy online using some social media website (Facebook, WhatsApp, Kik, etc.). Online assistance will vary buddy to buddy, as some might have a similar system of work back home while some might not. An example of online assistance of going to the bank after explaining different banks would be,

1) Take the bus from the closest bus stop to University Avenue, show your student ID to the bus driver.

2)The exact location of the bank is

<https://www.google.ca/maps/dir//465+University+Avenue,+Belvedere+Plaza,+Charlottetown,+PE+C1A+4N9/data=!4m5!4m4!1m0!1m2!1m1!1s0x4b5e52cea8c92c01:0x6b2bcaf673bd7bee?sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjYjsKHkdLMAhVizoMKHdKeCQ0QiBMIJjAA>

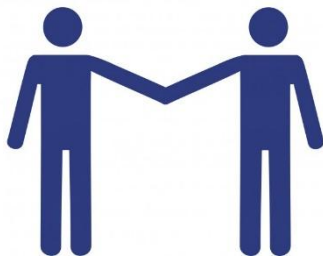
- 3) Go on the front desk and tell them that you are new in town and want to open a bank account.
- 4) Hear and follow the bank advisor to open an account
- 5) Once done take the bus back home when you are ready to go to home. Make sure you know when the last bus leaves for your house.

Volunteer-Buddy Activity Ideas

Buddy program will consist of both one-on-one activity and group activities

Volunteer are asked to communicate with your buddies and actively part take in both type of activity.

I'm a buddy!



Donisha Been a former buddy had to say

"The buddy program is filled with lots of exciting things to do and lots of people to learn amazing things from."

One-on-One Activities

- Ask your partner out for coffee
- Cooking
- Watching movies
- Going for walks
- Invite them to hang out with your friends
- Participate in a new hobby
- Attending events on campus

Can't commit to All this?

If you can't commit to so much outdoor one to one interaction, please contact the buddy program coordinator to look at a different option or say different options.



Group Activities

- Attend group activities with your buddy
- Meet other buddies and ask them what they with each other.
- Challenge other buddy friends to sports.

What Works Best

Below is a breakdown of how to work around your buddies, but it is you doing all this so do it on your own pace.

Week 1

This is probably the first few days of your buddy in PEI; you might want to concentrate on breaking the ice between each other.

Week 2

This week start helping them with school stuff (i.e. show them places on campus)

The whole point of what works best is making sure you and your buddy are comfortable with each other before you start all the fun stuff.

Knowing when it is my job?

It is really important to keep in our minds is that we are mentors not councilor. If you feel that your buddy might benefit from seeing a consular, please do so. UPEI has a lot of supports in place to help students. A few supports that many students find helpful are

Resource	Location	Times	Contact
Personal and Academic Advising	Student Affairs, 2 nd floor, Murphy Centre(MSC)	M-F 9-4	902-566-0488 Studentserv/2upei.ca
Career Counselling	RL 231	M-Th 9-4	Kylah Hennessey 902-620-5088 khennessey@upei.ca Jo Cullen 902-620-5088
Academic Coaching	Student Affairs, 2 nd floor, Murphy Student Centre	M-F 9-4	Karen Morse kmorse@upei.ca 902-566-0791 Anne Bartlett ambartlett@upei.ca 902-894-2835



VOLUNTEER: CODE OF CONDUCT



Confidentiality

Information pertaining to social conditions, medical conditions, personal situations, family issues, and other personal facts shall be kept confidential. Therefore the International Student Buddy Program will not disclose this information to any person who is not authorized by the Coordinator. Any person who would like to have access to such information must have the specific and valid reason or permission of the individual concerned.

Non-Discrimination/Equality

The International Student Buddy Program will neither tolerate nor practice discrimination or harassment against any Volunteer or International Student on the ground of race, creed, and colour, place of origin, ethnic group, disabilities, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationship, political or religious affiliation, citizenship, and ancestry.

Alcohol/Drug Use

Volunteers are not recommended to perform their duties while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Volunteers are not allowed to influence their partner (International Students) to be involved with alcohol or drugs.

“Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.”

- Henry Ford

EVERY
NEEDS SOME

BUDDY