

Cuenca Ecuador Guidebook



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Dear Taylor University Student,

Congratulations on your decision to go to Ecuador! This decision will have a positive impact on your life -- not only academically, but also personally and professionally. We hope that it will be a very rewarding experience for you and the family you will be living with in Ecuador.

The next step is to prepare for your journey. We encourage you to begin this process today! The guidebook that follows provides a lot of useful information designed to help you prepare for your time in Cuenca. It hopefully will help you to make this a successful experience abroad.

Read through it carefully and pay attention to policies and procedures.

If you have questions along the way, feel free to contact the staff at Off-Campus Programs located in the Ayres Alumni Memorial Building or the Director of Ecuador Programs, Dr. John Moore.

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CUENCA ECUADOR PROGRAMS

PART I

INTRODUCTION TO CUENCA ECUADOR PROGRAMS

Vision/Purpose of the Mission

The Cuenca, Ecuador Programs are directed and administered by the Spencer Centre for Global Engagement whose mission and purpose is to “impact the Kingdom of God and minister the redemptive love of Christ to a needy world through the educating and equipping of distinguished students by means of a dynamic integration of faith, life-long learning, and global service.” In the Cuenca, Ecuador programs, our goal is to accomplish this purpose through semester and summer academic programs, residence life programs, and daily routines as students live and study in Cuenca and interact with our partners there.

Partners

The programs in Cuenca, Ecuador operate FOR FUNDACION TAYLOR DEL ECUADOR in cooperation with Taylor University, Verbo Arco, and the Universidad del Azuay.

The Taylor University office FUNDACION TAYLOR DEL ECUADOR in Cuenca is located at the Verbo Arco church and is under the direction of our executive director Maria de Lourdes Larrea. She is responsible to develop, coordinate, and oversee all operations in Cuenca - including housing, student activities, and the daily schedule - under the direction of the Director of Ecuador Programs, Dr. John Moore, and the Spencer Centre for Global Engagement. Her staff coordinates with both the university and the church to ensure the academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual well being of the students.

Verbo Ministries - the ministry arm of Verbo Iglesia Cristiana – began in Cuenca in 1987 with 15 new believers. The congregation has now swelled to over 1800 in TWO churches in the city, with our home church being Verbo Arco.. The church is responsible for the residence life portion of the program and provides strong Christian interaction and involvement for the students. Check out www.verbocuenca.org for further information.

The Universidad del Azuay is a university of 5000 undergraduate and graduates students. Faculty from the university’s medical school and undergraduate programs teach courses to our students in English with a movement of terminology into Spanish. Faculty are approved by the appropriate departments at Taylor University and act as adjunct professors, allowing for courses to be given proper supervision and accreditation by Taylor University.

ARCO LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, this is part of Verbo Church, and is where the students take Spanish Classes

Contact Information

Regarding academic programs and residence life information contact Dr. John Moore, *Director of Cuenca Ecuador Programs* (jhmoore@taylor.edu or 765-998-4994).

Regarding application and procedural aspects (passport/visa) of Cuenca while in Upland programs
Jeff Miller, Assistant Director of Off-Campus Programs (jfmiller@taylor.edu or 765-998-5253).

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Educate Yourself

- Familiarize yourself with all program-specific expectations - particularly academic objectives and policies, daily routine of the program, and required excursions.
- Research your host country. Learn the local customs and laws. If you break a local law and are subsequently arrested, neither Taylor University nor the US Government has the authority to immediately release you.
- You will be reading *The Lonely Planet Ecuador*. Obtain it early, as it is a great resource for information. It will provide information about the local area, point out important or unusual laws, and give safety and emergency response tips.
- Online newspapers, literature, and film are other great sources of information about your host country.

Withdrawing from Taylor University.

If you need to withdraw from a Taylor University program for *any* reason, contact the OCP immediately as each semester is built upon the number of students attending. If you withdraw from the program after your acceptance for any reason that is not medically certified, notify the faculty director or program coordinator and OCP in writing *immediately*. You will be held responsible for any non-refundable costs, including the program deposit, administrative fees, and other expenses paid on your behalf. Update your local address with Taylor University to ensure that your billing and registration information go to a parent or responsible friend who will take care of your affairs.

REQUIREMENTS: DOCUMENTS, FINANCES, AND ORIENTATION MEETINGS

The following section lists various details related to documents, money, and orientation meetings that are required of all Cuenca participants.

Travel Documents for US Citizens

Passports

- Visit the US Department of State website for information on obtaining a passport and other travel documents you may need for your program. If you are a US citizen and do not have a US passport, you need to apply for one immediately. The average wait time for a passport is 4-6 weeks.
- You must present a U.S. passport with ***at least six months' remaining validity***. Make sure that your passport does not expire before _____. If your passport does expire before that date, you must renew your passport. Details of this process may be found on the US Department of State website.
- Visit <http://travel.state.gov/passport/> for passport details.

Visas

- You will be living in Cuenca for more than the 90 days allowed for a Tourist Visa. Visas are given to individuals not to universities.

- You will be applying for a visa 12-9 for 180 days, which allows you to study at the Universidad del Azuay (our Cuenca partner). See the application form in the website of “Ministerio de Relaciones exteriores del Ecuador”!
- Off-Campus Programs will assist you with the Visa application process.
- Student covers costs for the Visa.
- Visit www.cancilleria.gob.ec

Travel Documents for Non-US Citizens

The office of Off-Campus Programs will work with you to help you obtain the proper Visa; however, because you are a non-resident, Taylor University may not have all the necessary information. It is your responsibility to determine whether or not you need a Visa. A good place to start your research is the Visas or Consular Affairs/Services section or Consular Division of the official website for the [Embassy of Ecuador](#) in the United States. If you can't find information on student Visas for non-US citizens on the website of the Embassy in the United States, use the search engine to find the website of the Ecuador Embassy in your home country.

If you do require a Visa, it is your responsibility to follow the appropriate application procedures to obtain the Visa before the start of the study abroad program. If you accept nomination to this study abroad program and then fail to obtain the necessary Visa, you will be deemed to have withdrawn yourself from the program and may be held responsible for the full program cost. You are also responsible for ensuring that you have the necessary paperwork to re-enter the USA at the end of the program.

Please email Off-Campus Programs if you have any questions about the Visa process.

Finances:

Cost covers: tuition, flight to and from Ecuador, room, board, laundry, phone, phone & transportation allowance, trips

Financial Aid: Contact the Office of Financial Aid concerning your semester in Cuenca. It is a Taylor University program and should still be able to maintain financial aid.

Costs

Foreign liability insurance: \$40& International medical insurance: \$142

Books and materials fee: \$150

WHILE YOU'RE AWAY...

Taxes

If you are planning to be overseas between January and April 15 and you file your own taxes, you may request an extension on the deadline for filing your income tax. The extension usually is until June 15. Should you need additional assistance, contact the US Consulate or Embassy in your host country for information on your tax obligations.

Fafsa

If you are planning to be overseas between January and April 15th and are planning on returning to campus with financial aid, you will need to have your Fafsa filed.

Power of Attorney

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal documents during your absence, you may want to make arrangements for a Power of Attorney, an appropriate person to act on your behalf. This process can be arranged by contacting a notary public or an attorney.

Paying Bills

If you will be responsible for any bills while abroad, consider pre-paying your utilities or adding a parent to your checking account so they can pay bills for you. You may be able to pay some bills online. Be aware that some students have reported problems accessing these websites abroad, and some countries limit access to foreign sites. Some cell phone companies will allow you to put your account on hold for the time you are abroad, usually up to 3-6 months, for a small fee.

HOUSING

While studying in Cuenca for the semester, you will live with a Christian host family that has been screened and approved by both the elders of Verbo Arco and the Taylor University office staff. Upon acceptance to the program, you will be given an application for a host family. On this application form is a questionnaire that helps determine the family with which you will be placed. The main objective is to pair each student with the family which will provide the most enriching experience for both parties and develop strong ties that serve to support the academic semester. This selection process takes into account many important aspects that will influence your welfare during your stay in Ecuador.

The host homes will be functional families: father, mother, and children with a good Christian witness and which have the infrastructure to host a student, ie single room, shared or private bathroom, access to laundry, food at home, and a willingness to open their home and to share their life with a new son or daughter. Families will be responsible for providing housing, meals, laundry (washing machine & soap), and transportation in some circumstances. You will be notified about your host family approximately two weeks before the departure for Cuenca.

More information about living with your host family as well as living in Cuenca in general will be given to you and discussed at the Cultural Meeting.

HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Vaccines Required by the TU Program Students will have to submit proof of required vaccines to Off-Campus Programs:

1. Tetanus-diphtheria booster if last vaccine was over 5 years ago
2. Measles (MMR) if your records do not show 2 MMR vaccines
3. Typhoid
4. Many of you will be working with people and may be exposed to blood, so it is highly recommended for all students but **required for the Biology Majors** to have Hepatitis A & B vaccines.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) vaccine requirements/recommendations

Required Vaccines: None.

Recommended Vaccines:

Hepatitis A & B, Malaria (atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline or mefloquine tablets) & Rabies
See www.cdc.gov/travel/tropsam.htm for more vaccine and travel health info from the CDC.

Note:

The CDC states “Ecuador has **malaria** risk in all areas at altitudes lower than 4,921 feet. No risk in Guayaquil and Quito and the central highland tourist areas.” You will be based in the central highland area around Cuenca at 8,517 feet where there is no malaria. Taylor does travel to the Amazon where no record of Malaria has been recorded in recent medical records. Students also travel to the beach and the Galapagos Islands where there is no record of malaria incidents. However, If you choose to take an antimalarial drug, the CDC recommends: (listed alphabetically): atovaquone/proguanil (Malarone), doxycycline, mefloquine (Lariam), or primaquine (in special circumstances). See www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/tropsam.htm for more information.

The CDC recommends rabies vaccine if you might have “extensive unprotected outdoor exposure in rural areas, such as might occur during camping, hiking, or bicycling, or engaging in certain occupational activities.” Taylor University will not have this kind of rural/outdoor exposure. Cuenca is the third largest city in Ecuador with approx. 300,000 people. See <http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yb/utills/ybGet.asp?section=dis&obj=rabies.htm> for more info.

Please consult your health care provider and past immunization records on any questions regarding required or recommended vaccines.

As a Taylor University student traveling abroad, you are required to carry the Taylor University international health plan that covers you while in Ecuador. This card is used in Cuenca at the medical clinic/hospital with which Taylor University has an agreement. Jeff Miller will provide that information.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

The semester program in Ecuador provides the following courses:

Course	Dep. Code	Credits
2 Semesters of Spanish	SPA xxx	6-7
Human Medical Physiology	BIO 300	4
Biology Medical Practicum	BIO 393	2
Latin American History	HIS 250	3
Latin Dance	HUM250 or KIN200	1
Or the Public Health Cls	Epid	3

CUENCA ECUADOR PROGRAMS

PART 2

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Introduction

Why should I know something about Ecuador and Cuenca? Ecuadorians have great pride in their country. When you claim to be from America or you say that you are Americans, the Ecuadorians respond with, "So are we." They are from South America and you are from North America. Knowing something about their country will show them respect and that you care about them. You don't have to have this information memorized; in fact, it may not be accurate in the eyes of the people you meet. Come into the country and learn from them. See if what is said about them is true, and let the humility of learning help bring you close to these people.

Below are some questions you should ask yourself. Then, research what you do not know.

- How many prominent people in the affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.) of your host country can you name?
- Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
- Can you recognize the national anthem?
- Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?
- What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? What other religions are present?
- What is the attitude toward divorce? Extra-marital relations? Plural marriage? Homosexuality?
- What is the attitude toward drinking?
- What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?
- Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? Does this change in different situations?
- If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late?
- What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
- What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
- On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts? What kind of gifts would you exchange?
- What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? Of teenagers? What games do children play? What sports are popular?
- What is the normal work schedule?
- How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of most people living in your home country?
- What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
- How are children disciplined at home? At school?
- Is education free? Compulsory?
- In schools, are children segregated by race? By caste or class? By sex?
- Is the most popular media generally friendly in their attitude toward the US?
- What are common home remedies for minor ailments? Can medicines be purchased?
- Where are the important universities in the country?

History of Ecuador

Pre-Inca Times - Although the earliest evidence of man in Ecuador can be traced back to 10,000 BC, there are few concrete facts about the country's history before the invasion of the Incas in the middle of the 15th century. By 1480, dominant indigenous groups included Imbayas, Shyris, Quitus, Puruhaes, and Cañaris in the highlands and the Caras, Manteños, and Huancavilcas along the coast.

The Inca Invasion - The Incas inhabited Ecuador in the mid 15th-century then they began to expand into what is now Ecuador. Yupanqui led the invasion with his son Túpac Yupanqui, who established himself at Ingapirca. He then built an impressive network of roads stretching the length of his empire from Cusco in southern Peru north to Quito.

The Spanish Invasion - The Conquest: Francisco Pizarro slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Incas and the whole empire fell under Spanish control. His lieutenants Sebastian de Benalcázar and Diego de Almagro founded San Francisco de Quito on the charred remains of the Inca city.

Independence From Spain - The Spanish rule continued with relative peace until the late 18th-century when creole (Spanish born in the New World) leaders started to resent Spain for its constant interference and for demanding high taxes. After a couple of failed attempts to defeat the Spanish armies, the first real victory was won at Guayaquil, which gained independence in October 1820. At this point, an urgent request for backup was sent to the South American liberator, Simon Bolívar. Bolívar swept into action, sending his best general, Antonio José de Sucre, to take command of the rebel army based in Quito. Sucre and his forces won the pivotal battle of Pichincha on May 24, 1822, ending Spanish rule in Ecuador. Bolívar declared Quito the southern capital of a huge new nation, Gran Colombia, which included present-day Colombia, Ecuador, and parts of Panama and Venezuela. In 1830 the Quito representatives won independence for their own republic, calling it Ecuador because of its location on the equator. In 1861 Gabriel García Moreno, a fearless leader and devout Catholic, became president. The most significant legacy of his rule was to turn Ecuador into a Catholic republic and force his beliefs on all of its residents. In 1875, after Garcia Moreno's death, the equally fearsome but liberal president, Eloy Alfaro, took over and immediately started undoing Garcia Moreno's work, secularizing the state and education.

Dollarization and Beyond – In 1999, then-President Jamil Mahuad changed over to the U.S. dollar to stabilize the economy. Although this move had the immediate desired effect of stabilizing the economy, it brought numerous other problems for the Ecuadorian people. The cost of living went up and poverty worsened. His vice-president Gustavo Noboa, under whom the economy slowly started to recover, replaced him immediately. In 2006, Rafael Correa, an economist, was elected President. Since his election, he has shown signs of leaning to the left like fellow South American leaders Hugo Chavez, and Maduro (Venezuela) and Evo Morales (Bolivia). Popular among poor Ecuadorians, Correa is seen as something of a loose cannon by the middle and upper classes. He has engineered a new constitution for his nation and has promised to root out corruption. After 10 year in the government with Correa, the Ecuadorians elected and voted for a new President. Lenin Moreno is from the same party of Rafael Correa, (Alianza Pais), and Guillermo Lazo was the opposition, (CREO) they went to elections and Lenin Moreno won. Now starts a new period of Alianza Pais, with a new person in the Presidency of Ecuador who is Mr. Lenin Moreno.

Ecuador Weather and Climate

Ecuador has two seasons: wet and dry. The wet season- or *invierno* (winter) - in the highlands is from October until April (with a short dry period from mid-November to the end of December), and the dry season - *verano* (summer) - lasts from June until September.

Generally speaking, the temperature is dictated by altitude. Cuenca and the Andes enjoy spring-like weather year-round, with highs of around 20-25° C (68-77°F) and lows of about 8-10°C (45-50°F). Weather in the Galapagos varies between misty and cool, and steamy and sunny. The Amazon region is generally either hot and humid or hot and rainy. However, no matter what season it is said to be, the weather is ultimately unpredictable. Warm sunny mornings can often lead to bone-chilling, rainy afternoons, hence the sierra's adage "four seasons in one day."

Ecuador Culture and the Ecuadorian People

Ecuador's population is estimated to be 16'285.000 with a less than 2% annual growth rate. The population is ethnically mixed: 55% mestizo (mixed indigenous - Caucasian), 25% Indigenous, 10% Caucasian, 9% African, and 1% other.

Although the population was heavily concentrated in the Andes highlands region a few decades ago, today it is divided about equally between that area and the coast. Migration toward cities in all regions, but particularly Quito and Guayaquil, has increased the urban population to more than 50%. The rainforest region to the east of the mountains remains the most sparsely populated of Ecuador's three continental regions and contains only about 3% of the population.

THE CITY OF CUENCA

Cuenca is the cultural Mecca of Ecuador and the capital of the Azuay province, the third largest city in the nation, and the economic center of the southern Sierra. Cuenca is an ancient city, older than even the Spanish occupation. The city is a colonial jewel, a neat, orderly city set in the picturesque rolling hills of southern Ecuador. Cuenca has a centuries-old colonial center full of stunning architecture, venerable churches, and well-kept parks. Cuencanos are immensely proud of the fact that their colonial downtown was named a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural site in 1999. The city's cobblestone streets, towering cathedrals, and marble and whitewashed buildings give it a colonial air unequalled in Ecuador. Officially known as "Saint Ann of the Four Rivers of Cuenca," the river Machangara serves as the city's northern limit, the river Tomebamba - which means "River Valley of Knives" - runs through the historic district, and the river Yanuncay and the river Tarqui flow through the southern suburbs. The most visible of the four is Tomebamba, which separates Cuenca's colonial heart from several new residential areas, the stadium, and the city's main university.

Climate

Like the rest of the Ecuadorian Andes, Cuenca enjoys a mild climate year-round. Days are generally warm and nights are cool enough that you should pack a sweater. The average daily temperature is 14.6 C. The rainy season is the same as Quito's and generally lasts from mid-October until early May. During this time, mornings are typically sunny and afternoons cloudy with

light, periodic showers.

Safety

The city of Cuenca is considered to be one of the safest in the country. Although this is true, petty theft is common. Petty theft is an issue in any big city, and you will be advised and prepared accordingly.

Since you will be living in a home as part of a family, you should be prepared for and respect the fact that your Ecuadorian parents will tend to be protective of you as to where you go and in which activities you participate in the city.

Transportation

- Bus - National and International buses travel between cities and into other countries and are of good to excellent quality. Local buses are not expensive and locals frequently opt to walk or take taxis. The distances you would normally travel would be no more than a 30-minute walk; however, main routes are covered by the local bus system.
- Taxis provide transportation all over the city and to nearby cities. Costs are minimal.
- Air - The airport, Mariscal Lamar, provides flights into and out of the city. National airlines TAME and LAN fly into the country. The two main airports of entry into and out of the country are found in Guayaquil and Quito.



ACADEMIC INFORMATION

In Ecuador, especially within Cuenca, the importance given to education in the society is easily seen. Ecuador considers Cuenca to be an academic, scholarly, and artistic center. It has the largest cathedral in Ecuador and is known as “The City of the Sciences.” Because of the importance of education in this culture, it will be important for you to know about the educational system and how you will be assessed in terms of academics, appearance, and attitude. Remember, some of the teachers you will have may or may not be of an Evangelical Christian faith, but they know you are coming from that background.

Culture – Attire – Attitude

It will be important for you to remember that you will be studying in a different culture. The style of teaching as well as the style of assessment will be different than you are accustomed to at Taylor. This is one reason why you chose to participate in a study abroad program: to engage in a different culture, which includes their education system. The professors in Cuenca expect that Taylor University students care about their education and that they want to do well in their classes.

Homework and readings will be assigned to provide background and further detail to what is being taught. The faculty will expect you to complete all reading assignments and will test you over the reading. Exams and quizzes will be given on assignments, readings, and class activities. You may have a ten-question test of which three questions are from the lecture and the rest from the assigned reading. You will be expected to know everything assigned, not just the material covered during class.

The way you dress for class is a sign of respect to the teacher and will be noticed - and discussed - by the faculty. Wearing jeans with a nice shirt/sweater and shoes – not flip-flops - is quite adequate, but don't come to class looking like you just got out of bed (eg. wearing pajama pants). Class times may be earlier than you are used to which means you will have to get up earlier in order to prepare yourself adequately and get to class on time.

Trips

The Cuenca, Ecuador program has scheduled several mandatory class trips as part of the cultural experience. You will have the privilege of going to the Galapagos Islands, the Oriente, coast/beach, and to the capitol city of Quito. A member of the Taylor University Cuenca staff and/or someone from the Verbo will accompany you on these trips. Each trip will require specific attire as you travel. Please check the packing list for those specific items.

Absences

If you are ill and need to miss a class, you will need to contact the TU Cuenca office staff so that the faculty members can be notified. Missing classes without notification is not looked upon well by the TU staff, Cuenca faculty, or the culture. Communication and awareness are necessary.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Community life in Cuenca, Ecuador involves engagement with your Ecuadorian family, the Taylor University Cuenca personnel, the Verbo Arco church, as well the people with whom you interact at the university, areas of practicums, and everyday living in the city. You will not be living in the “intentional community” of Taylor’s campus; rather, you will be living in the culture of another country, and the way you live, learn, and interact will be seen in the context of their culture. The Life Together Covenant still applies in Cuenca as mentioned earlier, but it may be more difficult to understand because of the cultural differences; therefore, it is important to understand the culture so that you can adjust and function well while you are living out the LTC.

The following information acts as an initial step to understanding the culture with which you will be engaging while living in Cuenca. Upon arrival you will have orientation meetings that will help you to become more knowledgeable about the specifics of where you will be living, your host family, the teachers etc.

Life Together Covenant (LTC)

Remember that the focus of the LTC is to provide a framework for community. As it states in the handbook, “Taylor University is a community of Christians intentionally joined together for academic progress, personal development, and spiritual growth. We seek “to develop servant leaders marked with a passion to minister Christ’s redemptive love and truth to a world in need.” Together we seek to honor Him by integrating biblical faith and learning while our hearts and lives embrace the process of maturing in Christ.

“The Taylor University community consists of those who, in furtherance of our mission, are living together in intentional, voluntary fellowship, aware that we are called to live our lives before a watching world. Although primarily centered on the Upland campus, this community is not defined by geography, but rather by active engagement in the Taylor educational mission.” While you are at Cuenca you will also be a member of the community of the Verbo Church. When you arrive in Cuenca, the Director of the TU Cuenca office will provide more direction. If you desire more information and answers to questions about the LTC, check out the LTC online.

Culture

The overall culture of Ecuador and especially Cuenca is one of warmth, acceptance, and caring. The culture is very family oriented and supportive. Children do not leave the home until they are married or if work takes them to another location. At least once a month the extended family gathers for a day of fellowship together.

Greeting each other (friends and family - and sometimes new acquaintances) occurs with an “air kiss” on the right side of the cheek. Women “air kiss” everyone including children. Men and boys only “air kiss” women and shake hands with other men. You may notice, however, as the relationship between men increases, there may also be a side-hug with the handshake. This greeting is important both upon saying hello as well as good-bye. More will be discussed about this in the cultural meeting.

Holidays are special times and are family oriented. The culture is very patriotic and will respect that in you as well as long as you are humble in your approach. Remember that they do not celebrate U.S. holidays, so if you wish to have a Thanksgiving or special Easter celebration, you may have to teach your family concerning your traditions. The Taylor University Cuenca staff will try to provide the opportunity for you to celebrate important US holidays with the other Taylor University students who are living in Cuenca and their host families.

Sensuality is viewed differently in Ecuador. You may be surprised at the level of sensuality in the advertising and the dress. Remember that this culture views things differently than you do. Be careful of your remarks concerning the differences. Likewise, our culture is viewed by the Ecuadorians with the eyes of their culture. The public display of affection is culturally sensitive (i.e. laying on each other's laps, stroking each other's hair, etc.) are viewed differently in Cuenca).

Respect for others is a hallmark of this society. In the Ecuadorian culture there are important dos-and-don'ts that indicate the respect one has for the home, workforce, and education. Academic respect has already been addressed and respect in the home will be discussed later, but it is important to remember that the home is the central part of the culture. The respect for age, position, and status (gender) is an important cultural distinctive. The respect for elders is important. Chain of command is important. For example, if you have a struggle at Cuenca it will be important that you go to the proper person. If you side step or complain to (critique) someone else, they will assume that the other person has failed and will try and take ownership of the problem. Because we work very closely in the TU/Verbo structure, it is very important that you are careful to whom you express your disappointments, concerns, and/or frustrations. Therefore, because you are directly under the responsibility of the Taylor University Cuenca staff, any issues with which you may need assistance should first go to the Director of the TU Cuenca office. She will help to determine where the issue needs to be addressed including home, educational, community or Taylor University student issues.

The Community of Verbo Church

Verbo is our partner to help with the community and spiritual life while in Cuenca. Because your host family is a Verbo member, it is requested that you attend the Verbo worship services on Sunday with your family and participate in the home church ministry as the family directs. (This could mean youth home church and youth activities). Finding a way to participate at the Verbo church in one of its ministries is important to the church in their outreach to the people of Cuenca. Work with the Director of the TU Cuenca office and the Verbo leadership to see where you may be able to participate. Special note: participation in a Verbo ministry requires that you will abide by Verbo expectations in that ministry.

The Community of Your Home

You will be staying in Christian homes with the majority of the families being from the Verbo church. As mentioned, you will be in a home selected by a committee of Cuenca, Ecuador Taylor Staff and the Elders of Verbo Church.

The culture of the family in Cuenca is important, and just like your US family, will have its special character. Two things that are very important are the respect for authority and the need for communication. The family will feel highly responsible for your health, well being, and safety. Lack

of communication as to your plans, location, and physical and mental state will be viewed as signs of disrespect. This is not that they are controlling; rather, it is a way to make sure that all of the family members work together. Both the preparation of food and getting people around need proper coordination, and the mother of the home takes these tasks seriously. It will be important, then, to understand how your family handles chores, visits, schedules, and daily living rules so that proper respect is given to the proper authority. Remember, you are engaging their culture.

You will have regular scheduled meetings with the Director of the TU Cuenca office to assess the home stays. It is difficult to express feelings in a second language, and the director will help to assist in that communication with the family. You should feel to express your concerns or needs to the Director of the TU Cuenca office, and together you will work toward reaching a solution. Any concerns are initially handled by the Director of the TU Cuenca office, and if a change in housing is needed, the director will be of a great assistance.

Of special note is the spiritual life of the family. Most of the believers here are first-generation evangelical Christians while many of the extended family members may not be evangelical Christians. You will be highly involved in the life of your extended family and your life will witness to your own faith.

We encourage you to bring gifts to your host family and ideas of gifts to bring will be provided during the cultural meeting.

HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE IN ECUADOR

Taylor University will work to protect your health and safety while abroad, but you must take responsibility for the results of your decisions, choices, and behavior. Because the flora (bacteria etc..) in common materials in Ecuador is different from our common flora, the chances of having a case of food dysentery is quite possible. Until you are adjusted to the Ecuadorian flora and fauna, it is strongly suggested that you:

- Carry Pepto-Bismol with you. One chewable tablet taken before a meal is recommended.
- Be leery of eating foods that have not been prepared for you.
- Don't eat off the street; wash fruit & vegetables
- Do not eat foods that cannot be peeled.
- Do not eat undercooked foods
- Drink bottled water until you are adjusted or talk to your Ecuadorian parents about their water.
- Brush your teeth with bottled water in the trips

An Emergency card will be provided at the departure meeting. It will contain emergency numbers for you and your US family. It will be laminated and should be kept in your possession at all times.

Health Card

As a student at Taylor University, you will also have insurance through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). This card can be used with your own insurance and will help cover expenses

incurred in Ecuador. If you are sick while in Ecuador, make sure you take with you a copy of your passport, the CISI card, talk with your host parents, your parents from the USA let know the Director in Cuenca. and go to the Emergency Room of Hospital Santa Ines.

Petty Theft

Petty theft (passports, money, jewelry, credit cards, Ipods, computers) is an issue in a big city. You will need to be careful with what you carry when you are away from your home. Be watchful and cautious.

Emergency Information

Taylor University Cuenca Office
Address: Av. 10 de Agosto y Av. Loja
Iglesia Verbo Segundo Piso
Cuenca Ecuador

Director: Maria de Lourdes Larrea Cel 593-99-151-6493
E mail: mrlarrea@taylor.edu

Physician: Dr. Marlo Palacios (Call Director of TU Cuenca office for contact numbers.)

Hospital/Medical Facility that has agreed to work with CISI insurance:
Hospital Santa Ines
Address: Av. Daniel Cordova y Federico Proaño
Phone: 593-972827888

American Embassy

Address for visitors and local mail:

Ave. Avigiras E12-170 y Ave. Eloy Alfaro (next to SOLCA)
Quito, Ecuador

Address for package delivery:

Ave. Guayacanes N52-205 y Ave. Avigiras

Business hours: Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM, and from 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM. except during holidays

Embassy Switchboard: From abroad: 593-2-398-5000

From other Ecuadorian Provinces: 02-398-5000

From Quito and other cities within the Province of Pichincha: 398-5000

US Consulate in Guayaquil

Address for Visitors and Local Mail: U.S. Consulate General

Calle Santa Ana y Av. José Rodríguez Bonin
Guayaquil, Ecuador

Business Hours: Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Consulate Switchboard: From abroad: 593-4-371-7000

From other Ecuadorian Provinces: (04) 371-7000

From Guayaquil and other cities within the Province of Guayas: 371-7000

DAILY LIVING DETAILS

Money/Cost Of Living Allowance

Ecuador uses the U.S. dollar as its currency. There is no exchange of currency needed. Debit/credit cards are an easy way to obtain monies while in Cuenca. Like most ATM machines, a small fee is charged for each use. Large businesses allow for charge card use, but most of the markets must be paid in cash. Carry small bills & coins. If you choose to use a laundry service instead of what is provided in your home, you are responsible to pay. Otherwise, your laundry will be taken care of in your host home. Remember, you are responsible for your personal needs/supplies, not your host family.

The Cuenca, Ecuador Program provides a cost-of-living allowance for transportation & phones while in Ecuador. The transportation monies will cover use of public bus and, if needed, taxi service. The phone is for your use while in Ecuador and for the ability to be in communication with the Taylor University Cuenca office and each other. **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO KEEP THE PHONE IN YOUR POSSESSION AT ALL TIMES AND YOU MUST KEEP THE PHONE CHARGED AND LOADED WITH CALLING TIME (MONEY).** You can use your phone to call home as it has a good rate, but you will be responsible for finances of those calls.

E-mail Communication

While you are overseas, Taylor University and the Director of Ecuador Programs will communicate important university information, such as your pre-registration time and RAC code, to your Taylor e-mail account. If you plan to forward your Taylor e-mail to a non-University account, please be aware that many internet-based e-mail providers (i.e.: Hotmail, Yahoo) do not handle forwarded e-mail very well. The only way to guarantee that important University-related messages, including grade reports and course schedules, reach you is to leave your Taylor account un-forwarded and regularly check your e-mail using Webmail.

Communicating from Overseas

Internet communication: Communication overseas is easy with a Skype account. It costs pennies to call the US with a US-based Skype account. It is also free if you are calling to another Skype account. Many online instant messaging programs (e.g. Gmail and Facebook) now offer voice and video options. You can talk to your friends or family on the computer (and view them with webcams), often for free. Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) technologies, and international calls are offered at very low rates. For more information visit their website.

There are Internet providers in town that have Internet phones, and you can always call using your Taylor University Cuenca phone.

Email is one of the easiest ways to keep in touch. Although Internet access is common in many areas of the world, you may not have as much access as you're used to at home. Each home will vary in the amount of Internet service. However both the church and the universities have Internet access.

Mailing from overseas: When mailing packages to and from your host country, be sure to allow additional time for your mail to arrive. The cost is high and in most cases is impractical. Packages that are mailed from overseas can be delayed by customs or by internal bureaucracy. Package contents may also be subject to damage or theft during transit. Consider these risks before mailing a package, or instructing your family to do so. If you do, the UPS is one secure method for sending documents etc.

International calling cards: One economical way to communicate from overseas to the US is through the use of an international calling card, available through companies like AT&T, Sprint, MCI, or a local company. The phone company you choose will send you an international calling card, billing instructions, and a list of country toll-free numbers for your particular phone service. Make sure to obtain the toll-free number for all of the countries you plan to visit before leaving for your trip.

Family Visits

If your family wants to visit remember that you are still required to be in your classes. There are no cuts in the program. Host family trips and excursions take up any flexibility that you normally have in a semester. We can provide your schedule, but it may not be available until one month before you leave. It is best to coordinate all activities through the Director of Ecuador Programs & the Director of TU Cuenca office.

ECUADOR PACKING LIST

NOTE: Airlines limit the amount of liquids you can carry-on and restrict the packaging of those liquids. Please check www.tsa.gov for additional information. Do not pack any items in your carry-on luggage that could be viewed as a weapon. Such items include, but are not limited to aerosol cans, knives or pocketknives, lighters, nail files, razors, and scissors. A detailed list of airline-prohibited items can be found [online](#).

Required Travel Documents

- Passport (and one copy of your passport)
- 3 passport photos
- Visa materials
- TUID
- Driver's license
- Your health insurance card
- CISI insurance card
- Copy of wallet contents
- Proof of vaccination
- Credit or Debit Card for ATM (activate for international use)

Medication/Eyeglasses/Contact Lenses

- If you take prescription medication: Make sure you bring the prescription with you to verify its authenticity.
- Take enough medication to last for the duration of your trip.
- Carry all medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Keep medications in original labeled containers with your name, your physician's name, and the generic name of the medication. It may be helpful to write a list of this information as well.
- Ask your pharmacist for a copy of the original prescriptions for all medications.
- If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses: Bring an extra pair of eyeglasses and contact lenses as well as the prescriptions.

Academic Materials

- Good Spanish/English Dictionary-Oxford, University of Chicago, Langenscheidt
- Textbooks (See list below)
- Spanish verbs book ([500 Spanish Verbs](#))-especially if verbs are difficult for you
- Spanish/English Bible
- Notebook, journal, index cards, pens, pencils, markers, paper, etc.
- Back Pack
- Laptop and laptop case: A 2-prong AC adapter (you may want to plug in a computer, but the only plug in the room is 2-prong. Consider getting a 3 that converts to 2, usually \$1 or so)

Note: Ecuador uses the same electric current (110) as the US, so no need for current adaptors.

Text Books: Students will have to buy textbooks in US before leaving for Ecuador

Human Physiology

ISBN-13: 978-0073403625

ISBN-10: 0073403628

Clothing & Living Materials

- Warm clothes-layers
- Warm coat or Jacket, fleece or sweater(s) for cool nights, hat
- Rain jacket and umbrella
- Bathing suit, shorts for beach and athletic clothes for sports
- Dress clothes (include shoes) for weddings, special occasions, etc.
- Comfortable shoes, sneakers, and/or hiking shoes (You will be walking a lot!)
- Sunscreen, bug spray, Chapstick antibacterial hand gel
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush & toothpaste, razor, feminine products, small mirror, and looking good items etc.) You can get most - if not all- of these items in Cuenca, so you don't need to bring them in large quantity.
- Pajamas, slippers & shower flip flops
- Pictures of your home & family, gifts for your Ecuadorian family, favorite recipes
- Laundry bag
- Gifts for your host family. (Chocolates, t-shirt, etc.) They do not need be expensive.
- **Do not** bring expensive jewelry.

Miscellaneous

- Small bills
- Backpack & small duffel for day trips or short 2-day trips
- Small or wallet-sized purse
- Travel alarm clock, watch
- Camera, charger, flashlight

Trip-Specific Packing Lists

<u>Galapagos</u>	<u>Quito And Oriente:</u>
insect repellent sunscreen hat or cap sunglasses t-shirt: lightweight long sleeve and short shorts lightweight trousers for the evening tennis shoes socks, tights camera swimsuit small backpack water bottle sandals	jeans, shirts, hoodies and sweaters, umbrella semi-formal clothes for ballet in Quito waterproof jacket (optional) insect repellent, a large jar sunscreen hat or cap sunglasses t-shirt: lightweight long sleeve and short lightweight pants tennis shoes sandals long socks camera swimsuit small backpack

TRAVELING TO CUENCA

At the pre-departure meeting, you will be provided with the name of the city you will be flying through and the name of the person who will be picking you up at the airport. The person picking you up could change, so please read your E-mails. Someone from Taylor University will be at the departure airport to assist you.

When you get your boarding passes and luggage tags, **do not loose the luggage tags**. You will need them upon arrival in Ecuador in order to claim your luggage. (See below as to when you need to show evidence of your luggage.) It is good to have your bags marked with something very visible so you can recognize them.

On the flight to Ecuador, you will have to fill out information for immigration and customs. Make sure that you fill them out completely with your correct Passport and Visa information. You will use the church address as your home address. It is:

Verbo Inglesia Cristiana
 Av.10 de Agosto y Av. Loja
 Cuenca, Ecuador
 Phone Number: 072881330

When arriving, you will arrive in one of two cities, either Guayaquil or Quito. If you land in Quito, you will be at 9000 feet, so as you walk you may notice the need for a little oxygen.

As you land you will go through the following steps:

Immigration

You will head down to immigration and there are three lines: one for families with children, one for Ecuadorians returning, and the other for non-nationals. The line you should be in is the one with all the gringos in it. You will need your passport and your immigration form. When the immigration officials are filling out your paperwork, make sure they write the correct Visa type on your passport.

Baggage

After you go through immigration you will pick up your bags. The carousels are very small and the baggage handlers take the bags off of the moving belt and set them aside, so if you don't see them on the carousel, look to see if they have been set elsewhere. Once you have collected your bags you should head to Customs.

Baggage Scan and Customs

You will then get in line for Customs and a baggage scan. Usually this is very fast, and if you have a lot of luggage, it can be difficult to get your bags on and off. You will need to hand the Customs official your Customs form.

After going through Customs, you will go through glass doors where you will see many people waiting for their families or picking up people. You have two things to do here: 1) look for the person picking you up and 2) as you go up the incline, someone will stop you and will check that your bags match the baggage claim tickets you received at the departing airport. Make sure you have them available.

RETURNING HOME

Duties and Customs

When re-entering the US, you must declare all items purchased abroad. Typically, the first \$400-\$800 worth of goods is duty-free. If you purchased more than this amount in goods overseas, you will be asked to pay duty on the additional items. When traveling by air, you may be asked to fill out a Declaration Form provided by the airline. Pack items you will need to declare separately and have your sales slips for these items. For more information about US custom regulations and restricted items click [here](#).

Note: *It is generally forbidden to use cell phones until you have cleared customs.*

Reverse Culture Shock

Research has shown that coming home can be more unsettling than going abroad for some students. Returning students often find that they have changed a great deal, and it can be difficult to find people who truly seem to understand your new perspective. There is even a term for the feelings you may have when you get back home: reverse culture shock. It has many of the same symptoms of culture shock.

Remember that these feelings are a normal and on-going part of your cross-cultural experience. If your friends and/or family have noticed a change in you, it is because you have changed, usually for the better. The tips below will help you prepare for your homecoming, both emotionally and practically.

While You Were Gone

Studying abroad can be so exciting and interesting that it is easy to forget that your friends and family stayed at home. While you are sharing your experiences abroad, ask your friends and family about their lives during your absence. Before you return home, think of the things your family and friends have told you about while you were abroad. How will you connect your experiences with their lives when you return? What will you say to them?

Arriving Home

In your first few days back, your excitement to be home and back in your comfort zone will be colored by jet lag. However, once you have readjusted, keep yourself busy. Most returned students agree that getting a job or volunteering in the community keeps them from daydreaming and missing the host country. Do not make any big decisions in the first few weeks following your return; what makes sense during these weeks can simply be your reactions to re-entry shock. Just because you were a pedestrian for a quarter of a year, for example, does not mean you should sell your car now.

Reconnecting with Friends and Family

Communicating with family and friends can be the most frustrating experience of re-entry shock. Everyone will be glad that you are home and want to hear about your experiences, but they may be intimidated by the independence you have had. Most will only want a short version of your time and not a detailed description. Give them time and yourself time. In general, others find it difficult to relate to such a personal experience and may find it hard to share your excitement. The following tips may help:

- Talk to them about re-entry shock and the process, so they know what to expect.
- Organize your photos as soon as possible, so they are easy to share.
- Share your photos with your friends, but only if they ask, and do not talk too long.
- When you share the photos with friends or family, set a time so you do not impose on them and they can give you the attention you want.
- Be open to questions and comments.
- Be sensitive to their feelings, and try to relate your experiences to situations or events at home. (“This café we went to is a little like the diner down the street. Everyone ends up there in the evening.”)
- Let your parents and loved ones know how much you appreciate the chance they have given you to grow by living, studying, and traveling abroad.
- Ask friends what they have been doing while you were gone, and ask about local events.

Returning to Campus

Coming back to campus will be another change, and some students say that returning to classes was harder than returning to American life in general. Talk to your advisor soon after you return about your experience and any possible changes to your career goals and coursework.

Program Evaluation

We are extremely interested in hearing about your experience abroad and learning how we can better prepare future participants. Therefore, the OCP asks each study abroad participant to complete a written program evaluation.