The ESL Homestay Program of the University of Guelph wants to ensure that both students and hosts have a positive experience.

To help you enjoy the time that you spend with your host, we have prepared this booklet of information, advice and guidelines about Homestay.

Remember, Homestay is here to help you transition into your life in Canada. It gives you the opportunity to learn from the Canadians you live with about culture, food and life skills.

Please take the time to read this guide very carefully. If you have any questions, please be sure to contact us.

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Learn about your Homestay

When you arrive at your new Homestay, your host will show you your room and the rest of the house. Your host may want to explain some things to you. If you do not understand, ask questions to your host.

Contact Card

Use the information from the Host Profile sent to you before your arrival to create a contact card. The contact card should include your Host’s name, address, telephone number and email. Make sure you always have this card with you.

Learn the Bus system

Your host family will show you how to get to the University of Guelph by bus. Watch carefully and look for important landmarks to help you remember where to get off the bus.

For Bus Route information and bus route maps, please visit: http://guelph.ca/living.cfm?smocid=2156

Spend time with your host

Get to know your host and your new environment.

- Ask questions about your host, their family, background, interests etc.
- If you have a favourite food from home, bring the recipe and cook it with your host. Your host will want to know about your country and your family.
- If you have some pictures, show them to your host.

Spend time with your family rather than staying in your room. They need a chance to get to know you and feel comfortable with you, too!
Here are the responsibilities of the host:

- They will provide you with three meals a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- They will provide you with a private room with a bed, closet and desk or table for study purposes.
- They will always speak English when you are there, and they will encourage you to always speak English in their home (even if they speak a second language).
- They will treat you as a member of the family.
- They will let you know what the rules and expectations are for their home. You can ask them to write them down if you don’t understand.

As a member of your new family, you have responsibilities too.

Here are your basic responsibilities:

Cleaning:
- You must keep your room tidy and clean. This means making your bed every day and vacuuming your room regularly. Ask your host how often this should be done.
- You should clean up after yourself in the bathroom.
- Avoid splashing water on the floors and walls. If this happens, clean it up as soon as possible. Remember that homes in Canada are made of wood and can be damaged by water.
- Clean up after yourself in other parts of the home. If you use the kitchen, clean your dishes and crumbs. If you use the family room, put the videos away and clean up your snacks. Remember to make the room look like it did before you used it.
- You should help with meals by setting the table, clearing the table and cleaning the dishes. In some families, you may also make your own breakfast and lunch. Be sure you clean up after you are done in the kitchen.

Communication:
- You must communicate with your host family. If you don’t understand something, ask.
- You should tell your host family well in advance if you are going to be late, or if you won’t be home for dinner.
- You should communicate with your host and make an effort to feel comfortable with them.
- You should be sure to check the host’s house rules.
Responsibilities of the student:

Food:
You are expected to learn how to prepare your own breakfast and lunch. If so, your family will show you what you can make or take for these meals.

What is not included in Homestay?
- You should pay for your own entertainment, unless the family offers to treat you.
- You must provide your own toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, etc.

Remember: You are not staying in a hotel, and the members of your host family are not your servants. Please treat them with courtesy and respect.

Accommodations:
Each host has agreed to provide you with a safe, clean and comfortable place to stay. Each Homestay house has advantages and disadvantages. Every house is different in size, shape and structure. It is best not to compare your Homestay home with other students.

Families live in:
- houses
- apartments
- condominiums
- townhouses

It is very common for North American homes to have finished basements with a bedroom. You should not be surprised if your room is in the basement.

Meals:
You will find Canadian food different from your food at first. Try the food offered to you at least once. As you discover foods you like, make a list. Ask your host, “What kind of food is this? I like it!”. This will help your host know that you like some foods and help you remember them.

Discuss what foods you like and dislike with your host. Your host will take you to the grocery store in the first couple of days. Show them what foods you like and dislike. However, you cannot expect your host to change their diet completely to accommodate you.

If you really miss the food from your country, offer to cook a meal for your host. They will really enjoy the chance to try food from your country!
### Table Manners:

When you are eating, watch the way the members of your host family behave at the table. Table manners are different from country to country and it is important to be aware of table manners. Here are some examples:

- Think of others at the table; don’t take more than your share of food.
- When offered more food, you can accept by saying “Yes, please” or refuse by saying “No, thank you”.
- Before leaving the table, ask “May I leave the table?” or “Would you excuse me please?”

#### Meals with your Host:

**When you are late:**

- Call or text your host as soon as possible.
- Do not expect your host family to start cooking for you when you arrive home. They will either leave something for you to heat up or expect you to cook something for yourself.

**Very Important:** Do not take food into or leave food and dirty dishes in your room. This is a health risk as food spoils and bugs begin to become present.

### Shower Use:

Be sure to check with your host to find out when you should take a shower. It is very important that you are not in the washroom for too long when other family members have to get ready for work or school.

- Check with your host about how long you should spend taking a shower. Keep it under 10 minutes.
- This is very important! Keep the shower curtain INSIDE the tub when taking a shower to stop water from spilling on the floor.
- Be sure to clean up after yourself in the bathroom once you finish your bath or shower every day.
- Clean the sink after you use it.
- Hang up wet towels. Do not leave wet towels on the floor.

### Personal Care:

**Deodorant / Perfume**

Canadians like to look clean and smell clean.
Personal Care:

In Canadian culture it is important for people to use deodorant, brush their teeth often and shower every day or once every two days.

Many Canadians are allergic to perfume. Because we shower everyday or two days, we do not need a lot of perfume. In many workplaces, people are not allowed to wear perfume.

We recommend you do not wear perfume or cologne.

Clothing

Canadians like to wear clean clothes every day. It is rare to wear the same clothes two or more days in a row. If Canadians see you wear the same clothes two or more days in a row, they will think you are wearing dirty clothes.

Remember to clean your clothes regularly and change into clean clothes every day.

It is also common for Canadians to have special clothes to sleep in, called pajamas. These clothes are used only for sleeping and directly before sleep to relax.

Sanitary Napkins / Toilet Paper

With the toilet, tissue is flushed down the toilet, but sanitary napkins are wrapped and placed in a garbage container.

Your host will help you get used to living in their home. It is a good learning opportunity to talk to your host about their habits.

Laundry Facilities and Use:

Check with your host about how they want to handle laundry. If they prefer that you do your own laundry, be sure that you understand how to use the washer and the dryer. Wait until you have a full load of laundry before you use the washer. You do not have to buy laundry detergent; the host supplies it. Ask your host to show you how much detergent to use for each load.

Telephone Use:

You must use a telephone card for all long-distance calls.

If you make a long-distance call directly using your host’s phone, it is your responsibility to pay for the charges.
Telephone Use:

Here are some tips on phone use:

- Check with your host about when and how often you can use the phone.
- Avoid receiving phone calls after 10:00pm as it may disrupt the host’s sleep.
- If there is a time difference between Canada and your country and you must call late at night, please speak quietly.
- Be considerate of other family members when you are on the phone. Check with your host family about the length of your telephone calls (30 minutes is reasonable).
- If you want your own phone line in your room, check with your host. You will have to pay the monthly bills, buy the phone and pay an installation charge.

If you want to get a cell phone, please do not ask your host to co-sign for you. Your host has been requested to decline co-signer requests. You can buy your cell phone and use a “pay as you go” plan without a co-signer. With this plan you pay for “air time” as you need it. A lot of cellular phone companies offer this option.

Computer Use:

Not all host families have computers, and those that do have computers may not want you to use them. Hosts are not required to provide you with a computer. If you are allowed to use your host family’s computer, please be respectful of this privilege. Here are some simple rules to follow:

- Check with your host family for the time you can use their computer.
- Save all your work to a memory stick.
- Be very careful about using the internet. Do not try to access inappropriate material.
- To prevent viruses, do not download any material onto your host’s computer.
- Do not make any changes to the computer’s programs without your host’s permission.

Internet service is a requirement for all of our host families including but not limited to cable or DSL internet service. If you have your own laptop computer, you may discuss setting up wireless internet with your host.

Very Important: Take advantage of the valuable time that you could spend socializing with your host and practicing your English with them. By socializing with your host, you will experience the benefits of the Homestay program and develop a relationship with them.
Health Problems: Let your host know if you are not feeling well. If you have to miss school, you should also contact your instructor so that he/she will know that you will be away from class.

1. Call Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Telehealth Ontario is a free service provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that allows Ontario residents to speak to a Registered Nurse with their medical questions any time of the day or night. It's designed to provide quick answers, information and advice.

This could be when you're sick or injured, but aren't sure if you need to see a doctor or can treat the situation at home. It may also be questions you have about an ongoing or previously diagnosed condition, or general questions about nutrition, sexual health or healthy lifestyles.

What the service does not do is replace a doctor's visit for an actual diagnosis or prescription, and it certainly does not replace having a family doctor you can build a relationship with. Also Telehealth Ontario is not intended to provide emergency support - call 911 to have an ambulance or other emergency response sent out and to get emergency first aid instructions by phone.

The service is available in French as well, and the nurses can connect to translators in 110 languages.

What to Expect When you Call:

An operator will ask you about the reason for your call and take down your name, address and phone number. You do not need to provide a health card number. If a Registered Nurse is available immediately you'll be connected, but if all the lines are busy with other callers you'll be given the option of waiting on the line or getting a call back.

If you've indicated that you have a health problem, as soon as you speak to the nurse they will ask a few standard questions to ensure that it is not an emergency situation. You will then be able to speak to them about whatever problem or question you have called for.
Health Problems:

**Telehealth Ontario Tips:**
- Have paper and a pen when you phone to make notes throughout your conversation.
- Be prepared to keep your phone line free for awhile after you phone in case the lines are busy and they need to call you back (in my experience, the return call came within fifteen minutes).
- Remember that the nurse you are speaking to has no access to your medical history so you should be prepared to provide specifics, such as medications you are currently taking.
- Information you provide to Telehealth won't be added to your medical records, and they won't contact your doctor for you. Remember to repeat everything you told the Telehealth nurse if you later go to your doctor or a walk-in clinic for a diagnosis.

2. Go to Student Health Services

*Where is Student Health Services?*

Student Health Services is a medical clinic located on the first floor of the John T. Powell Building (beside the Athletic Centre at University of Guelph).

*When is the clinic open?*

The university clinic is open from Monday to Friday. Clinic hours are posted on the Student Health Services website at [http://www.studenthealth.uoguelph.ca/hours.shtml](http://www.studenthealth.uoguelph.ca/hours.shtml)

*Who can use Student Health Services?*

Urgent health care is provided on campus to all ESL students with medical insurance. Family members of ESL students are not allowed to use Health Services unless they are also registered ESL students. Children of ESL students cannot be seen at the on campus Health Services. Family members may visit an off-campus walk-in clinic. If you are not currently registered in the ESL program, you are not eligible to use Health Services.

*How do I make an appointment?*

To make an appointment to see a doctor or nurse, phone the clinic at 519-824-4120 extension 52131 or go to the clinic and speak with the receptionist in person.
Health Problems:

Can I visit the clinic without an appointment?
You may also go to the clinic without an appointment. This is called "Walk-In". When you go without an appointment, you will need to wait longer.

How does an ESL student use Student Health Services?
If you need to see a doctor or nurse for urgent medical care, make an appointment or go to the walk-in clinic at Student Health Services.
When you arrive, show the receptionist your medical card and fill out the information form. You may be asked to verify your identity. If your visit is for urgent care, you will not receive a bill after your visit. Student Health Services will collect your fees from the insurance company directly.
If your visit is for comprehensive care, you will need to pay for your medical care at the time of your visit because comprehensive care is not covered by your insurance policy.
For further information about your coverages and policies, please go to http://www.eslguelph.ca/LiG_health_services.asp

4. If you are sick for 3 days or more, please email esl@uoguelph.ca
This is official notification of your illness.
We can also pass this on to your instructor or the Academic Coordinator.
When you email us, we know that you are missing class for a good reason and not just for a trip or time off.

Here is a list of off-campus clinics:

Surrey Street After Hours Clinic:
21 Surry Street: 519-767-6201  6pm – 10pm, seven days a week

Major Emergency:
Phone 911 on your telephone or dial 0 and tell the operator it is an emergency
Student Information

ESL Homestay
Cultural Transition Support

Smoking:
Most Canadians do not permit smoking in their homes; however, many will allow for smoking outside. You must cooperate with your host and their rules regarding smoking. Breaking a rule regarding smoking is grounds for removal from the program.

Pets:
Many hosts have pets, usually dogs and cats. In Canada, dogs are very clean and friendly; cats are well cared for and make good companions. You may be surprised by how much you enjoy them as you get used to their presence.

Keys:
You will be given keys to your host’s house. Please take good care of these keys and be sure to return them to your host family when you leave. If you lose your keys, you must pay the cost of replacing them.

Making Social Plans:
While academic study, growth and development are the main goals of the University of Guelph ESL program, group interaction and socializing are also important elements to a successful student experience.

Students may set aside a regular amount of time each week for leisure activities and relaxation (e.g. ESL activities). Much of this time will be with your Host, though activities with school friends are also important. Regardless, all ESL students should provide their host with detailed information as to where they are going, how they can be reached (i.e. cell phone number) and when they will be back.

Communication with your host is essential and very important to prevent confusion and misunderstanding. Do not expect your host to “know” where you are or remember plans you may have mentioned days earlier. Remember, if you are going to be later than you had planned; contact your host family immediately.

Try to control the amount of socializing you do with students who speak the same language as you. You came to Canada to learn English, speaking your home language can be a comfort, but remember to take advantage of this opportunity to speak as much English as you can.

Alcohol & Illegal Drugs:
The legal age for drinking in Ontario is 19 years. Drinking underage, excessive drinking, the use of illegal drugs or the use of false identification are strictly prohibited and may result in removal from the Homestay program.

Note: Use of False ID is now a criminal offence.
Curfew: As adults, your host will not impose a curfew however; you must respect your host and their individual household rules. This includes the hours you spend outside the home. When going out, use the following factors to determine an appropriate time to return.

- Is it a school night or a weekend?
- The ages of the family members in the host family

The Homestay program suggests returning

- 10:00pm – 11:00pm return from Sunday to Thursday
- 12:00am – 1:00am return on Fridays and Saturdays

Special arrangements could be made for special events and circumstances.

Guests: You will need to ask your homestay host before inviting guests to their home. Some families may have room to accommodate guests, but are not expected to do so.

If you have family visiting, they should arrange to stay at a nearby hotel. If your host offers to house them, you should expect to reimburse or offer a minimum of $20 per day per person.

Host families will not allow your boyfriend or girlfriend to stay overnight. It is best to talk openly to your host family about your relationships and their household guidelines.

Travel: 1. Student Travel

Students are encouraged to explore and experience Canadian culture through travel during their stay in Ontario. However, this travel should not interfere with academic studies and should be limited to designated school holidays.

2. Host travel & Student participation

Many hosts will want to include you in their own travel and holiday plans. Students are encouraged to participate in these trips provided that the length of trip does not interfere with their course of study. Inform the Homestay Coordinator that you will be away on the trip.
Travel:

3. When your host is away
In some cases, the host will not be able to take you with them. If the host will be absent for two to five days, you may remain in the host home alone.

If the absence if greater than five days, you must inform the Homestay Coordinator and we will make arrangements for you to either stay with another family or to have somebody check in on you on a regular basis in the Homestay home.

When Problems Arise:

When you are having problems with your homestay, you must come and talk to us right away. In most cases, we can find a collaborative solution to the problem; however, if there are serious problems, a change in host family can be made.

Please note that this is very rare, as most homestay placements work out very well. Do not arrange to change host families without talking to us first. It is very important to discuss the homestay situation with us so that we are aware of any problems you may have.

Payment of Homestay Fees:

Homestay term fees can be paid in full or monthly.

Payment must be made upon your arrival at the University of Guelph.

Full term payment is $750 Canadian per month. For the first two months of stay, Payment includes Administration and Supervision Fees.

It is expected that you pay the full fee for months that include vacations when you choose to be away from your homestay. If you are in a homestay for extra days at the beginning or end of the month when you arrive or depart, the fee is $22.95 CAD per day to be paid directly to your host.

Removal from Homestay:

After 2 months you may choose to enter a private relationship with your host. Monthly term payment is $700 CAD per month or $22.95 per day paid directly to your host. You will no longer be under the direct supervision of the Coordinator and we will no longer manage your Homestay payments.

If you have concerns about your homestay or have considered moving, you must talk with the ESL Homestay Coordinator to discuss problem solving and options available.
Removal from Homestay:

You must give your homestay family and the Homestay Coordinator 30 days notice from the first of the month before leaving your homestay placement. If you do not give 30 days notice from the first of the month, you will be required to pay the fee of $700 for the following month.

Discrimination is not tolerated. Host families come from many different cultural backgrounds but are all considered Canadian. Regardless of cultural background, approved hosts have native to near native English proficiency and will provide you with a good language learning environment. We will not accept requests for families of a particular ethnicity.

If there is a health or safety issue, you will be moved without delay and without penalty.

Inappropriate touching is not tolerated. If either host or student receives an improper physical advance, the student will be removed immediately without penalty.

Length of Stay:

Homestay placements are a minimum of 2 months in length. In most cases, students choose to stay for 4 month terms.

If you wish to stay with the same family for an additional term, we can renew homestay for another 2 or 4 month term. Renewal will be decided after talking with both student and host. If both decide to continue we will renew homestay. If your host family cannot host for another term, another family can be arranged for you.

Entertainment:

Your host is responsible for providing meals and accommodation; they are not responsible for paying for your entertainment, even if you go somewhere with them. Always ask how much it will cost so that you can decide if you want to go or not. If the host family takes you out for dinner with them, they are responsible for paying. Your host family provides family meals. When you go out to eat with your friends, it is your responsibility to pay.

Money:

Do not keep large sums of money in your room. We recommend you open a bank account to keep your money protected. In addition, do not borrow money from or lend money to members of your homestay family.
Damage of Property:

When you damage or break something during a homestay placement, offer to have the item fixed or replaced. It can be difficult to tell your host that you have broken something. If this is the case, come to see the Homestay Coordinator, we can help you with this situation. Always make sure you know how household appliances work so that you don’t break them. Also, be careful when you are cooking that you don’t burn pots and pans or make burn marks on counter tops.

Very Important: Students who have outstanding homestay payments, phone bills and/or have incurred damages in their homestay placement and have no resolves these issues will not receive their final mark, certificate and transcript until the issue has been resolved.

Emergency Contacts:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Noorland,</td>
<td>519 824-4120 ext.53744</td>
<td>Rm. 154C Johnston Hall Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay Coordinator</td>
<td>Cell: 519-241-8099</td>
<td>of Open Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:homestay@uoguelph.ca">homestay@uoguelph.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Police</td>
<td>519-824-4120 ext. 52000</td>
<td>1 Trent Lane</td>
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<td>24 hour emergency support</td>
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