

ASA

Location-Specific

GUIDE:

Viña del Mar, Chile

For parents and students

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Student Visa

All students must have a passport that does not expire for at least 3 months after their proposed return date from Chile.

Students going to Chile for 6 months or less (i.e. a semester or summer program) can enter the country on a Tourist Visa, which is issued to the student at the Santiago international airport when they arrive in Chile, for a fee of US\$131 in cash. (Most semester/summer students prefer to get the tourist visa because obtaining a student visa is more involved.)

The Tourist Visa is good for 90 days, but you must leave Chile for one day during their first 90 days, and then you can return to Chile for another 90 days. If you do not leave Chile during your first 90 days, you will have to pay a fine.

Students going to Chile for more than 6 months (i.e. an academic year program, or back to back Spring and Summer programs) are required to obtain a Student Visa prior to departure from the Consulate of Chile that covers your state's jurisdiction. Please note that if you're thinking of extending your stay in Chile (i.e. you're going for one semester but are considering staying for an additional semester/summer), then you **MUST** obtain a Student Visa prior to departure.

♦ **Please see the document “Student Visa Information for Chile” for full details on how to obtain a Tourist Visa or Student Visa.**

Helpful Local Information

ASA students in Viña del Mar will have a Site Director to assist them during their stay, María Alejandra Flores. She works in the International Office at the Universidad de Viña del Mar.

María Alejandra Flores

Email: on-site.coordinator@uvm.cl, maria.alejandra@oie-uvm.cl

Cell phone: 011-56-9-9938-0901*

**This phone number includes the int'l code and country code, so this is the number you would dial from the U.S. If you are in Chile calling from a land line, dial 0-9938-0901. If you are in Chile calling from a Chilean cell phone, dial 9938-0901. 56 is the country code for Chile, and 011 is the int'l dialing code from the U.S.*

Host Institution & Housing

ASA students in Viña del Mar will attend:

Universidad de Viña del Mar (UVM)

Diego Portales 90

Agua Santa

Viña del Mar

Chile

Homepage: www.uvm.cl

International Office webpage: http://www.oie-uvm.cl/prontus_oieuvm/site/edic/base/port/inicio.html

Where will students live?

Students will live with a Chilean host family in Viña del Mar. All of the host families are carefully screened by the UVM International Office staff, and the majority has hosted international students for years. The hosts' residences are located as close to school as possible, in safe areas of the city; however, some hosts are located further from the school than others. Living in a Chilean home is considered the best form of housing because it provides an immediate introduction to life in Chile. **Students find that speaking Spanish at home is the single greatest factor in increasing their facility with the language.**

Living arrangements and the composition of families vary. The term “host family” should not be interpreted too narrowly. Increasingly, about 50% of the hosts are childless couples or divorced women with children who enjoy having a student living with them. The UVM's hosts come from a cross-section of society; they belong to no particular professional or social milieu.

The host will provide students with **three meals a day**, one load of laundry per week, a reasonably comfortable bed, clean surroundings, good light and desk for studying, and most importantly, endless opportunities to learn and practice Spanish. Living arrangements and the composition of families vary. Keep in mind homes in Chile are not as large as most homes here, so space, especially storage space, can be limited. **The vast majority of students love living with a host family and report that it was one of the best aspects of their study abroad experience.**

Students usually have their own room. Some hosts take only one student at a time, and others more. So, you may be the only student with your host, or you may have a housemate. If you have a particular preference, please note this on your Housing Questionnaire.

How are the host families selected?

The UVM International Office staff is responsible for interviewing, selecting, and matching host families with students. All the hosts must complete a detailed questionnaire and interview in their home. Each host is asked a variety of questions about their background, occupations, family composition, previous experience with students, habits, living arrangements, pets, and more.

All ASA students will complete a Housing Questionnaire after being accepted, which collects information that help us match the student with a compatible host family. *Students must be sure to indicate any allergies, dietary restrictions, or other special needs on the Housing Questionnaire.*

Students will receive their host family assignment by email, about 2 weeks prior to departure. If you have any concerns about your living arrangements after you arrive, please don't hesitate to bring it to our attention. Many times a concern can be a cultural misunderstanding or a communication problem that is easily resolved. If, for any reason, we are unable to settle an issue between a host family and a student, we will move the student to a new family as soon as possible. The welfare of our students is always our highest priority.

I have pet allergies/special dietary needs/other special needs. Can this be accommodated?

In most cases, yes. We will make every effort to accommodate each student's needs! It is extremely important that students indicate any allergies, dietary restrictions, or other special needs on their Housing Questionnaire.

How will I get to class from my residence?

Some students will be able to walk back and forth from the university, and others will take the bus or subway. Either way, the commute usually takes 10-15 minutes on foot, bus and/or subway. Viña del Mar has a modern and efficient public transportation system, including buses and a subway called *Merval*. Although Chile is a safe country, we recommend that students take taxis after 10 pm.

Do I need to bring sheets, pillows, blankets, towels, etc.?

Pillows, sheets, blankets and towels are provided by the host families.

♦ **You may not move in early to your program housing or stay after the program ends. Students who choose to arrive early or stay late must make their own lodging arrangements for any extra days. OVERNIGHT GUESTS ARE NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.**

Medical Care

What happens if I get sick while I'm in Chile?

Our students' health and safety is always our number-one priority. The first and most important step to take is for the student to notify their Site Director immediately if they are ill. She will help the student in any way possible – by locating medical care, translating, accompanying him/her to the doctor, etc. Modern medical facilities and medications are widely available in Chile.

Cell Phones

What is the time difference between Chile and where I live?

The following times are the number of hours BEHIND Chile each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
4 hours	3 hours	2 hours	1 hour

So, if it is 6pm in Chile, then it is 5pm Eastern, 4pm Central, and 2pm Pacific.

Dialing Instructions for Chile

011-INTERNATIONAL CODE WHEN CALLING FROM THE U.S. TO CHILE 56-COUNTRY CODE (CHILE)

CALLING FROM THE U.S. TO CHILE

• All phone calls made by friends and family outside of Chile should dial the following numbers:

Calling a House Phone in Chile

011 56 32 (then the 7-digit home number)

Calling a Cell Phone in Chile

011 56 9 (then the 8-digit cell phone number)

INSIDE CHILE:

- If you want to call from a land line (“*red fija*”) to another land line, you only have to dial the number. For example, if you want to call the International Office from your home in Chile, just dial: 246-2640.

- If you want to call a cell phone from your home (land line) you must first dial the cell phone code: 09. For example, if you need to call María Alejandra Flores just dial: 0-9938-0901. But, the majority of houses are not equipped to call cell phones from a *red fija*.

- If you want to call a land line from a cell phone, you must first dial the area code of the phone you are calling. For example, if you need to call the International Office from your cell phone, you must first dial Viña’s area code 032, and then 246-2640. To call a land line in Santiago from your cell phone, you must first dial Santiago’s area code 02 and then the 7-digit number

- If you want to call a cell phone from another cell phone, just dial the 8-digit number. For example, if you need to call María Alejandra Flores from your cell phone, just dial: 9938-0901.

How do the cell phones work?

Each student receives a pay-as-you-go cell phone when they arrive in Dublin. ASA provides the phone, while students are responsible for the cost of all calls. A pay-as-you-go system means that students have to purchase talk time before they are able to make and receive calls. This system makes it easy for students to keep track of how much they are spending on phone calls. The rates for calls and text messages are described in the phone’s instruction booklet, which they will receive upon arrival in Viña del Mar. Students can purchase talk time using a debit or credit card, and a member of the UVM International Office will show the students how and where to purchase talk time. The phones are usually up and running within 24 hours of arrival, after students have had the chance to purchase talk time and charge the battery.

◆ There is no charge to the student for incoming calls!

What is the best way to call to/from Chile?

Many students use **SKYPE** which gives you **free international calls** over the Internet. For details, go to www.skype.com.

You can also contact your long distance provider about their international calling plan. Or, use an international pre-paid calling card. To use an international pre-paid calling card, you dial the access number, enter your PIN number/calling card number, then enter the number you want to call.

Try www.nobel.com or www.tel3advantage.com for international pre-paid calling cards for calling U.S. – abroad.

Try www.enjoyprepaid.com for international pre-paid calling cards that parents or students can use to call each other, anywhere in the world.

TIPS ON CHOOSING A GOOD CALLING CARD:

- Make sure the rate you’re looking at is for a mobile phone and not a landline. Usually the rate to call a mobile phone abroad is higher than the rate to call a landline.
- Check to see if the card has a connection fee or disconnection fee.
- Some cards charge a small weekly or monthly MAINTENANCE FEE that is deducted from your balance.
- Watch out for MINUTE ROUNDING. For example, if your card has 3-minute rounding and you make a 1-minute call, you will actually be charged for 3 minutes of talk time; if you make a 5-minute call, you will actually be charged for 6 minutes of talk time; if you make a 7-minute call, you will be charged for 9 minutes of talk time. So, 1-minute rounding is much more desirable than 5-minute rounding.
- Most cards will give you a toll-free OR local access number to use. Try to use their LOCAL ACCESS NUMBER, if possible, because some cards charge a per-minute or flat fee for using their toll-free access number.

- Normally, the fewer “fees” a card has, the higher the per-minute rate. Conversely, the more “fees” a card has, the lower the per-minute rate. If a card seems “too good to be true,” with no fees AND a super low rate...then it probably is! Therefore, it’s important to READ ALL OF THE FINE PRINT before purchasing any phone card, and don’t be afraid to call the company to ask questions before purchasing anything.
- Don’t forget that you may have to pay for the call you make to the access number. If you call the access number from your cell phone, that call uses your minutes.

Mail, Computers and Internet

Will students have Internet/email access while in Chile?

Yes. All students will have free wireless Internet on campus at the Universidad de Viña del Mar, so **bring your laptop!** In addition, there are free computer labs located on the main campus. ***Please note, students will NOT have Internet access in their homestay.*** Students can also access Internet and email at Internet cafes, which are reasonably priced and easy to find throughout Viña del Mar.

What kind of adaptor do students need in order to use their laptop in Chile?

In Chile, the power supply is 220 volts/50 cycles, while in the U.S. it is 120 volts/60 cycles. Most laptops have a power supply that supports both 110 and 220 volts and 60 and 50 cycles (dual voltage). If your computer meets these requirements, you will only need to buy a plug adaptor so that the U.S. plug will fit into the Chilean wall socket. Voltage adaptors and converters can be purchased at most hardware stores or places like Target, Wal-Mart, etc.

Can students receive mail?

Yes, students can receive mail at their residence. However,

- We do NOT recommend mailing packages to Chile unless it is absolutely necessary.
- All mail/packages must arrive AFTER the student has moved in.

In general, it is problematic to receive packages in Chile—a customs and sales tax of 27% is charged to receive packages. Therefore, it is not advisable to mail anything—especially not items of a non-urgent nature such as clothing, gifts, etc. A former student was sent a package by DHL and had to pay US\$150 to retrieve the package from customs, and that package only contained used clothing, candy and personal items.

If you do choose to send something, the following information will assist you. On the customs form, you should mark your items as “used” whenever possible (i.e. “used books” or “used clothing”), or “FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE,” as packages containing new items will be taxed exorbitantly. You will also have to declare a value on the customs form. The higher the declared value, the higher the tax will be on the receiving end. If at all possible, don’t declare a value or make it less than \$10.

For sending packages, we recommend FedEx, UPS, or DHL because they will give you a tracking number. Although FedEx, DHL, and UPS are not the cheapest ways to mail items abroad, they are the fastest and most secure. You may contact any of these companies for a price quote and estimated transit time by giving them the weight, dimensions and destination of your package. For sending mail (letters, cards, papers, photographs, etc.), we recommend the U.S. Postal Service. *Please confirm the correct address before mailing anything.*

► OVERNIGHT MAIL

“Overnight” from the U.S. does NOT mean overnight to Chile! If someone in the U.S. sends an overnight document to Chile, it will arrive in Chile AFTER 2 DAYS OR MORE. For urgent documents, ATM cards, etc., use a reliable service such as FedEx or UPS. While the express or overnight USPS Global Priority service is reliable, it will actually take several EXTRA days to reach its destination because when the item enters Chile it is placed directly into the Chilean postal system, which delays its delivery.

Example: If a FedEx letter classified as “overnight” leaves the U.S. on a Monday morning, the student will likely receive the item at the *earliest* on Wednesday or Thursday of the same week. Other couriers (UPS, USPS) may take longer.