**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE 2014**

**Created by the International Student Advisory Board (**[**ISAB**](https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/isab)**)**

Welcome to UChicago! ISAB asked hundreds of international students at UChicago questions about studying at the university and getting to know the city of Chicago. Here are their answers. Please note that these are real answers from real students; some answers will conflict with others. This is not intended to be an authoritative, comprehensive guide but rather a starting point and a way to get advice from current students.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**Question: “Most UChicago students get their textbooks from Marketplace, where do you usually get yours?”**

**Marketplace: “The University of Chicago Marketplace is a space for students and University affiliates to buy and sell goods and services within the University community” (**[**http://marketplace.uchicago.edu/**](http://marketplace.uchicago.edu/)**).**

**UChicago students say:**

* Marketplace is a treasure trove.
* Graduate students looking for used books are unlikely to find the books they need in Marketplace. The main reason is that there are no textbooks in most graduate programs. Do check Marketplace for books, but the best places to buy second-hand books are, in this order: Alibris, Amazon, StrandBooks.
* It is a great resource: a quick turnover of people gives a lot of good quality used items. Plus, Marketplace is within the UChicago/Hyde Park community with a higher level of reliability and more convenience for picking up.
* For saving money and for everything not urgent you can periodically look on Marketplace and Amazon to wait for a good offer and set your desired price.

**Seminary Co-Op Bookstore:** [**http://www.semcoop.com/**](http://www.semcoop.com/)

**UChicago students say:**

* Seminary Co-op is expensive; but its impressive collection is one of the best in the country. It's always good to be a member, so that you get a discount if you need to buy a book from them. The membership (which actually makes you part of the cooperative for life) is about $30.
* Seminary Co-op membership has 10% off with lifelong membership.

**UChicago Library:**

**UChicago students say:**

* If you really don't want to buy textbooks that are used only for one quarter, you can borrow them from the library. If we don't have it on campus, you can also use UBorrow or BorrowDirect (includes all the Ivies), which get books from other Universities.
* Sometimes the mailing list for your department is good for this. Download PDFs. Inter-Library Loan from other schools. Also, Google books.
* One usually borrows Humanities or Social Sciences books from the library.
* Apart from the Regenstein Library, the Law library might also have books needed for you. Plus, UBorrow and other services that the library provides usually means that you can borrow/loan the books you need and not buy them.
* If one is happy with scanned copy then UChicago students can request up to five scans a day and up to 200 scans a quarter. This is free of cost, and works well for articles from books, bound journals, etc. which one usually does not want to check out. These requests are subject to copyright rules and hence do not include whole books. The free scanning requests may also be made via ILL if the material is not held by UChicago. Scan request is found along with the call number of books on the web catalog.
* Always be advised that if you come across a title that the library does not hold, you could request the library to buy it for you though the form available on the library website (<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/using/purchaserequest.html>).
* For graduate students in non-science disciplines the Regenstein Library is the most important source of books throughout your career here as the amount of books that you will require cannot be met by buying, even if second hand. The library and their borrowing system which practically includes the best academic libraries in the country are available through a mere click of the button via Borrow Direct, UBorrow and ILL (also includes all that is available on WorldCat). Make sure you attend the library orientation for your discipline in the first few weeks.

**Amazon:**

**UChicago students say:**

* Get eBooks from Amazon.
* Amazon Student Prime gets books to you quickly! Recommended for Graduate students in text-oriented disciplines.
* I usually buy textbooks secondhand from Amazon. Most professors are completely fine with your using an earlier edition of a particular book, as long as you manage to keep up with the correct homework. These cost around $30, versus $150 of the new, latest edition book. So, it is a much better deal.

**Other:**

**UChicago students say:**

* Join the UChicago Groups on Facebook. You can look on Facebook for any textbook exchange groups. Those tend to be very helpful for graduate students.
* Yard sales & Marketplace are not Hyde Park specific but can be useful: freecycle.org! You might have to take a trip to other parts of Chicago, but stuff is for free.
* Powells on 57th (1501 East) is a great place to buy second hand books.
* There is a new, very convenient website: <https://www.postyourbook.com/> Also, check this one, with information and a marketplace: <http://www.packbackbooks.com/>

**GREAT DEALS**

**Question: “You can get a $10 quarter roll from Citibank and Students’ Night at Court Theatre comes with free pizza. What’s your little Hyde Park secret?”**

**UChicago students say:**

* Dollar Milkshake on every Wednesday at Einstein’s.
  + Einstein Bros Bagels:<http://obook.uchicago.edu/c-shop-einstein-bros-bagels>
* The Logan Cafe has the best menu and series of events that keep you smart AND artsy. Speaking of which, I also love the Smart Museum. Favorite place on campus to unwind and get some culture.
  + Logan Cafe:<http://arts.uchicago.edu/logan-center/café-logan>
  + Smart Museum:<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/>
* You can get a free apple everyday at the basement of Booth School of Business.
* The computer lab in Crerar Library is the best place on campus to study: quiet with a nice big desktop monitor.
* Almost all restaurants have student discounts; just remember to show your ID before getting the bill!
* Become a University Pub member (I guess for $5 during the first few weeks of the year, $10 regularly) and have free entry to it yearlong. Some University events are held in the Pub too (like the Graduate Pub Social every quarter). The drinking age in the U.S. is 21.
* Free days at the Museum of Science and Industry.
* Jimmy John's sometimes sells day old bread for less than $1/loaf.
* When running along the Lakeshore, try to run into the headwind on your way out - it makes the way back so much more pleasant.
* Pastries are $1 at Medici (the Med) after 10 PM!
  + The Med:<http://www.medici57.com/>
* Zumba classes at Ratner are free for all students!
* Most hair stylists give student discounts. Especially university hair specialists on 57th gives crew cuts for $17 every day.
* Bonjour Cafe on 55th Street has hands-down the best pastries in Hyde Park.
* The Comfort Boutique on 53rd has amazing, beautiful items and often has discount nights for students.
* Doc Films sometimes hosts really cool people (like the guy from Arrested Development). Subscribe to the list-host.
  + Doc Films:<http://docfilms.uchicago.edu/dev/>
* University of Chicago Medicine (the hospital) often has great events with good food. If you're interested in healthcare, subscribe to their list-host.
* Jeffery Dollar Store on 53rd has super-cheap stuff for the house and random things (but sometimes low quality).
* CVS has good deals and prices for detergent, house things, medicine and some food. Hyde Park produce has relatively low price / high quality for produce and is best for buying fresh vegetables. If you have some time, go downtown to do shopping because it is cheaper (even within the same chain like CVS and Walgreens). There is for instance Trader Joe's, with good quality food and wine at really good prices.
* For bike-repair it is Blackstone Bicycle Works on 61st: a bit cheaper and with a social/educational local commitment towards the kids of the neighborhood; technical professionalism may be not always the highest but people are super nice.
  + <http://www.experimentalstation.org/blackstone-bikes>
* You can get produce (especially ethnic food stuffs/spices from different places) at Open Produce on 55th right up to 2 am!
* Valois diner serves breakfast starting from about 5 AM till 4 PM. It is one of my favorite places on campus for affordable comfort food.
  + Valois:<http://www.valoisrestaurant.com/>
* At the Art institute of Chicago, the UCID also doubles as a free pass!
* UChicago has student discounts for electronic devices and software (oftentimes they’re free for students!)
* Ikea delivers for $60, so a bunch of us combined our deliveries and ended up paying less than $5 per person. Rely on your friends!

**DINING**

**Question: “Clarke’s is open 24/7. Medici sells pastries for $1 after 10pm. What sets your favorite Hyde Park restaurant apart?”**

**UChicago students say:**

* My favorite restaurant is Noodles! It's tasty, fast, and the menu is extensive! My favorites are their Pad Thai, Garden Rolls, Beef Salad (plus a side of rice noodles) and Thai Iced Tea. Cafe Korea also serves tasty, homey food--and it's BYOB!
  + Noodles:<http://noodlesetc.com/>
* On 55th street, between Lake Park and Cornell, there are three Thai restaurants, one Japanese, and one Korean. But the best, most underrated, and most unknown is Uncle Joe's, which serves Jamaican food. <http://www.unclejoesjerk.com/>
* Go to Z&H (57th) for the best gourmet sandwiches in Hyde Park and peanut butter brownies. Their soups and coffee are great too.
  + Z&H:<http://www.zhmarketcafe.com/>
* You can get catered breakfast from the Original Pancake House.
* Siam serves Thai food on 55th street. Even though we have 4 Thai restaurants on 55th street, this is arguably the best.
* The Snail might be more expensive than the other Thai restaurants, but it's worth it.
* Kikuya (for Sushi/Japanese) on 55th street!
* Shinju is all you can eat sushi for a set price, so it is good for groups.
  + Shinju Sushi:<http://www.shinjusushi.com/>
* Divinity school coffee shop (Grounds of Being Café) has $1 coffee.
  + Grounds of Being:<https://divinity.uchicago.edu/grounds-being>
* The Nile - a killer lentil soup for those cold winter days. Good for groups, and not expensive!
  + The Nile:<http://nilerestaurantofhydepark.com/>
* Leona's - it's right beside Harold's and Cedar's, for their great tasting steak items! Salonica - for the amount of food they give for $10. The Nile - for their flavors and aroma. Rajun Cajun - for their prices.
* Jazzman Coffee has pretty good fresh bakery pastry. They are 50% off from 3.30 to 4PM (30min before closing).
* Starbucks in UCMC/hospital is open all through school break times (even when most campus cafes are closed. It is spacious and has clean toilets.
* Harold’s (53rd) is cheap and tasty;
* Most places deliver, if you don’t want to get out of your bed or the library.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Question: “Red, Blue, Orange or Purple. The train comes in all sorts of colors. Where does your favorite metro line take you?”**

**UChicago students say:**

* Moving around in Hyde Park is free--hop on to UChicago buses (starts from 5 pm), East (covers 53 and Treasure Island etc.), North and South. CTA route # 170, 171 and 172 (also free for students) are good for daytime.
* If you are going downtown, take the Metra. It only has the disadvantage of location (only on Lake Park, the boundary of campus) and schedules (during day, it is available about every half an hour, but after about 6 or 7, it is more scattered). Always check schedule in advance, it is always on time: [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com). If it is not, take CTA route 6. The latter goes across campus on Lake Park. Also notice that CTA means Chicago Transit Authority, and that locals call CTA both the bus system and the subway system. You usually need to take a bus to take the subway. The subway is referred to it by lines: Red line, Green line, etc. When they say Metra (yes, with an "a" as the last letter), they are talking about the suburban train that connects to the downtown station, from which you can go pretty much everywhere in the Midwest region. This all is not obvious for most foreigners.
* The train system is called the ‘El’ or ‘L’ which is short for ‘elevated train.’ People say, “You can take the L or the Metra there”
* Please make sure that you get a VENTRA card at your earliest convenience. It applies to all CTA transportations (no Metra though) and is convenient and cheap (a quarter cheaper than paying cash each time) <https://www.ventrachicago.com/> . You can manage and refill the card online. They can be bought and refilled at CVS (53rd) and Walgreens (55th) as well.
* The bus is better than the Red Line, but the Metra is the best.
* The Metra is a train that can go pretty much anywhere in the Midwest region; so if you’re looking for a cheap way to travel around the Midwest, use the Metra at Lake Park.
* I think the #6 bus is the easiest way to get to downtown including the UChicago Gleacher Center/Graham School in downtown.
* I love taking Metra because it's so fast. #6 bus is pretty neat, especially if you are close to a nearby stop. I have taken the Green line a couple of times too, but only during the daytime.
* Green Line takes you to Garfield Park Conservatory, which is a needed burst of fresh and green in the winter. Red Line takes you to Green Mill for jazz or poetry slams.
* Green Line also takes you to the West Loop/Fulton Market area where all the hip, new restaurants are!
* Green line to Clark/Lake! Most people don't like it and think it's unsafe. I use it everyday to commute to downtown and I never had a problem (I'm a woman and travel alone). Sure, you should avoid late hours, but during the day it's really OK and convenient- you can connect to virtually any line (incl. Blue line to O'Hare). Get over that uncomfortable feeling of feeling different - you're a Hyde Parker now, enjoy the diversity!
* Midway airport is the closest to campus and accessible via the 55 route bus and also by L (means CTA trains).
* The Red line Garfield stop nearest to Hyde Park is just 3 stops from Chinatown.
* Red line takes me to Chinatown. Though, since I live on the east side of campus, the #6 and #2 are my more favorite means of transportation.
* Downtown Chicago (blue line). It takes less than 20 minutes to get to the Loop. Make your way to North Michigan where you can shop away and grab brunch with friends.
* Get TransLoc, Uber, and/or Lyft. They’re all very helpful in finding a taxi or when the next shuttle is coming.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**UChicago students say:**

* Join mailing lists, even if you don't attend most events. You never know the information you can get. Visit:<https://lists.uchicago.edu/web/info/ucsmp-el>.
* T-Mobile charges $30 a month for unlimited text and data with 100 minutes. But if you have an iPhone, then its unlimited audio via face time audio!
* To know exactly how many minutes the next bus is going to take, you can send a txt message with “CTABUS \*insert number of bus listed on the stop sign\*” to 41411. Super useful when trying to avoid a long wait in winter. You can also look online on CTA Bus Tracker website.
* At the end of the year (and to a smaller extent every quarter), I-House is full of household items, food, and other stuff that people are giving away in the main lounge. Kimbark has a lot of free tastings on Friday and Saturday.
* Ice skates are really cheap (~$50) so they pay for themselves even if you only skate a couple of times per winter.
* Harper theatre is good value.(has student discount too)
  + Harper Theater:<http://www.harpertheater.com/>
* Be sure to visit the lake--it's gorgeous during the fall, spring and summer. Walk along 57th and stop by the Med to grab an almond croissant and an iced coffee and walk to the edge of the lake and enjoy!
* Get a Divvy membership, and explore the rest of the city on 2 wheels! Don't miss the lakefront ride to downtown - my favorite part of Chicago.
  + Divvy Bikes:<https://www.divvybikes.com/>
* Take a trip out of Hyde Park whenever you can, especially when it is warm. Once it gets cold, you will want to squirrel away and hibernate!
* The Lyric Opera has $20 student tickets on the front rows of the main floor if you register with them. That is a wonderful deal for tickets, which usually cost $100+.
* Ukrainian village has really good truffles.
* Wicker Park has one of the best cocktail bars in the country-Violet Hour. It also has pubs with 1980s video games.
* If you are lonely and willing to hangout, I-House is an excellent place to start with. One could also get involved with campus fraternities which are especially good for college students.
* It is also a good idea to get involved with some Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)--they range from student politics to academics to everyday matters.
* If you want to spare money for your mobile, consider to sign a family plan with 4 other friends, like that with T-Mobile.
* This does not pertain to Hyde Park, but Lou Conte Dance Studio offers a discount to UofC students - the dance classes are only $12!
* For your mental well being- Spiritual life in UChicago to start with. It organizes various events aimed at students, including free yoga classes at Rockefeller. <http://spirit.uchicago.edu/>
* Also get access to Student counseling (free) whenever you think you need professional help.  <http://counseling.uchicago.edu/>
* Let’s Talk is a casual walk-in service offered by the counseling center a few places around campus. It is confidential; you don’t need an appointment or anything. You can just walk in, sit down, and relieve your stress by telling someone about what is bothering you: <http://counseling.uchicago.edu/page/let%E2%80%99s-talk>
* One of the purposes of OIA and ISAB is to work for your well being here, and should you like to discuss a particular issue-academic or personal or bodily--you are most welcome to [contact OIA](https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/about-contact#overview) or [contact ISAB](https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/isab).