



impact

International Mentor Program
for Academic and Cultural Transitions

Resource Guide for Mentors



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Campus and
Student Life
International Affairs

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Mentor/Mentee Collaboration	4
The Role of a Mentor	4
Peer Mentor Goals	5
City of Chicago.....	6
City Website	6
Maps	6
Tours	6
Ways to Save While Exploring:	6
Events.....	7
Shopping.....	7
Religious Institutions.....	9
Chicago and Campus Transportation	10
Transportation within the City of Chicago / Going Downtown	10
Campus Transportation.....	12
Safe Ride program	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Getting to Hyde Park from the airports	13
Getting in and out of Chicago.....	14
Navigating Resources at UChicago.....	15
Graduate Student General Resources.....	15
Health and Wellness	16
Student Ombudsperson	16
Housing	16
Cultural Transition.....	17
Culture Shock.....	17
Homesickness	19
Cultural Orientation	20
Intercultural Communication	21
Student Employment.....	22
Conclusion.....	23



Welcome

The purpose of this guide is to provide you, the mentor, with information that is easily accessible. The IMPACT Committee compiled this guide keeping in mind what questions a new student may have or resources they need. The *IMPACT Resource Guide* is a supplement to the support that the University and OIA provide to you.

We hope your time as a mentor is positive and that you gain valuable insights and experiences throughout your time as a mentor.

Mentor/Mentee Collaboration

The Role of a Mentor

The roles and responsibilities of a mentor are varied and complex. You will serve as a guide and ally to your mentee. You must be prepared to allow the mentor/mentee relationship to change as it develops over time. The needs and goals of your mentee may shift and specific situations may require different strategies.

While it is not possible to define specific ways in which mentor and mentee collaborate, there are a number of common goals that benefit any mentor/mentee relationship:

The first is to establish a positive, personal relationship with your mentee. IMPACT Committee encourages you to contact your mentee by email as soon as possible to build a solid foundation before the fall quarter begins. You should avoid acting as if you are a professional service provider. You are a guide and friend. Once a personal relationship is established, it is much easier to assist your mentee with their goals. Regular interaction and consistent support are important in any mentor/mentee collaboration.

Next, you will help your mentee develop their academic and life skills. An important factor to acting as an effective mentor is to put yourself back in the mindset as a first-year international PhD student here at UChicago and to recognize the unique challenges that are faced by new international students (UChicago academic culture, making new friends, finding a right balance between your academic and social lives, etc.). IMPACT Committee encourages you to work with your mentee to develop and accomplish specific goals and emphasize life-management skills he will need when adjusting to the United States. It is especially important to assist your mentee in finding, accessing, and using academic and university resources.

Finally, part of your responsibility as mentor includes helping your mentee interact with her new environment. This includes adjusting to the diversity of Americans, as well as people and groups of other racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Respecting cultural differences is necessary, but it is also important to use your insight of these differences to facilitate new relationships, understanding, and insight.

Peer Mentor Goals

1. Assist with academic adjustment. It is very important that your mentee learns to foster a balance between his academic, work, and social lives. This can be a particular challenge for first year PhD students at UChicago. Help your mentee develop strategies for time management, study skills, stress management, and school/life balance. Discuss educational norms and expectations with your mentee. Resources for developing these skills are available in the "[Graduate Student General Resources](#)" section.
2. Aid with cultural transition. As a first-year PhD student in the United States, adapting to the differences in culture can be a challenge. Learning about and becoming familiar with US culture and social customs may facilitate smoother interactions with domestic peers and faculty. Encourage your mentor in his interactions with fellow students and Americans. Keep up to date on information regarding local and national issues. Allow your mentee to ask questions to help determine appropriate behavior and language usage.
3. Promote exploration of opportunities at UChicago and within the city itself. Attend [UChicago events](#) with your mentee. Encourage her to explore the city of Chicago or offer to act as their guide on a trip into the heart of the city. There are many resources in this guide to help identify places to explore and how to get there.
4. Utilize [campus resources](#). Introduce your mentee to the different services, groups, and organizations throughout the university. Describe each entity's goals and how their mission can be an asset to your mentee.

City of Chicago

The city of Chicago offers plenty of opportunities to explore new cultures and hobbies. However, for a new student, exploring this city can be a daunting experience. Some students find themselves rarely leaving the boundaries of Hyde Park. We hope this guide will help you as a mentor to direct your mentee to various events and activities throughout Chicago.

City Website

[Chicago's official tourism site](#) has information on art, attractions, museums, festivals, restaurants, shopping, and theatre.

Maps

[Individual Community Maps:](#)

Explore Chicago's diverse communities! These maps provide a detailed view of the crossroads and "L" lines that run through much of the city. Begin by exploring [Hyde Park](#).

[City of Chicago Neighborhoods](#)

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods. If you want to get the big picture, check out this colorful map, which shows each neighborhood, to help give you an idea of the city as a whole. Check out where [Hyde Park](#) is in comparison to other nearby neighborhoods.

Tours

A great way to get acquainted with Chicago is by going on a tour.

[Hop on and Hop Off:](#)

By double decker bus or old-fashioned trolley, choose one of the four hour-long tours, which covers 13 miles and 18 stops. You are able to "hop off" the bus at various points of interests and explore the area. Just jump back on the bus when you are ready to complete the tour

The [Chicago Architecture Foundation](#) offers numerous tours – by foot, bike, or bus. Check out their famous boat tours on their website.

A very popular way to see the city is by boat. [Wendella](#) is a well-respected company that gives tours of the river, the lake, and a combination of the lake and river. There are also several tours and different styles of boats that leave from Navy Pier.

Ways to Save While Exploring:

[UChicago ID](#)

Many museums, movie theaters, and attractions have student discounts. Be sure to ask when purchasing your tickets. Your UChicago ID doubles as your [Arts Pass](#); you get free admission to the Art Institute and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

[Go Chicago Card](#)

With the Go Chicago Card, you'll get access to 28 top Chicago attractions, can go to the front of the line, and get special discounts.

[Chicago City Pass](#)

Chicago CityPASS includes one-time admission to five of Chicago's most famous attractions.

[Groupon](#)

Groupon is a city-specific deal-of-the-day website that is localized to major markets in the United States and abroad. It is a good way to explore new restaurants or get discounted admission to special events. Groupon originated in downtown Chicago.

[Chicago Public Library Card](#)

In addition to book privileges, a City of Chicago Library Card makes you eligible to check out a Museum Passport, which can grant you free access to 14 museums in the city. Also, local libraries offer many free events and workshops. Also, many free [events and workshops](#) are offered by your local library - be sure to check out the events page.

[Museum Free Days](#)

Museums and historic landmarks around Chicago are free to IL residents on select days during the year. Free Museum Days are posted on the Explore Chicago website and are updated each year. Most museums require you to show an IL state ID card or Driver's License. Find out how to apply for these cards on the [OIA website](#).

Events

There is always something happening in Chicago, no matter what you are interested in. Here are several websites to help you, discover restaurants, events, architecture, and cultural attractions

[Choose Chicago:](#)

Managed by the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau, Choose Chicago provides [pre-set itineraries](#) to explore the city. You can also [build your own itinerary](#), as you browse the calendar of events, lists of restaurants, and upcoming sporting events

[Time Out Chicago:](#)

A guide to Chicago's music, restaurants, museums, news, culture and events that is searchable by type of activity, cost, and date.

[Metro Mix:](#)

A guide to Chicago land's restaurants, bars & clubs, events, and theatre.

[Museum Guides:](#)

Chicago's world famous [museums](#) cover many different interests, from science, history, and art, to architecture and medicine. In addition to student discounts found at many attractions, the Chicago Public Library has a program that can provide you free entrance to 14 area museums. Visit the [Chicago Public Library website](#) to learn about program details. [Free Museum Days](#) are posted on the Explore Chicago website.

Shopping

Grocery

Hyde Park has two main grocery stores and many small local markets. There are also small marts and convenience centers on campus. In the summer, Farmers Markets pop up in almost every neighborhood in the city.

Hyde Park:

[Hyde Park Produce](#)

53rd and Kimbark. This popular produce store has a wide selection of fresh fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices. The dry goods here, such as pasta, locally made bread, and spices, are high quality, but a little expensive.

[Treasure Island](#)

55th and Lake Park. This well-stocked grocery store provides a large amount of produce, high-quality groceries, and many imported food options, but can be expensive. It was the revered chef Julia Child who called Treasure Island "the most European supermarket in America".

Valley of Jordan

53rd and Ellis. Besides the regular chips, candy, and canned goods, this small convenience store offers fresh produce, and freshly made hummus, babaganoush, pita, and a deli, as well as specialty items like labna, red lentils, coconut milk, and Mediterranean desserts.

Village Foods

51st and Lake Park. This smaller grocery store in north Hyde Park is convenient for people living in Regents Park and other apartment complexes in the area. It is better for dry goods, such as canned foods, than for fresh produce.

Harper Foods

57th and Harper. Harper Foods offers simple groceries, daily staples, and convenience items. You can also buy firewood and grilling supplies here, which is convenient if you are headed to a picnic at the Point.

Around Chicago:

[Local Beet](#)

In the summer, regular farmers markets spring up all over the city, offering seasonal produce, flowers, and crafts. This website will help you locate local farmer's markets.

[Marianos](#)

A large supermarket chain with many locations around Chicago. Marianos offers general groceries and specialty ethnic and dietary items, they also have fresh market.

[Jewel](#)

Another U.S. supermarket chain grocery store offering general groceries and specialty ethnic and dietary items.

[Trader Joe's](#)

An affordable organic and natural foods grocery store, where you can find many unique items. There are three locations in Chicago, with the South Loop location being the closest to Hyde Park.

Whole Foods

A natural and organic whole foods market located throughout North America. There are six locations in Chicago, with the South Loop location being the closest to Hyde Park.

Clothing

Hyde Park does not currently have a dedicated clothing store, although there are some small boutiques here and there. Drugstores such as CVS and Walgreens sell items like socks and t-shirts. There are several popular boutique stores, department store flagships, and national chains lining either side of [State Street in downtown Chicago](#).

Discount stores for name brands goods:

[Marshalls](#)

[T.J. Maxx](#)

[Premium Outlet Mall](#)

Winter Clothes

Winter Clothes can be purchased in as many of the stores listed above. Also, you can find gently used items from secondhand or thrift stores. It is important to dress in layers and have a good winter coat, gloves and hat for the winter months in Chicago. As a mentor you should remember your first encounter of a Chicago winter. Be sure to provide your mentee with tips on how to prepare for the winter.

Household Goods

In Hyde Park, you can find basic household goods, such as kitchen supplies, at CVS, Walgreen's, and Treasure Island. For furniture or more specific supplies, many students use UChicago Marketplace to list or buy items. You can also take the Red Line to [Target](#) at the Roosevelt stop. Another option is to buy items online. Many online stores provide free delivery for large purchases.

[Target](#) and [Wal-Mart](#):

Large discount stores where you can find everything from groceries to pots and pans and much more at reasonable prices.

[Ikea](#):

If you have a car, IKEA is the place to go for inexpensive household goods. There are two located near Chicago. IKEA online offers delivery on some items.

Religious Institutions

The Spiritual Life office, keeps this list of various [religious institutions](#) located in Hyde Park and the surrounding area. In addition, the Spiritual Life office supports students through a full staff of [religious advisers](#) with multiple religions represented.

Chicago and Campus Transportation

Chicago has an extensive public transportation system. You can take the bus, ride the Metra (commuter train) or hop on the Red or Green Line Elevated trains (the “EL”).

Planning Your Trip:

Get to know the public transportation system on the [CTA website](#):

[Plan a Trip](#): Enter your start and end destinations, and CTA will give you several public transport options and transit times.

[Bus Tracker](#): Select your bus route and direction, and see the arrival time of the next bus.

[Track by Text](#): Enter your bus stop ID and receive a text message with arrival times of the next bus.

[Track by App](#): Download an app available on the CTA website to your smartphone and track your bus on the phone to see arrival times.

[The Metra](#) is good for trips downtown or to the Suburbs, but the service is limited during off hours. Hyde Park is on the Metra Electric District route.

Transportation within the City of Chicago / Going Downtown

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

Number one option for long-term stays is purchasing [the Ventra card](#). The card allows you to have up to \$300 on it so you do not have to worry whether you have enough on your CTA Transit card or cash. By registering your Ventra card, you can make sure it will not be abused if stolen. The card can be purchased [online](#) or at any “L” station.

The old farecards, [CTA Transit cards](#), are being replaced by the Ventra card but you can still use them. You can buy them at any amount at “L” stations. 1-day, 3-Day, 7-Day and 30-Day passes can be purchased at most drugstores (CVS, Walgreens, Jewel, etc.) and Currency Exchanges. You can also buy CTA cards in \$10 or \$20 dollar amounts at the ID & Privileges Office in Regenstein Library.

The following CTA bus and train routes operate between Hyde Park and downtown Chicago. These descriptions are meant to give a general idea of routes and service. Visit the CTA website for up-to-date route details and stops:

#2, Hyde Park Express

This bus runs between Hyde Park and Navy Pier. You can catch the bus at several points along 60th Street and East Hyde Park Boulevard with several downtown stops

The #2 only runs during the mornings (6-9 AM) and evenings (3:30-7 PM), every 20 minutes.

#4, Cottage Grove

The #4 picks up at Cottage Grove and any street between 51st and 60th Streets. It runs from Hyde Park to the southern part of downtown. To get back to Hyde Park from downtown on the #4, catch it southbound on Michigan and Randolph or Michigan and Washington.

The #4 runs 24 hours a day, every 5-15 minutes.

#6, Jackson Park Express

Most students use the #6 bus to go downtown and back. Get on at Stony Island Avenue from 60th to 53rd Street. The bus also travels north on South Hyde Park Boulevard between 57th and 47th Streets. To get back to Hyde Park, catch the bus heading south on State Street between Balbo and Lake.

The #6 runs daily from about 5 AM -1 AM., every five to ten minutes.

#X28, Stony Island Express

The X28 goes from Hyde Park to Union Station during rush hours. To go downtown, catch the bus along Stony Island (60th to 53rd) or one of the stops along South Hyde Park Boulevard. It runs southbound all the way to 103rd.

The #X28 Stony Island Express runs on weekdays rush periods only, every 10 minutes.

#55, Garfield

The #55 runs east to west along 55th street, from the Museum of Science & Industry. Some 55 buses go to Midway Airport. It is mainly used for getting to the Green and Red train lines (as well as Midway airport) and across Hyde Park.

The #55 runs 24 hours a day; it picks up about every 10 minutes and during the late hours every 30 minutes.

#192: UChicago Hospital Express

This express bus, used mostly by commuters, runs south in the morning and north in the evening rush periods. The #192 only stops at Ogilvie Transportation Center, Union Station, the Roosevelt train station, and UChicago.

Green Line

The easiest way to use the Green Line from U of C is to take Bus #55 west (see above) to the Garfield Green Line stop, and take the Green Line north towards downtown (in the direction of Harlem/Lake). The northern-most point on the Green Line is State and Lake (major downtown stop), and it goes west after leaving downtown. State and Lake is a transportation hub.

Red Line

The Red Line will also take you downtown, but for trips to areas north of downtown, the Red Line is more convenient than the Green Line. The Red Line can be accessed in the same manner as the Green Line: catch the #55 west to the Garfield Red Line stop (on the Dan Ryan expressway), and take the Red Line north. Please note that the south portions of the Red Line will be closed starting in spring 2013.

Metra

Metra operates commuter trains that run between downtown Chicago and several suburbs. The [Metra Electric District line](#) runs along the east side of Hyde Park and into downtown. Riders can board at 59th Street, 55th/56th/57th Street, or 53rd/51st Street Stations to arrive at Millennium Park in approximately 20 minutes. Tickets can be purchased at automated machines at the station. A large fee is added if tickets are purchased on board.

UChicago South Loop Weekend Shuttle

On Friday and Saturday evenings, typically between 6:00pm and 3:30am University shuttle operates hourly from 57th and University to the Roosevelt Road transit station near downtown Chicago, and makes the return trip to campus one-half hour later. The shuttle is non-stop. Dates of operation

follow the academic calendar. Visit the [UChicago Transportation Page](#) for more information and shuttle schedule.

Car Sharing

I-GO and Zipcar are two car-sharing companies with cars in several locations in Hyde Park. Car-sharing may be a good option if you only need a car occasionally, as you can avoid the costs of titling, registering, insuring, and parking a car you own. Visit www.igocars.org and www.zipcar.com for rates and membership details.

Visit the [OIA Driver's License page](#) for a reminder of international student license information.

Biking around Campus

Purchase a recycled bike at [Blackstone Bicycle Works](#)

Borrow a bike by the day through the University's [bike sharing program](#). To be eligible to borrow a bike, you must register with your UChicago student ID.

Campus Transportation

The University provides free shuttle buses around Hyde Park. Track UChicago shuttle buses online at <http://uchicago.transloc.com/>

The CTA coordinates three free bus routes in Hyde Park to serve the university community. These buses are free of charge for those with a University of Chicago ID. Visit the [CTA website](#) to find out about schedules and maps.

#170 Bus

The #170 runs around the Midway from 57th/Stony Island to 59th, Cottage Grove, 60th, and Stony Island back to 57th, every 10 minutes during rush periods only. Free with UChicago ID.

#171 Bus

The #171 runs from South Shore Drive, along 55th Street to Ellis Avenue, 60th, and then through central campus. Free with UChicago ID

#172 Bus

The #172 runs on East Hyde Park Blvd, then down through central campus. Free with UChicago ID.

Evening bus Routes:

The 170, 171, & 172 stop running in the evening (after 6 PM). Instead, the University provides four [evening bus routes](#) through the campus, Hyde Park, and Kenwood area that are free with your UChicago ID and run until the early morning.

Buses come every 20 minutes and pick up at convenient stops like Regenstein Library and Ratner. Drivers will stop to pick up and/or discharge passengers along intersections on any of the [established routes](#).

For more information about transportation visit [the University's website dedicated to transportation](#) around Hyde Park and Chicago.

Getting to Hyde Park from the airports

Airport Shuttle:

The easiest option for getting from O'Hare or Midway airport to Hyde Park is to take an airport shuttle. Omega Airport Shuttle regularly services the Hyde Park Area. The Omega makes several planned stops at specific locations, but also will pick-up and drop-off anywhere in the area. Shuttles run to and from campus hourly. Reservations are required.

[Omega Airport Shuttle](#) – You **must** make arrangement at least 24 hours in advance! (773) 734-6688 for reservations (at least 24 hours in advance), See schedules and current rates on their website.

Train/Bus:

*From **Midway**:*

The University of Chicago's close proximity to Midway Airport makes finding an inexpensive ride here very easy. There are no CTA ('E' trains) trains that run directly from the airport to Hyde Park. There are two CTA buses that service the route:

#59 Bus: The #59 runs east and west on 59th Street

#55 Bus: The #55 runs east and west along 55th Street.

The cost for buses is minimal. Buses accept cash and fare cards, but no change will be given. Visit [CTA's website](#) for updated schedules and fare information

*From **O'Hare**:*

The least expensive, but most time-consuming route to Hyde Park is boarding the CTA Blue Line train from the airport terminal. The blue line does not run all the way to Hyde Park, so you must connect with either a bus or taxi to complete your trip.

If you take the Blue Line to the Washington & State stop, you can board the #6 (Jackson Park Express) or the #28 (Stony Island Express), both of which service east Hyde Park. From here you can generally walk to your destination or catch a bus to head further west.

Alternatively, you can take a taxi from the Clark & Lake Blue Line train stop, to reduce the amount of taxi fare.

Taxis:

Taxi service from Midway airport to campus will cost anywhere from \$20 - \$35. A taxi from O'Hare to campus will cost approximately \$50 - \$70. A taxi from downtown Chicago to campus is approximately \$15 - \$25.

Getting in and out of Chicago

Flying in the US and Overseas

Most commercial airline carriers provide service to and from [O'Hare International Airport](#) . The main hub for [United Airlines](#) and [American Airlines](#) is located at O'Hare International Airport. [Southwest Airline](#) operates from Midway airport and mainly provides service in the US, with limited flights to Canada and Mexico. You can book your ticket directly through a specific airline website or through other websites that often offer special discounts and deals:

www.orbitz.com

www.travelocity.com

www.bookit.com

www.studentuniverse.com

www.kayak.com

Amtrak

Amtrak is located at Chicago's Union Station. Amtrak serves more than 500 destinations. You can take short trips or plan a longer vacation in the US by using [Amtrak](#) . Amtrak also offers a Student Advantage Card, which is a discount card that you can purchase for savings over time.

Buses for Long Distance Trips

You can travel to and from other states and cities in the US by using bus companies. Tickets are usually very reasonable and the sooner you book your ticket the cheaper the fare. Major bus companies are listed below:

Greyhound

630 W HARRISON ST
Chicago, IL 60607
(312) 408-5821

Megabus

225 S Canal St (between Adams St &
Fulton St)
Chicago, IL 60606
877-462-6342

Navigating Resources at UChicago

The University of Chicago has a wealth of resources for students. The graduate divisions have put together useful guides for incoming and current students. You will find them on the respective websites (see links below). Please consult them and offer information about them to your mentees. The *IMPACT Resource Guide* is a supplement to the UChicago's guides.

Graduate Student General Resources

The University of Chicago has a wealth of information specific to graduate students and following is a list of resources that would be relevant to your mentee.

[Student Life and Resources:](#)

Everything that you need to know about the support services the University provides is on this website. This site has information for Disability Services, Housing, Campus Life, Career Advancement and much more. This is a great site with which to become familiar as it directs you to so many resources.

[Graduate Student Affairs \(GSA\):](#)

GSA is a department that provides support to meet the needs of a graduate and professional student. It oversees various fellowship and grant opportunities, as well as scholar exchange programs. In addition, they offer specific workshop and events, for example Dissertation Write-In, Information Sessions on academic support, professional development, etc.

[Graduate & Professional Student Gateway:](#)

This website provides graduate and professional students with general information regarding school policies, financial matters, campus life, etc. If you cannot find an answer to your question, you can anonymously [ask the Gargoyle](#).

[Financial Aid/Scholarships:](#)

OIA gathered various financial aid resources and scholarships that are available for international students.

[Events and things to do on campus:](#)

The University organizes many activities and events geared towards academics, personal development and personal enjoyment for the University community.

[Spouses and Partners:](#)

OIA provides support for spouses and partners of international students and scholars. Our website directs spouses to various on-campus and community programs to assist them with connecting to their new environment. If your mentee has a spouse or partner, direct her to this website.

Health and Wellness

As a mentor, you will most likely get questions about health insurance, going to the doctor, dropping off immunizations forms, and dealing with stress. Make sure your mentee is aware of university resources, such as the Student Health and Counseling Center, to help get their questions answered. We encourage you to direct your mentee to the following resources that are available to all students.

[Student Health Service](#)

[Health Insurance Information, USHIP, and FAQs](#)

[Student Counseling Service](#)

Student Ombudsperson

[The Student Ombudsperson](#) investigates student grievances (such as conflicts with professors or department administrators) when existing channels of communication or dispute resolution have proven unsatisfactory.

Housing

Incoming students often find it challenging to navigate the housing options around Hyde Park and have many questions. Here are some useful links for you to offer your mentee. These websites have resources for graduate students:

[Living on campus:](#)

Besides graduate student housing, students can also live in the [International House](#).

Living off campus: General Chicago Apartment Finding Resources:

[UChicago Marketplace Apartments Section:](#)

[UChicago Apartments:](#) Free Online Service Sponsored by Student Government.

[Craigslist:](#) An online resource to find housing, furniture, cars and more.

[Chicago Apartment Finders:](#) Professional service with an office in Hyde Park.

[Apartments.com:](#) Free information about apartments throughout the US.

[Apartmentguide.com:](#) Service with both print and online versions.

[Rent.com:](#) Free information about apartments throughout the United States.

[Qumbya Coops:](#) Cooperative housing in Hyde Park.

Cultural Transition

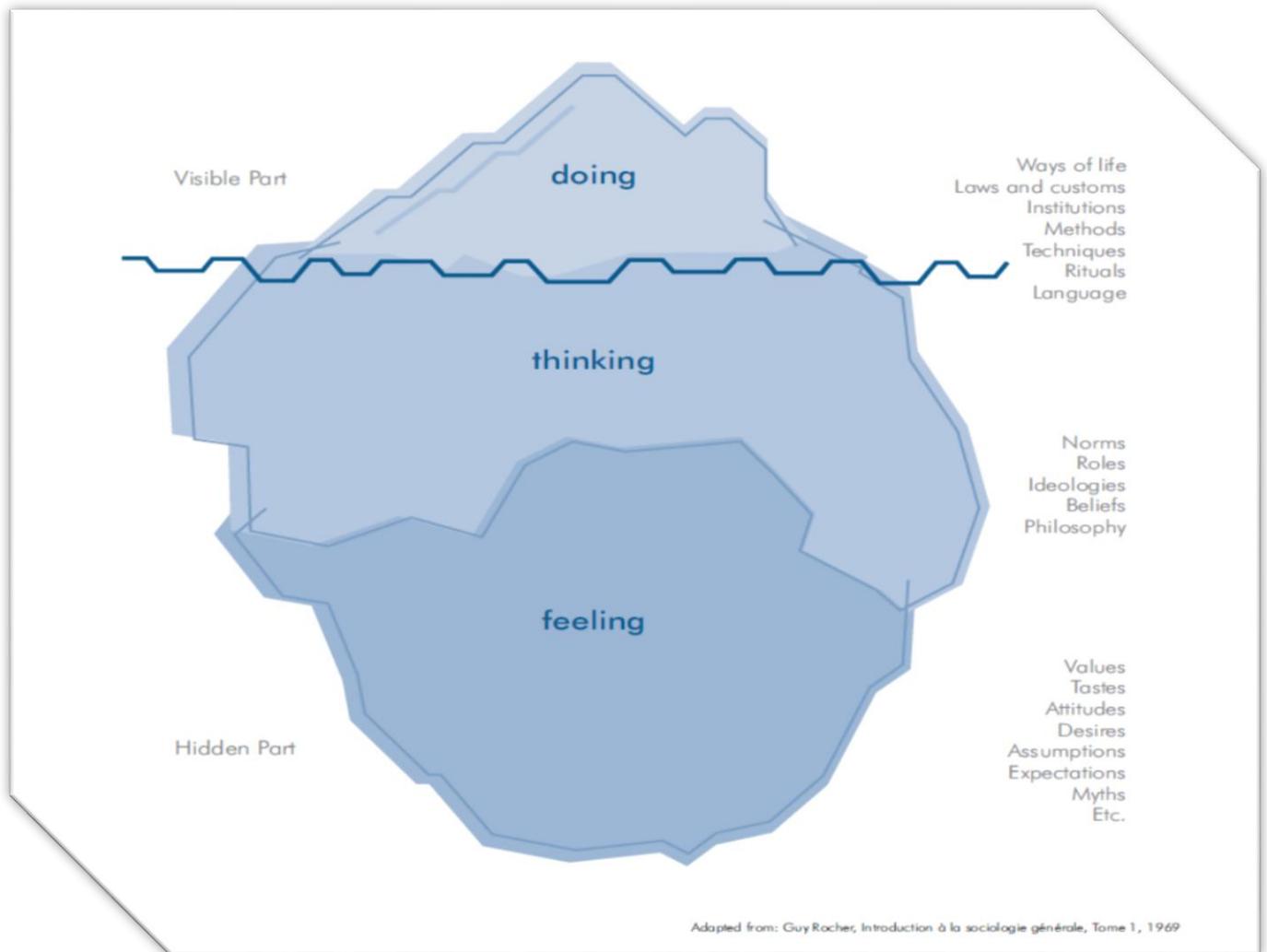
As a mentor to a new international student, it is imperative that you understand the impact that such a large life transition can have. As your mentor-mentee relationship develops, there may be times when you become a sympathetic listener. As a mentor, you are not expected to be an expert or a counselor. However, it is important to understand what your mentee may be going through as he gets settled into his new home. If you find, however, that your mentee is having a difficult time going through this transition or putting you in an uncomfortable position, you are welcome to seek assistance from OIA or from the Counseling Center (see the [Living Well](#) section located in the Graduate Students gateway)

Culture Shock

What is culture shock?

Culture shock is a process that many people go through as they get acclimated to a new culture and new surroundings. There are five stages of culture shock and time needed to transition through each stage is different for every person. In most cases a student takes about two quarters to complete the transition of culture shock. It is important for an international student to understand, from the beginning, that the feelings and frustrations she has are normal and it is important to identify them and not to ignore them.

There are many ways in which culture shock manifests itself. Some are obvious differences that affect our everyday routines, such as getting used to a different eating options available or having initial difficulty with a new language. However, below the superficial difficulties of adjusting to a new culture there are multiple other internal conflicts that an international student will grapple with through his transition into life in a new place. Many students are unaware of these aspects, as they are hidden and handled more often on an intrapersonal basis. The Iceberg diagram provides a visual of the visible and hidden aspect of culture shock. As a reminder, each person will experience these five stages over a slightly different timeline.



5 Stages of Culture Shock:

1. The Honeymoon Stage

International students are excited and curious. There are so many new things to explore and learn. They appreciate and are excited about the differences they observe and encounter.

2. The Distress Stage

Over time, the “newness” feeling starts to go away. Things become unfamiliar and international students begin to encounter obstacles due to either language barriers or cultural differences. They begin to miss home and their support system.

3. Hostility Stage

During this stage students begin to critique the new culture. They identify the negatives. They develop feelings of anger and frustration. During this stage they start to doubt their decision of leaving their home and starting a new life in a different country. They begin to idealize their home and how much easier and better things would be if they were home. This is normal and it is the beginning of the transition into independence stage. The foreign students begin to identify what they value about themselves and their own culture.

4. Emergence Stage

In this stage students begin to accept their new home and cultural differences. They find a way to be comfortable and to be themselves, with an increase in confidence to cope with obstacles. The sense of isolation begins to fade away.

5. Independence Stage

Students embrace the new culture and value their home cultures, as well. They are now more confident to move through the obstacles they may encounter. In this stage they find themselves enjoying their stay more and find that the once unfamiliar place can be home. They are now confident to make decisions.

What are the symptoms of Culture Shock?

- Feelings of sadness and loneliness
- Increased irritability
- Feelings of anger, depression, vulnerability
- Sleeping problems (too much or too little)
- Often speaking of returning home
- Beginning to question their decision of coming to the US and UChicago
- Overwhelming sense of homesickness

How to overcome Culture Shock?

In order to help your mentee with the transition, encourage him to...

- Understand that culture shock is a normal process, even for the well-travelled student.
- Keep in contact with friends and family from home.
- Understand that there are many things that the mentee cannot control, like certain academic policies or landlord rules. Help your mentee identify areas of life that she can control.
- Not focus too much on minor problems. Identify what issues/obstacles are most important and focus the mentee's energy on those things.
- Not avoid problems. Tackle major issues directly, so they do not get out of the mentee's control.
- Ask for help. The US educational system provides many resources to support students, which your mentee may not even consider to seek out. There are resources throughout this guide that you can direct mentee towards
- Keep a journal (paper or electronic). This will provide a personal outlet for your mentee.
- Learn more about the US and UChicago culture and compare/contrast in order to have a better understanding of the different ways people interact, social expectations, and communication styles.
- Become part of the community. Join an organization or attend departmental, campus, and [OIA social events](#). As the mentee interacts she will gain more insights into her new home.

Homesickness

What is Homesickness?

Homesickness is a feeling of malaise or distress that occurs when students are preoccupied with the home they left. This is the point of the journey when they "grieve their loss". Homesickness often occurs in the Distress stage of culture shock, when students idealize their own home or culture. However, some students will experience short episodes of homesickness throughout their stay.

Homesickness can be seen as a kind of separation anxiety, as students have left behind their support group of family and friends, daily routines, and places they frequented.

What are the symptoms of Homesickness?

- Skipping class
- Being quiet
- Being less focused
- Unhappiness
- Fatigue
- Depression/anxiety symptoms

How to overcome Homesickness?

Here are some tips to help your mentee overcome homesickness. Many of the tips are similar to those used to overcome culture shock. Encourage your mentee to...

- Talk with someone.
- Keep in contact with family and friends back home
- Not assume he is the only one feeling homesick
- Allow herself to feel sad, but also strive to enjoy their time here. Your mentee should not feel guilty for enjoying her time away.
- Establish a balance between work and leisure.
- Seek assistance in areas where he feels weak. For example, if your mentee feels that he lacks proper study skills or time management skills, have your mentee seek support to increase his skills through resources such as Career Advancement or Counseling Center
- Maintain basic needs, like sleep and food

Cultural Orientation

According to the renowned organizational researcher Geert Hofstede, Cultural Orientation provides a foundation for an individual to identify oneself in relation to a specific culture. Because of their specific cultural orientation, people from different countries or regions may have different communication styles (i.e. direct vs., indirect) or have different relationships with their elders. One place that cultural orientation can come into play in the university setting is in the individual vs. the group dynamic.

In some cultures, one is more self-reliant and does not depend on the group for her identity. This is referred to as Individualism. In other cultures, one is more reliant on a group – family, community, etc. – to develop her identity. This is referred to as collectivism. Neither of these orientations is correct or incorrect. However, it is important to identify that these differences exist and can affect your mentee's experience. Try to find out where your mentee seems to be on the scale between collectivism and individualism and help him appropriately navigate the UChicago system or student organizations.

Collectivism:

Individuals in a collectivist society identify with the group. It is the group's goals and ideas that motivate the individual, not the individual's goals. The individual hesitates to not share an opinion that would go against the group. There is great loyalty and responsibility towards the group. When a mistake is made in a collectivist society, shame, instead of guilt, is felt by the individual. Students from places where collectivism is highly valued might have difficulty confronting a professor about a mistake or feel uncomfortable approaching an employer. As a mentor, you can help guide your mentee to resources, such as the Ombudsperson or OIA that might help them navigate tricky situations.

Individualism:

The expectation of individuals in an Individualistic culture is that they are more self-reliant. These people are more likely to speak up and express personal opinions. They do not give up control of their own idea; they develop a personality independent of their family or group. When a person from this society commits a mistake, they usually have a feeling of guilt, instead of shame. People in the U.S. tend to be more individualistic than other cultures, which could be a big adjustment for some students.

Intercultural Communication

Communication is often the root of many cross-culture confusions and misunderstandings. Many see communication simply as language; however, communication is more than the structure of a sentence. There are also cultural norms and nuances that directly influence communication.

There are two common types of communicators that can sometimes clash. These are “high-context” and “low-context” communicators. Identifying the difference between the two forms will assist you when you are helping your mentee develop intercultural communication skills and hopefully prevent misunderstandings.

High-Context:

High-context communicators tend to come from collectivist societies. They use implied meanings in order to communicate. Additionally, nonverbal messages and gestures are important aspects of communication. People in high-context cultures tend to spend much of their time in groups and therefore have many shared experiences. The shared experiences tend to make the communication more implicit than explicit. The purpose of communication is not merely to share information, but to strengthen the relationship. Lastly, high-context communicators value saving face and being tactful when communicating, which can lead to indirect communication. People from high-context cultures might find direct communication styles abrasive or hard to master; as a mentor, you might need to explain that direct communication does not mean that someone is mad at them. Also, high-context students might enjoy joining an RSO or other campus groups.

Low-Context:

Low-context communicators tend to come from individualistic societies. Low-context communicators do not rely on the context of a situation to gather information. They rely on direct communication to gather information. Communication is a way to receive and provide information directly. Statements are explicit and not implicit. Being direct is not seen as offensive, but a form of an efficient manner to discuss the tasks. Another name for this form of communication is “straight talk”. Straight talk is direct speaking; the person directly says what they mean without implying, hinting or using suggestive language. Americans tend to be more direct and low-context than other cultures. As a mentor you may need to assist your mentee, if he comes from a culture where his communication style is considered high-context, on how to communicate with low-context speakers

Student Employment

As a mentor you may receive many questions from your mentee on how to secure employment. This section provides useful information in support you to guide your mentee. Whether your Mentee is an incoming student, looking for a summer job, or doing a post-graduation job search, there are many resources your mentee can utilize. Encourage your mentee to:

1. Visit the [UChicago Student Employment](#) website.
Filter the search to **non-work study** jobs.
2. Visit the **Career Advancement (CA)** website or make an appointment to meet with an adviser. Their graduate advising program is one of the largest in the nation and is devoted to assisting students plan their careers. An extensive section of the Career Advancement website is dedicated specifically to providing information to international students. Additionally, they provide resume review services and mock interviews.
3. **Attend a Career Advancement event.** Review the events on the [CA calendar](#).
4. Review **your department's website**. Individual departments often have resources to assist their students with career planning in their specific field.
5. For **post-graduation job searches**, there are several job sources which are geared toward PhD graduates and academics. Make a list of these websites and review the types of opportunities available to assist you with your career planning.

[Jobs for PhDs](#)

[New Scientist Jobs](#)

[My Science Jobs](#)

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

[HigherEd Jobs](#)

Dependents:

If your mentee has a dependent (spouse), please refer to the "[Spouses and Partners](#)" section of the OIA website. This section will provide information regarding employment and volunteer opportunities.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time, effort and commitment to IMPACT the international population. We hope that this guide will support your journey as a mentor. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the IMPACT Committee at oiainc@uchicago.edu

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