

I'M HERE... WHAT NOW?

Having some idea of what to do and where to go during your first week will make the process of settling in much easier and more enjoyable. Your first couple of days at the geography department will be spent filling out forms, collecting keys, and wandering aimlessly. You will also meet important people such as faculty members, fellow graduate students and departmental staff.

The following will provide you with the information you need for form filling, key finding, and wandering aimlessly with ease:

TALK: Talk to the secretaries, the graduate coordinator, your buddy, staff, professors, fellow grads, undergrads, and most importantly, to your advisor. The easiest way to learn the scoop is to establish contact and communicate with people who know how the Geography Department and the University function.

KEYS: Talk to the secretarial staff in the main office on the second floor to acquire keys to “key” places such as your office, the computer lab and the photocopy room. They will have you fill out a couple of forms and pay a deposit. You will have to go to the second floor of the General Services Administration Building to collect the keys (north-west corner of University Boulevard and Westbrook Mall). Be wary of line ups, as this office distributes keys and parking passes to everyone on campus; avoid peak hours and go early morning or late afternoon.

DEPARTMENTAL COMPUTERS: There are several computer labs for student use. To gain access you need an ID and password which can be obtained from one of the system administrators in rooms 240B (Vincent Kujala) & 240C (Julie Ranada).

You will probably want to use the graduate computer labs located on the second floor in rooms 237 & 240. One of the computers in Room 240 has a flatbed colour scanner attached to it, as well as the large format printer. Users of those peripheral devices have priority on this machine.

Room 216A has been set up as a TA meeting room where class office hours can be held to avoid disrupting other grad students in your office. There is normally a sign up sheet on the door to reserve your time slot. The computer in that room has the same capabilities as those in the other grad computer labs.

There are 3 undergraduate computer labs that are also accessible to grad students, but their availability will depend on the classroom schedule normally posted on the door of each lab. They are located on the first floor in rooms 114 & 115, and on the second floor in room 239.

Note: There is a telephone in the grad computer lab in room 240 that students may use for local calls.

IT SUPPORT: This is a brief introduction to a variety of technical support topics that may be of interest to you during your program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the technical support staff at support@geog.ubc.ca.

- *Personal computers*

In order to connect to the web, you can utilize the UBC wireless network, as described a bit farther down this document. However, you will not be able see any of the Geography printing services through the wireless network. Please log into one of the lab machines to print.

- *Campus-Wide Login (CWL)*

Provides access to many of the University's online systems, such as the Student Service Centre, WebCT, and myUBC. If you don't have a CWL account, you can get signed up by visiting UBC's IT Services page at <http://www.it.ubc.ca/cwl/>

- *Wireless connections*

You can connect to the high-speed UBC Wireless Network almost everywhere on campus. It's easy to use and it's **free** for UBC students, faculty, and staff. All you need to get wireless is a laptop or PDA with a Wi-Fi compatible card and a self-subscribed Campus-Wide Login (CWL) account. Visit UBC's IT services page for more information (<http://www.it.ubc.ca/internet/wireless.html>).

- *Wired connection*

If you plan on using a desktop in your office instead of a laptop, you need to contact support in order to set up a connection. Make sure to update the operating system and virus software with the latest upgrade and patches before you make the call.

- *E-mail*

- Interchange accounts

Your Interchange account gives you access to UBC Email (username@interchange.ubc.ca), Dial-Up, Mailing Lists and other online services. UBC faculty, staff, alumni and others can sign-up for an Interchange account. Students can sign up for a Netinfo account, which is an Interchange account that comes with a free email account and free dial-up time.

You can find more information at:

<http://www.it.ubc.ca/accounts/interchange.html>

- Geography e-mail accounts

By default, all Geography grad students have an email address of the form: **firstname.lastname@geog.ubc.ca**. When you pick up your Geography account at Room 240, take the time to discuss your email preference with either Vincent or Julie, so they can register your preference, as well as add your preferred email address to the grads mailing list.

- *Web space*

If you are interested in setting up a web presence, you have two options:

- UBC Blogs

It's an initiative of UBC's Office of Learning Technologies

(<http://blogs.ubc.ca/>). It uses WordPress as the personal publishing system. Visit their wiki ([http://wiki.ubc.ca/UBC Blogs FAQ](http://wiki.ubc.ca/UBC_Blogs_FAQ))

- Geography Web Space

We can create web space for you in our servers where you can publish your personal web page using your favourite HTML editor. Contact support@geog.ubc.ca if you want to explore this option. We'll help you get started.

- **Software**

- UBC Information Technology Services

Visit IT services web page (<http://www.it.ubc.ca>) to check out the software licensing offered to the UBC community. Please note that UBC provides a free anti-virus package to faculty, students, and staff.

- UBC Bookstore

Offers many software packages at educational prices to the UBC community. (<http://www.bookstore.ubc.ca>)

- GIS software

Our department has a site license for ArcGIS that allows us to install a copy of ArcView on your personal computer for academic research. The software cannot be used for commercial purposes and must be uninstalled when you complete your program. If you would like a copy, please e-mail labhelp@geog.ubc.ca to set up the installation.

PHOTOCOPY/ PRINT ACCOUNTS: Graduate students, postdocs and faculty can use the geography department's photocopiers for the price of 8 cents per page. This is a steal considering the going rate at the libraries is 12 cents. The photocopiers can also be used as B&W printers from the grad computer labs for the same rate.

The undergraduate labs in room 114 & 239 also have B&W printers (\$0.10 @ page) and colour laser printers (\$0.30 @ page). There is also a laser colour printer in room 240 capable of printing tabloid (11"x17") at \$0.60@page. All the labs have signs of the available printers.

Please note that the photocopiers and the undergraduate lab printers work out of two different accounting systems. Both of them are administered by the main office. So when you stop by to put money in these accounts, make sure to specify which printing you are planning on using.

The department also operates an HP large format plotter that fits 36" & 42" rolls ideal for posters. The printing fee is normally \$3/\$5 per square foot depending on the quality of paper used. Inquire in the main office about paying for this service.

CARTOGRAPHIC SERVICES: The Cartographic Resources Unit, located in room 240D, serves the university community and the general public with map production support for books, journal articles, posters, and dynamic cartography, using mapping and graphic design software. Contact Eric Leinberger at lein@geog.ubc.ca to enquire about the service.

MAILBOXES: The graduate mail boxes are located to your left when you walk into the main office, and mail is sorted alphabetically. Check for new mail when you arrive. If you are a TA, you will also have a folder in the TA mailboxes. These are located along the front wall in the main office and any student assignments submitted to the office can be found here.

LIBRARY CARD/STUDENT ID: Go to the UBC bookstore as soon as possible to get your wonderful library card-cum-student ID and your magical U-Pass. Use the library card at all UBC libraries. Use the U-Pass for unlimited access to all public transit in greater Vancouver until April 2010. (You will receive another U-Pass at the end of April for summer 2010). Once again, go early to avoid lines. ****Caution**** Once you get your library card and begin borrowing books, make sure you sign up for email notification. The library will remind you when your books are due and let you know when a book you have signed out is recalled, or when a book you have recalled is ready to be picked up.

COFFEE/LOUNGE: Graduate students share a lounge with faculty at the north-west corner of the second floor (room 227). Store food in the fridge; zap it in the microwave and stay around to socialize. There is a coffee and tea service available for a small fee, which is administered by the graduate student coffee committee. Pay a \$10 “good-behaviour bond” to Sandy (room 266) and then keep track of the tea, coffee, and milk you’ve consumed on the chart by the sink. It is cheap, strong coffee.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FUNDING: This is too a big a topic to discuss here, but keep your eyes peeled for workshops and seminars hosted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (appropriately and fondly referred to as FOGS). These workshops will give you an idea of what awards you should be applying for (UGF, SSHRC and NSERC are the major ones – you’ll be asked to apply for these very shortly after you arrive here). For more information, please see the website:

<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/index.asp?menu=000,000,000,000>

There is also limited travel and research funding available from the department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, which can be used for conference participation (see <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/graduate/travelfund.html>). Talk to your supervisor about funding opportunities and application deadlines.

BASIC CHECKLIST

Go to the main office (room 217) with \$ to:

- Order and pay the deposit for keys to the building and your office (from Lorna Chan).

Pick up keys from second floor of the General Services Administration

Building, near the bus loop (north-west corner of University Boulevard and Wesbrook Mall). You can also pick up any TA cheques before you set up direct deposit in the same building. Departmental key (6G-5A) opens rooms 227 (Faculty/Grad Lounge, i.e. the coffee room), 248 (Copy Room), 237 (Grad Student Study Room and office swing space with lockers), and 216A (which can be used for TA office hours).

- Add money to your copy/print account (photocopier code: 2579).
- Add money to your coffee account. (Actually, don't do this at the main office. Go visit Sandy Lapsky in room 226 to top-up your coffee account.)
- Introduce yourself to the wonderful, hardworking secretaries.
- Check your mailbox, and if you are a TA, your TA mailbox.

Go to the Graduate Computer lab (room 240) to:

- Get a Geography computer login and password.
- Use the telephone.

Go to the Department to:

- Check out the GIC Library (Geographic Information Centre), room 112.
- Get coffee in the Faculty / Grad Lounge, room 227 (good to bring your own mug).
- Meet lots of people, learn, and teach!
- Hang out with undergrads and use a phone, sink, and microwave in the GSA (undergraduate Geography Students Association) lounge is on the first floor (room 120).

Go to the UBC Bookstore with identification to:

- Get your student card/library card.
- Get your U-Pass (subsidized metro/bus pass (see "Getting Around Vancouver" section))

Go to the Campus-Wide Login page to:

- Get your Campus-Wide Login (CWL) that will let you access many of UBC's websites and online services

Go to MYUBC login at my.ubc.ca and log in to:

- Check your webmail and access WebCT (e-learning) if one of your classes uses it.
- Visit the Student Service Centre (a link) to register for courses (terms 1 and 2), check grades and class averages, make financial payments, access tax forms and many other things. You can visit in person at Brock Hall – East Wing. Info on degree programs and required courses at:
www.geog.ubc.ca/graduate/degree_programs.html/

Go to other places on the internet to:

- Send an e-mail to support@geog.ubc.ca to request to join the grad student listserv. (This e-mail will reach Julie Ranada and Vincent Kujala, our System Administrator and Departmental Programmer, respectively)
- Apply for MSP (BC medical insurance). Info at www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/infoben/eligible.html
- Apply for SIN (Social Insurance Number) if you're an international student. Info at www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/sin/apply/how.shtml

I. POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SUPERVISOR

Good communication with your supervisor is the key to a good working relationship for both parties. Here are some questions that current graduate students suggest might be a good to ask your supervisor even before you arrive:

- Are you able to provide a computer for me to work on?
- Will I be given office desk space, lab space, or both?
- Is there telephone access in my lab space?
- How often do you anticipate us meeting?
- What is the Spring Review, when is it held, and who makes the first move in terms of setting it up?
- Am I expected to cover office supplies / photocopying fees?

- Is there funding available for travel to conferences (outside of the FOGS/Departmental stipend)?
- What types of research funds/scholarship/grant/award opportunities there are (not just within the University, but outside organizations as well)?
- What is the process for getting reimbursed for research expenses?
- What kind of employment opportunities are there in my field?

II. HOUSING INFORMATION AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Housing Information:

One site to explore housing is the site run by the UBC Alma Matter Society (AMS): <http://www.amsrentsline.com/>

Another good site is Craigslist: <http://vancouver.craigslist.org/>

The bus service in Vancouver is fairly efficient. There are many options as to where to live. Be warned that rent is pretty pricey in Vancouver, and tends to decrease as you move east and south from UBC.

Campus: It is difficult to get into residence on Campus, but you can try looking into the two graduate residences, Green College and St. John's College, if interested. Go to the University website to explore these options.

Point Grey: This is the closest neighborhood to UBC. It's quiet, close to the beach, the park and campus. There's not too much nightlife; it's mainly quiet, with a suburb-like feel.

Kits: This is one of the more popular places to live. It's very lively with lots of young people and close to campus and the beach. (15 - 20 minute bus ride from campus)

Main Street: This is a trendy and diverse neighborhood, some deals still to be found here. There are multitudes of boutiques and dim-sum restaurants and a good nightlife (25 minutes or so from campus).

Commercial: This is a diverse and dynamic urban neighborhood – lots of restaurants/bars, arts/culture, cheap produce, etc... However, the bus ride is 35 minutes or more.

Downtown: There are express buses from downtown to UBC so it's only about 25 minutes to campus. There is a couple of great neighborhoods downtown – a

favorite is the West End area, close to the beach and Stanley Park.

Check out these brief descriptions of Vancouver neighborhoods:

[http://www.10best.com/Vancouver/Know Before You Go \(SM\)/Neighborhoods/](http://www.10best.com/Vancouver/Know Before You Go (SM)/Neighborhoods/)

International Student Information:

To obtain your student Visa, you will need:

- A valid passport
- Your statement of acceptance into the University
- A statement that shows your funding or financial status

You can either obtain your student visa at the border when you arrive, or beforehand by going to the website <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp> and following the instructions for applying for the visa via mail.

When you arrive, you will need to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). This will allow you receive payment for work in Canada). To obtain a SIN you will need to visit a Human Resources Canada Centre with your valid Study Permit, passport and a contract of employment from your employer. Application forms are available at the International House. Contact an International Student Advisor at isa@students.ubc.ca or 604.822.5021 or drop by International House for more details.

You will need to apply for the **Medical Services Plan (MSP)** when you arrive. MSP's monthly costs are: \$54.00 for one person, \$96.00 for a family of two, and \$108.00 for a family of three or more. Information on [how to pay your premiums](#) is available online. This is the MPS number: 604 683-7151 and here is the website for more details: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/>

You are allowed to get a job on campus and with the introduction of the working-off campus permit. International students can now apply to work outside of the University with a permit. Here is the website if you are interested in exploring the possibilities: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-offcampus.asp>

Further information about a variety of international needs can be found in the University international handbook site: <http://www.international.ubc.ca/handbook.cfm>

III. GETTING AROUND VANCOUVER

The U-Pass Program

As a student at UBC, you are automatically enrolled in the U-Pass Program. Your U-Pass is your ticket (quite literally!) to getting around Vancouver and the GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District). Use it to get on the bus, SkyTrain and SeaBus. Considering that a one-zone monthly bus pass runs at \$73, the \$23.75/month we pay is a steal.

You can pick up your U-Pass when you pick up your student card at the UBC Bookstore. You'll also get a convenient pocket-sized transit map. Get your U-Pass early to avoid long line-ups!

Bus

You can plan your trip either by calling 604-953-3333 or by visiting <http://tripplanning.translink.bc.ca/hiwire?.a=iTripPlanning>. All bus stops in Vancouver are marked with a 5-digit code. If you text a stop's code to 33333, you'll get a reply with the schedule for the next few busses to visit that stop.

Biking

Vancouver is, in many respects, a cycling haven. The weather allows for year-round cycling, and there are a number of designated bike routes and bike parking, making riding along busy routes and throughout downtown fairly decent. You'll come to know the topography of Vancouver intimately. The bike route along the seawall and seaside will spoil you for any future urban cycling you do in other cities.

In other respects, Vancouver *can* be a cycling nightmare if you're not properly prepared. It does get rainy in the winter, but a number of shops sell quality rain gear. You can find a cluster of these stores on Broadway near Ontario or Manitoba St. Here you can also find an assortment of reflectors, lights and just about any bicycling accessory can possibly imagine. DO make sure you have a quality bike lock!

The UBC Trek Centre (<http://www.trek.ubc.ca/>) has much information regarding transportation choices around campus and throughout the GVRD. The website has, for example, a map of bike parks and shower facilities around campus.

For used bikes, repairs and maintenance, the Bike Kitchen in the Student Union Building (SUB) (<http://www.ams.ubc.ca/clubs/bikecoop/bikekitchen/>) has affordable rates. It's different from other bike repair shops because if you're interested, they'll actually teach you how to repair your own bike.

Off-campus bike shops include

- West Point Cycles (<http://www.westpointcycles.com/> , W 10th Ave & Alma),
- Dunbar Cycles (<http://www.dunbarcycles.com/> , Dunbar St. & W 26th Ave)
- Cambie Cycles (<http://www.cambiecycles.com/> , Cambie & W 17th Ave)
- The Bike Doctor (<http://www.thebikedr.com/> , W Broadway & Manitoba)
- Rain City Bikes (<http://raincitybikes.com/>, W Broadway & Manitoba)

Buying a pair of wheels can be expensive and there is certainly no shortage of upscale bicycle shops around the city. For more affordable bikes, try:

- Dan's Bike Shop (<http://www.vancouverbikeshop.com/>, W Broadway & Waterloo)
- Cheapskates (Consignment Sporting Goods) (3496 Dunbar St, 604- 734-1160).
- Sports Junkies (Consignment, new & used sporting goods) (<http://www.sportsjunkies.com/>, W Broadway & Manitoba)
- Our Community Bikes (<http://www.pedalpower.org/ocb.html>, Main St & W.17th Ave)

A map of bike routes in Vancouver can be found at

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/routes.htm>

Another useful interactive mapping tool was developed by a research group on campus. It allows you to plan your route by varying parameters such as distance, maximum slope, and traffic pollution. You can access the application at:

<http://www.cyclevancouver.ubc.ca/>

Getting into the City from the Airport

There are a few different ways of getting into Vancouver, and to UBC.

Remember: If you arrive on an international flight, follow the signs to the domestic arrivals area before exiting the building.

The 'Airporter' buses cost around \$21 and will take you to all the major hotels downtown. To get to UBC from downtown, catch the #17 or the #4 on Granville St., or the #44 on Burrard (runs only during peak hours). If you are taking the bus it is good to have exact change.

You can catch public transport from the Airport. The newest line of the SkyTrain opens on August 17 2009 and provides a direct route from the Airport to Downtown Vancouver. This will be by far the most efficient and cost effective way of getting into town. For students wishing to travel directly to UBC from the airport you will be able to catch the SkyTrain to the Broadway –City Hall Station and change to the #099 Bus (on Broadway Ave) which is an express bus to the UBC Bus Loop on Campus.

You can also take a bus directly from the airport. The bus stop at the Airport can be difficult to find and people often doubt whether they're at the right place. This out-of-the-way stop is on the Arrivals level. When you head out the doors, turn right and keep walking. The bus stop is at the end of this narrow sidewalk. Wait for Bus # 424, then get off at Airport Station (everyone will get off here), and then wait for the # 98 B-Line bus to downtown Vancouver. The # 98 B-Line (down Granville St.) and the # 99 B-Line (down Broadway Ave) come fairly frequently. You will probably get to know these buses quite well during your stay here.

III. SOCIAL EVENTS IN GEOGRAPHY

MARK THESE DATES!

September - Welcome BBQ

Saturday SEPTEMBER 26

UBC Farm (on campus)

To kick the year off, we'd like to invite you to the graduate 'Welcome Barbeque!' This annual BBQ is great opportunity to meet your incoming class members, current graduate students, faculty, and staff members in a casual and pleasant atmosphere. We will provide a meat & veggie BBQ, a potluck salad spread, and wine and beer as well as non-alcoholic choices! Look for more details and directions via email.

Graduate Retreat to Whistler

Saturday and Sunday, OCTOBER 3-4

AMS Whistler Lodge, 2124 Nordic Dr, Whistler

You've only been back at school for a few weeks, but you need a vacation already! No problem – the beautiful AMS hostel in Whistler has been rented out by the Geography graduate students for one night. On this overnight retreat you'll have the chance to get to know fellow students, sightsee, participate in outdoorsy activities, eat delicious food, or test out the Whistler nightlife. The total cost is very reasonable, and the hostel is clean and cozy with a communal kitchen, hardwood floors, hot tub/sauna, and a fireplace! We will organize a carpool list and a hike, details of which will be announced closer to the weekend of the retreat.

<http://www.ubcwhistlerlodge.com/>

Every few weeks during the term: Geography Beer Gardens

Undergraduate Lounge, Fridays, time to be announced (often 4-8pm)

Three or four Fridays every term, the Geography Students Association (GSA) holds a beer garden from 4-8pm (or thereabouts) in the downstairs lounge. After a long week of work, these evenings are a great time to catch up and relax over a well-priced pint or pop. There are a healthy sprinkling of undergrads, graduates, and faculty who attend this casual tradition.

Be on the lookout for emails over the grads listserv for other social activities throughout the year. Past events have included:

- Bowling nights
- Volunteer activities
- Ice skating and curling outings
- Happy hours at different neighborhood pubs-
- Pot luck BBQs at the beach

Helpful Links:

Transport:

- Translink (www.translink.bc.ca) – local transit maps, fares and schedules.
- BC Ferries (www.bcferrries.com) – ferry schedules to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.
- Yellow Cabs (604-681-1111) and Black Cabs (604-721-1111).

Accommodation:

- AMS Rentsline (www.amsrentsline.com) – great source of rental notices.
- Craigslist Vancouver (<http://vancouver.craigslist.com>) – great page to find temporary and permanent accommodation, as well as buy/sell furniture, access community groups, etc.

Student Facilities:

- Alma Mater Society (www.ams.ubc.ca/index.cfm) – the student society of UBC. This website has many useful health, job, and lifestyle links. Join one of the many student groups, sign up for a 'Minischool' class, or book a bed in UBC's Whistler Lodge.
- UBC Library Services (www.library.ubc.ca) – the portal to reserving and requesting books, accessing search engines, bibliography software, etc.

Community:

- Georgia Straight (www.straight.com) – a free Vancouver newspaper published weekly which includes a comprehensive entertainment guide (movies, restaurants, live music, bars, galleries, community events).
- Volunteer Vancouver (www.volunteervancouver.ca) – a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities.
- City of Vancouver (<http://vancouver.ca/>) – you can find everything on this page, from a community arts calendar to the garbage/recycling pick up schedule.
- Vancouver Parks and Recreation (http://vancouver.ca/community_profiles/RecGuideInfo.cfm).
- BC Parks and Recreation (<http://www.bcparks.ca/>) – if you have time to do some camping before school starts.

Welfare:

Information on the AMS/GSS Student Health Plan can be found at:
<http://www.ams.ubc.ca/content.cfm?ID=17>

A few healthcare practitioners/facilities popular among geographers:

- Dentist: Dr. Paul Newitt (604-737-8808) at Broadway and Granville (part of AMS/GSS plan).
- Chiropractor: Dr. Beverley Steinhoff (604-738-1021) at Broadway and Yew.

- Eye care: Dr. Graham Foster (604-689-9962) at Burrard and Davie (part of AMS/GSS plan).
- UBC Student Health Centre (604-822-7011).

Departmental Contacts:

- Stephanie Lambiris (Graduate Secretary) – 604-822-2663 / gradprogram@geog.ubc.ca
- Sandy Lapsky (Accounts Manager / Administrator) – 604-822-3539 / lapsky@geog.ubc.ca
- Albert Teng (Audiovisual Assistant) – ateng@geog.ubc.ca
- IT support - support@geog.ubc.ca