



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN INTERACTING WITH AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT:

NAMES MATTER

Make an effort to learn what a student would like to be called and how to pronounce their name correctly.

EYE CONTACT

Rules of politeness vary across cultures. In the U.S. for example, direct eye contact is encouraged, but in some countries, it is considered rude. A student may avoid eye contact because it's the polite thing to do, not because they aren't listening or don't care.

"I DON'T GET IT ..."

American jokes, cultural references, acronyms and slang may not be immediately understood. Take the time to explain a reference.

WRITE IT DOWN

When you help an international student who seems to be struggling, consider writing down what you talked about so that they can refer to it later.

NOT SO FAST

When you ask an international student a question, give them a little extra time to gather their thoughts before they respond. Put yourself in their shoes.

When communicating, culture counts!

Learn more about intercultural communication. Support international student success. Come to an ISRC workshop!

Visit internationalcenter.ucr.edu for details.



UCR | International Student Resource Center

ADDRESS:

University Village,
Suite 204

HOURS:

Mon. – Fri.
(8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

PHONE:

(951) 827-4113

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SLOW DOWN (IF NEEDED)

If there is a language barrier, speaking a little more slowly can increase understanding. However, remember some international students are quite comfortable speaking English and have been doing so all their lives.

ALWAYS CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (YOURS AND THEIRS)

When a student asks, “Where do I get a bus card?” directing them to the bus station sounds reasonable, right? However, what if they meant an R’Card? You probably would have responded differently! Ask for clarification. Restate what you think the student is trying to say, and have them do the same. Asking, “Do you understand?” is not as effective as inviting them to share what they heard you say.

WHY WOULD YOU ASK ME HOW I AM AND THEN JUST WALK AWAY?

Some interactions that are quite normal in the U.S. may seem odd to an international student at first. For example, saying, “How are you?” as a greeting, without waiting for an answer, may seem strange to students from certain countries. Strive to resolve these misunderstandings.

FACULTY: YOUR RULES MIGHT BE NEW RULES

In some countries, copying work is considered high praise. Take extra time to go over your expectations regarding academic integrity, attendance, punctuality and deadlines.

KNOW THAT YOU DON’T ALWAYS KNOW

Don’t make assumptions or judge. Be open. Seek to truly understand international students. You’ll be glad you did.

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