

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT GUIDEBOOK -
UNBC**

by

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Abstract

International students pursuing higher education experience diverse challenges during their stay in their host culture. This project design relies on research findings of the pervasive challenges faced by international students in creating a guidebook for international students pursuing higher education at the University of Northern British Columbia. The stress that students encounter around the psychological and social-cultural domains is often difficult to mitigate when familiar support systems are not available and/or accessible. The dominant stress areas identified during the cross-cultural transition are in the areas of language, academic, social, financial, and labor market. The availability of support systems that provide international students with awareness about cross-cultural challenges, support resources, and their functions in the academic setting as well as community environment can assist them in better integration and successful outcomes.

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Abbreviations

UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia
IS	International Student

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction: Part One

Studying abroad can be one of the most rewarding experiences for students pursuing higher education. However, this transformative opportunity also poses numerous stresses (Blue et al., 2000; Lacina, 2002; Nasir, 2011; Thomas & Althen, 1989) such as difficulties adjusting to the new environment. Indeed, for new international students, the experience of arriving from diverse backgrounds and transitioning to another culture could present various complexities that correlate to the collective influence of the psychological and social environment of the new culture.

The demands of acculturation stress, cultural differences, racial discrimination, and lack of social support (Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy, 2010) are common struggles. Further, academic life, personal commitments, and separation from family relations and friends contribute to difficulties in the transition process (Bastien, Seifen-Adkins, & Johnson, 2018). This could impact students' physical and mental wellness in their functioning and cultural integration (Ortiz & Choudaha, 2014).

Myles and Cheng (2003) highlight language as one of the main barriers that impact effective communication and building social connections. Moreover, international students experience stressors from academic challenges such as unfamiliar teaching styles, academic writing, and workload expectations. Some students may also face financial burdens with expectations to provide for their families within the host settlement and abroad. Students may arrive without a scholarship to offset their tuition and livelihood, while those who come in with scholarships may have left jobs in their country of origin and face financial challenges to accomplish their goals. Certainly, international students may experience the mental distress of

isolation from exposure to the vast gap of cultural diversity inside and outside school (Myles & Cheng, 2003). Thus, the need for international students to be able to access support in their transition process within the academic (Trilokekar, Safdar, El Masri, & Scott, 2014) and community environment cannot be understated

Wolanin (2000) highlights distinctive strengths international students bring to higher education. Given significant contributions to a country's economy, they also transfer rich academic knowledge. The influence of diversity in building international relationships is of enormous value considering the acceleration of the integrating economies and global business environment. Thus, in the direction of multicultural sensitivity that would promote and maintain international student enrollment, university management needs to recognize and respond to the unique needs of this diversified academic population (Bastien et al., 2018; Trilokekar et. al., 2014).

1.2 Rationale of Project

The rationale of this project is to uncover the challenges regarding the international student adjustment process in Canada with a focus on the University of Northern British Columbia. Numerous research studies indicate countless challenges that confront international students due to barriers in academic, financial, socialization, and interpersonal problems (Yeh & Inose 2003). International students enrolled at the University of Northern British Columbia are not excluded from international student-identified challenges across the country. Hsu (2003) described how these problems often arise in settling in a new culture while braving different academic experiences, various emotional and financial anxieties, and other cross-cultural challenges.

1.3 Significance of Project

This project is a guidebook to primarily provide information about diverse adjustment issues experienced by international students enrolled at the University of Northern British Columbia. Firstly, the project will discuss acculturation issues within psychological and sociocultural contexts. Topics will include cultural adjustment, academic struggles, socialization, finances, language proficiency, and labor market concerns during and after their studies (Dauwer, 2018; Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2009).

Secondly, the project aims to highlight the various possible vulnerabilities of international students at the University of Northern British Columbia and build awareness for this group of students. The guidebook is intended to prepare prospective, new, and continuing students and educate them about potential challenges on their arrival and stay. Finally, the project will explore and provide suggestions of coping strategies and available support services within the academic and community circles. It may offer mentoring ideas in gaps in services within the academic setting and community of settlement. The guidebook will offer recommendations to improve international student services.

1.4 Personal Location

I immigrated to Canada seven years ago to pursue self-development in knowledge and skills and expand my employment opportunities for better prospects. In 2013, I became a new graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia. For the first time as an immigrant, I faced the challenge of adjusting to a new culture distinct from my home country. My beautiful, adventurous perception in its idealist sense about the Western World was met with an absolute cultural shock when my reality did not reflect my former perceived thoughts or ideas.

At the heart of the matter, the realities of a new immigrant student with no awareness of the complexities of integration in a new academic and social setting were crippling. With a vague idea of what the weather would feel like, especially in the North and not substantially prepared both psychologically and materially, such extreme temperatures coming from a tropical soil brought confused reactions.

From the first day in class, I realized, the opportunity I earnestly prayed for to travel for further studies was nothing like I anticipated. I yearned to return home, but the sacrifices had already been made. I had quit a stable job and my family had paid an enormous amount of towards travel; there was not much hope looking back because that would be a disappointment to both my family and social group. The language barrier in assimilating teaching and educational material coupled with inadequate social skills was more daunting at the initial stage. Thus, being different, cut off in an unknown and unfamiliar surrounding, exposed me to isolation and disconnection from people.

Constant anxiety in navigating the unfamiliar system and cultural space exposed me to psychological stress. Indeed, this hurt my academic performance and mental health. I remember dreading to stay in Canada if this were going to be my life – instinctively; I wish I had been aware of these realities because it would have prepared me and not taken me by surprise.

In my experience, I identify with most new student immigrants at the University of Northern British Columbia, including my younger sister, who also arrived as an immigrant student two years ago. For an immigrant student living in a new cultural environment, you are at a disadvantage over domestic students as the pressure mounts to catch up in the academic conditions even as you struggle to identify and learn new ways of being.

Our adjustment is multi-layered and complex and entails the sociocultural and psychological spheres coupled with our educational expectations. The adjustment and integration never end; it seemingly gets better over time. Although each story is personal in the adjustment process, it is still shared collectively.

Working as a practicum student at the UNBC counseling center, my counseling engagements demonstrated to me students' emotional distress and anxiety. Although I encountered several international students, it was quite troubling to me the low turnout of international students for mental health support (Yakunina et. al., 2010). It was unknown whether international students know of the availability of support services or did not find the need to use it due to other unknown personal factors. In my case, I was aware of the counseling service yet never used it for reasons I cannot identify. However, I can say that I did not know about the process of accessing the counseling service and did not even bother to find out.

Thus, what are the actual barriers to help-seeking, and how can they be mitigated? I happen to agree with Sharkin (2013) in her guidebook, *College Students in Distress*, where it is asserted that, unlike school counselors, non-counseling college personnel is on the frontlines in terms of spotting troubled students and enlisting assistance for them. She continues to highlight how it may be distressful for non-counseling personnel in knowing what to do or how to respond to students dealing with distress.

I believe raising awareness of international students' particular struggles ought to be heightened throughout appropriate channels and essential support systems within the university information system pathways (Trilokekar, Safdar, El Masri, & Scott, 2014). Through academic and administrative services, connections within the university system may provide social engagement to help students feel connected in the adjustment process. Information about

community resources and employment pathways needs to be provided for international students to help with the financial constraints that add to the stress of settling in the host community. I hope that this project will ultimately build a significant level of connected care to buffer the unavoidable challenges.

As a counselor, this collective struggle to support new international students is a call to action. I am aware of ongoing efforts by the international office that supports international students in diverse ways. More can be done especially in creating awareness to help prospective students make informed choices and feel cared for and welcomed. This is an important task for the university community.

I hope this project would help amalgamate ideas in creating awareness about the everyday struggles of international students through a guide that would give pertinent information to build awareness around these vulnerabilities and, thus, minimize some of these surprising stresses, give information about resource services available in the University and community. In this way, new international students can be better prepared psychologically for unforeseen challenges.

1.5 Overview of Project

This project will explore adjustment struggles imposed on new international students enrolled at the University of Northern British Columbia from the lens of international students' struggles as a whole. This project will help design a guidebook that would support awareness about diverse adjustment issues experienced by international students enrolled at the University of Northern British Columbia as students. These issues around acculturation include cultural adjustment, academic struggles, socialization, residency, finances, language proficiency, job

acquisition, and employment (Yakunina et. al., 2010; Trilokekar et. al., 2014) during and after international student's studies.

Chapter Two will review the literature to identify acculturation struggles among international students under two domains, namely psychological and social-cultural, that affect international students in their transition process at UNBC and Canada at large. I will examine the adjustment process regarding vulnerabilities in language, social adjustment and belonging, academic adjustment, and financial and labor market exclusions, among other cross-cultural barriers (Yeh & Inose, 2003). These factors are known to affect the smooth acculturation of international students in Canada generally and specifically UNBC. However, emerging research has discovered that the nature of international student concerns is homogenous in their complexities even in the face of individual experiences. Against this background, the project will explore areas in the adjustment process imperative in improving the successful outcome in the transition process.

Primarily, this project can be used as a guide to inform and create awareness about international student adjustment issues. It will also highlight concerns that could help service providers, particularly the international student office, mitigate international student problems and potential vulnerabilities for culturally specific support systems.

Chapter Three will lay out the project design and form the basis for the concluding chapter. The design will take the form of a module that will incorporate principal headings that will be interfaced with subheadings to add information and explain various topics. Principal headings will cover Canadian culture and lifestyle, cultural adjustment processes, university support systems, and community support systems within Prince George. Each of the principal headings will have connected subheadings that expand topics areas.

2.1 Introduction: Part Two

The Significance of International Education to Canada's Economic Development

International education is currently an important enterprise for most major countries competing for financial benefits. Admittedly, international education advances skilled labor considering that it fosters cross-cultural learning and connections, thus students can productively assimilate into the labor market after their education (Scott, Safdar, Trilokekar, & El Masri, 2015). The Canadian federal government in 2014 marked the importance of international education under the Global Market Action Plan. According to reports, the number of international students studying in Canada expanded 325% from 77,235 in 1988 to 328,672 in 2012 a historical record in just over twenty years (CIC, 2013).

Based on this expansion, Canada's policy developers are creating efforts to further raise international students' numbers from 239,131 in 2011 to 450,000 by 2022. The goal is to advance expenditure generated by international students from nearly 7.7 billion annually in 2012 to 16 billion (Cox, 2014; Government of Canada 2014). This approach also intends to fortify the economy through domestically trained people for the labor market and promote long-term residency to curtail the population decrease (Cox, 2014). Therefore, the government of Canada is capitalizing strongly on international education to attract more international students, through an initiative called "International Education Strategy." This plan is set up to prepare the country for the global market (Canada's International Education Strategy, 2014).

Canadian government projected targets reveal the importance of international student education to policymakers in the Canadian governing body. International students play a vibrant role in creating opportunities for advancing economic prosperity in Canada and creating knowledge and skills on a global scale. With these noted benefits, it is essential to ask what

conditions need to be put in place towards the growth of international students to maintain proper integration and settlement? As argued by Scott and colleagues (2015), the contribution of international education largely depends on positive cultural integration. Continued growth relies on providing a positive learning and rewarding experiences for international students (Ortiz & Choudaha, 2014).

Ryerson's Center for Immigration and Settlement (Assessing Canada's Support of International Students) research reinforces the multiple problems identified as challenges that make life harder for international students in Canada during and after their studies. Some of these problems regard the lack of connection opportunities and support systems in universities across the country and the complexities of Canada's immigration rules and policies (Dauwer, 2018). Consequently, policy developers, higher education institution personnel as well as international students themselves need to give particular attention to the challenges and barriers international students experience as they transition. The achievement of Canada's international education development plan pivots on international student adaptation and preservation (Scott, et al., 2015).

2.2 International Student Struggles across Canadian Academic Institutions

A focus on international student vulnerabilities is limited in research due to the unique nature of their challenges. Critical challenges within the areas of academia, language, academic workload, financial stress, dietary barriers, cultural misunderstanding, and racial discrimination are documented struggles (Abel, 2002; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2000; Yakunina et al., 2010). The interlace of these elements widens awareness of the social, cultural, personal, and academic adjustments international students have to make (Myles & Cheng, 2003).

A pilot study conducted in two higher educational institutions in Canada revealed that the projected outcome doesn't correlate with international student lived experiences integrating into the Canadian workforce (Trilokekar, R., Safdar, S., El Masri, A., & Scott, C. (2014). International students expressed concerns about gaining access to the labor market and, even worse, fears of attaining jobs in their study area. Further, reports indicated discrepancies in career opportunities relative to domestic students (Trilokkar et al., 2014)

Roach (2011) research examining service provision deficiencies related to international student services across different institutions within Canada revealed distinctive disparities. To illustrate one example, across the four participatory institutions, only a single international student office could refer students out to community resources for support. The study also stated that several international office workers did not have the competencies to advise students on immigration matters (Dauwer. 2018)

In addition to these findings, Roach's (2011) study revealed that few international offices provided bridging services. However, there were contradictions across institutions. In the face of these inconsistencies, these services assigned as part of the services provided were not continuous. This finding supports the lack of optimal service provision for the international student body across educational institutions in Canada. The gap creates a lot of frustration for the general international student body, particularly newcomers who are still navigating their new academic and social environment. Therefore, there is the need to highlight and address these gaps in international student service delivery among educational institutions (Dauwer. 2018).

One of the major problems that add to international student struggles is lack of awareness regarding cross-cultural barriers as mentioned in areas of psychological stresses of alienation, stigmatization, and racism; employment preparation barriers, academic stresses, and immigration

complexities (Yakunina, 2010). These unforeseen challenges reinforce feelings of alienation, and stigma and could deter help-seeking behavior making it more difficult for international students to achieve positive experiences and successful outcomes. Generally, the lack of awareness regarding potential challenges conceals possibilities of discovering suitable service provision and support systems in their environment. Thus, hindering smooth integration in the University and the community of settlement (Myles and Cheng, 2003).

2.3 University of Northern British Columbia International Student Context

University of Northern British Columbia is situated in the North-West region of BC and ranks as one of Canada's leading universities. The University has its largest campus located in Prince George, with its other regional campuses located in Fort St John, Terrace, and Quesnel. Currently, the international student population makes up 11.1% of the entire student population. Inclusiveness and diversity stand as one of the University's core values which exponentially enhances the university learning environment (UNBC website).

Notably, adjusting to a new town like Prince George located in the northwest region in British Columbia creates countless logistical stresses such as harsh weather conditions and the already stated transitional factors. Barriers surrounding language, social support system, service provider awareness (community resources), navigating through the community, and general cultural adaptability are issues international students face (Yakunina et al., 2010), especially at the initial arrival stage. These vulnerabilities present an urgent state of safety issues for fresh students and continuing students as settling in a new environment is a process and not time bound.

While international students are an integral part of cultural diversity promoting humanistic values, they also improve productivity and profitability by exchanging innovative

ideas (UNBC, Website). Nevertheless, international student challenges are unrecognized because of the unique nature of the factors involved.

University of Northern British Columbia is one of the many universities in Canada with an increasingly international student body. There was a 92% increase in the international student body in Canada in 2015, an upsurge since 2008 (CBIE, 2016). Essentially like other Canadian Universities with international students, acculturation challenges are homogenous because of cross-cultural transitional factors. Thus, with recognition of the complexities in transitioning and integration barriers, higher educational institutions should take the necessary actions to minimize challenges to enhance successful integration.

According to some research, the academic success of international students (Westwood & Barker, 1990) may be determined by the connection between the host culture of settlement and adjustment difficulties (Zimmerman, 1995). It is imperative to understand international student's concerns and adjustment difficulties culturally and socially within and outside the classroom to build more awareness because they influence student experiences in academic circles (Myles & Cheng, 2003).

One such method is for higher educational institutions to recognize the concerns of international students, assess their expectations, and create awareness to empower the quality of services (Ortiz & Choudaha, 2014; Trilokekar et. al., 2014) to mitigate their peculiar struggles. Creating awareness of the possible barriers and challenges could enhance preparation and planning for prospective international students in advance of their arrival and adjustment during and after their education. It can also enhance building suitable platforms for engagement through support groups, a safe place where international students can share and voice specific issues. The importance of building relationships and connections could also help address acculturation issues.

2.4 Summary

The project aims to highlight the various vulnerabilities of international students pursuing higher education at the University of Northern British Columbia from a personal standpoint and contextual research studies available relating to the subject. The project may build awareness for this group of students, which may also benefit continuing students. Further, it aims to provide support systems to help ease the stresses of the transition process. It will also highlight areas of gaps that could help service providers, particularly the international student office, academic staff, and other services/communities provide better service.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

3.1 Introduction

The resources used in gathering the literature for this study were journals and articles from websites such as Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost research platform, a Canadian Government website, etc., and other Google search platforms such as blogs with references. Texts and books were also used as sources of information for the project.

The predominant search terms examined are Acculturation, International students, Adjustment barriers: language, academic, social, financial, psychological stresses, sociocultural stresses, and support services for international students. The search was narrowed to between 10 to 15 years. Nevertheless, works from authors that are cited invariably past the time frame are utilized because their works carried constructive information beneficial to the subject area. Search findings are worldwide. However, more focus is on Canada to capture an in-depth context with regards to the cultural conditions.

A thematic analysis was employed to capture the central themes around international student's adjustment barriers. The literature identified several international student's challenges in the areas of language barriers, academic adjustment, social adjustment, belonging, financial adjustment, and labor market. These areas are expanded from findings across the globe and narrowed down to Canada.

3.2 Canadian Policy on International Student Education

Canadian policy suggests the strategic significance of international students to the economic growth and development of the country (Scott et al., 2015). Current federal policy revisions regarding international education strategy indicate the belief in international education

to boost the national economic system by drawing and retaining skilled workers to expand Canada in the global market space. Based on Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data, the international student population in Canada increased by 13 percent in 2019 (CIC News, 2020).

Currently, governmental efforts are ongoing to expand the number of international students to approximately 450,000 entering the country to study by 2022. Through this Canadian policy the government intends to generate more careers to about 86.500 million and expand estimated expenditure to ultimately grow the Canadian economy by boosting tax proceeds to about \$910 million (Canada's International Education Strategy, 2014). According to Scott et al. (2015), government efforts are influenced by the positive returns of international students' education in the province of Ontario, where 41.9% of international students generated 3.5 billion in returns for the government.

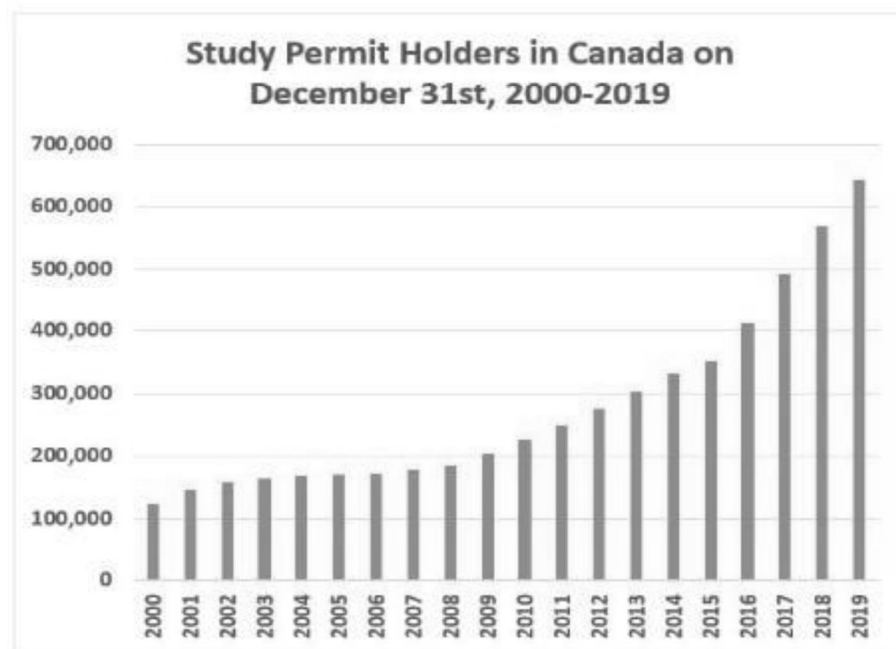


Figure 1. Source: (CIC News, 2020)

The above chart illustrates study permit holders in Canada from the year 2000 to 2019. The international student population in Canada has seen a progressive increase of about 11% over the last decade. From 100,000 in 2000 to 700,000 in 2019, there has been an increase of 5000 study permit holders. Current findings also suggest a decrease of Canadian-born students entering universities in the last decade due to the low birth rate in Canada (CIC News).

Study Permit Holders by Province/Territory on December 31, 2015, to 2019

Province/Territory	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Newfoundland	2,675	3,215	3,665	4,090	4,690
Prince Edward Island	1440	1965	2475	3215	3815
Nova Scotia	10460	11795	13350	16170	18640
New Brunswick	4170	4445	4800	5800	6905
Quebec	50040	54735	61325	69965	87280
Ontario	152105	186345	236265	275690	306735
Manitoba	10020	12825	15995	18580	19385
Saskatchewan	5855	7035	7950	9430	10840
Alberta	19710	23410	26110	29690	32990
British Columbia	95790	104675	118760	133445	144675
Northwest Territories	25	30	30	40	35
Province /Territory not Stated	40	150	195	1780	6200
TOTAL	352365	410690	491135	568130	642480

Figure 2. Source: (CIC News, 2020)

The above table shows international student estimates in Canada across the 10 provinces and three territories from 2015 to 2019. While Ontario received the highest number of international students with 48 percent estimating nearly 307,000 international students, British Columbia comes in as the second largest with 23 percent -145,000 people. Following current findings, the international student population has observed triple growth, ranking Canada as the

third highest globally over the United States of America (CIC News. 2020). This progressive statistical upsurge shows Canada as a hotspot for hosting international students from across the world.

Admittedly, international education has assumed a viable global business with developed countries encouraging international students to come (Scott et al., 2015). The growth has resulted in considerable changes in the international education policies among developed and less developed nations, intending to attract international students. Despite the rapid growth of international students in Canada coupled with government initiatives emphasizing a strategic plan to recruit and retain more students (Canada's International Education Strategy, 2014), there has been insignificant work to provide support that will ensure their successful transition (Roach, 2011)

4.1 Psychological and Social-Cultural Complexities in International Student Acculturation

The process of acculturation consists of psychological and social-cultural adjustments (Berry, 2008). According to Safdar and colleagues, the psychological and social-cultural adjustments impact the period of cross-cultural transition (Safdar, Chuong, McKenzie, & Uhm, 2010). Although both domains are related, they carry distinctive characteristics (Berry, 2006). International student acculturation involves these domains, with the interaction of these elements affecting students' wellbeing both psychologically and socially.

According to Scott et al (2015) based on the concept of coping and stress by Lazarus and Folkman, (1984), psychological adjustments characterize an individual's overall attributes of well-being and satisfaction measured by an individual adverse effect (Brisett et. al., 2010) such as emotional difficulties and mood distresses (Sadfar et. al., 2009). Further, the psychological

effects differ among individuals and behavior traits (Safdar et. al., 2009; Scott et. al, 2010) that affect coping with lived experiences. Examples of predictors of psychological adjustment include behavior factors such as “locus of control, extroversion/extraversion, life changes, and social support” (Bastien et al., 2018, p. 1201)

On the other hand, socio-cultural adjustment concerns an individual’s capacity to culturally integrate their new environment through the process of social learning (Bastien et al., 2018). Specifically, an individual capacity to “fit into” a social context (Yang et al., 2006, p. 488) comprises one’s thriving abilities mediating the host environment’s social and cultural components.

Adjustment within the socio-cultural domain is considered a process of social learning and develops progressively in the areas of cultural differences, language capabilities, and general satisfaction within the host inhabitant (O’Reilly et al., 2010). Jain (2012) reinforces socio-cultural adjustment in terms of feeling accepted by new social standards and values. The socio-cultural adjustment also builds and maintains social connections and a sense of belonging (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Gündüz, & Alakbarov, 2019).

In understanding international student’s psychological and socio-cultural adaption struggles, it is important to understand the demanding complexities in adjusting to everyday living, communication, standard social norms, and accepted behavior within the new environment (Johnson & Sandhu, 2007). Arguably, psychological, and social issues within the school and community are relatively influential and present unique acculturation distress among the international student community.

4.2 Acculturation Stress Defined

Acculturation stress is rooted in the process of acculturation, a response rooted in changes during cross-cultural contact (Berry, 1995; Berry, 2006). In explaining acculturation, Safdar and colleagues (2013) define it as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals with different cultures come into contact, with subsequent changes in the original patterns of either or both groups, or in the behavioral or psychological change in individuals from either or both groups” (p. 5). Thus, acculturation occurs as a change in adjusting to a new environment different from one’s home culture.

Acculturation stress happens within the physical, social, and psychological domains (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Frequently, stress reactions include “heightened levels of depression (linked to the experience of cultural loss) and of anxiety (linked to the uncertainty about how one should live in the new society) (Berry, 2006, p. 43). For international students’ immersion into a new culture, the challenge of integrating into their host environment raises psychological and emotional distresses and impacts the students’ welcoming experiences.

The lack of awareness in the face of ambiguities in identifying services coupled with challenges in expressing support needs adds to one’s stresses. Thus, students may exhibit emotional pain, powerlessness, marginalization, loneliness, and perceived alienation (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998) due to differing cultural backgrounds and cultural interactivity. Because of this, an individual’s stress may heighten in the absence of social support and social connectedness, and appropriate awareness and accessibility.

Admittedly, moving away from a secure home environment to independence and responsibility for college students presents essential life changes (Sullivan, & Kashubeck-West, 2015) and undeniable potential vulnerabilities. Several research studies illustrate university-level

education with imposing challenges and stresses (Sharkin, 2013) as students encounter altering “social, financial, and academic expectations” (Scott et al., 2015, p. 5). However, international students face significant challenges with combined difficulty in cross-cultural conflict (Andrade, 2006).

In Berry’s (2006) writings, the term acculturation stress is widely known as “culture shock,” which translates to negative experiences in cross-cultural interaction. However, the main issue is how people handle and manage encountered stresses (negative experiences) using coping strategies towards enhancing adaptation. Berry (2006) describes the term ‘shock’ as a characteristic that heightens at the initial stage of the acculturation process, notably when accompanied by contradictory events. However, Berry’s (2006) study emphasizes that some of these stresses may arise from a person’s dominant culture, often resulting from the lack of resources to adapt to a new condition.

As stated earlier, stresses that international students face during the acculturation process are primarily within the academic and social contexts. Other significant areas identified include language, financial, and concerns related to racial discrimination. (Lee et al, 2004; Mori 2000; Church, 1982; Yeh & Inose, 2003). The issue most studies have not covered is immigration anxieties and finding channels and supports to help minimize these challenges.

4.3 Dominant International Student Cross-Cultural Barriers Impacting Smooth

Integration

4.3.1 Introduction

The daunting process of integration after being removed from one’s familiar support systems and familiar cultural environment builds on personal vulnerabilities. For most

international students, the encounter of a new culture may be the first experience living in a different society. A new student's unraveling anxiety towards change and the ambiguities of new life experiences must be embraced ultimately. The impact of cross-cultural barriers imposes high demands on international students' mental wellbeing in the process of their academic and professional pursuits. The main barriers in the cross-cultural transition process are revealed in the following areas.

4.3.2 Language and Communication Barriers of International Students Learning

Language barriers and writing is indicated as a significant problem confronting international students (Akanwu, 2015; Gatwiri 2015; Scott et al., & El Masri, 2015). A student's ability to communicate effectively is a critical determinant in integrating into a new environment (Baker, 2001) determining one social, academic, and professional engagements (Young et al., 2013). For new students, suitable communication abilities are a defining factor for minimizing struggles in the transitional process (Andrade, 2006).

According to Sawir (2005), international students extensively process the information on their new environment on arrival. The demands of the acculturation process leave them to make meaning of their new experiences from their perspectives and establish personal perceptions and knowledge base. This is because new students are still developing awareness and building familiarity to make sense of their new environment.

For instance, Scott and colleagues (2015) reinforce the problem with language comprehension, and communication standards for international students at the beginning of international student education irrespective of the strong attributes of the educational system. The international students in this study stressed the disparities in the mode of delivery of lessons

from the style they are familiar with from their country of origin (Scott et al., 2015). The problem of the linguistics barrier is also more challenging in comprehending teachers and classroom engagements. International students with language barriers such as English as a second or third language with significant inflections to their speech may be self-conscious in contributing to classroom exercises out of concern of being ridiculed. This could hinder classroom participation and overall academic performance (Bastien et al., 2018; Scott et al., 2015).

Further, incompetencies in communication and interaction can impede the social skills necessary for building social connections. Essentially, language incompetence may affect self-confidence and learning abilities (Jackson et al., 2013; Yoon & Portman, 2004). Nonetheless, constant engagement and practice are necessary to accept and learn from errors and develop self-confidence in the adjustment process (Gatwiri, 2015). However, the anxiety to make mistakes may inhibit continuous communication which may promote social interaction and enhance language proficiency. Similarly, language anxiety may hinder regular engagement between international students and domestic peers that could encourage mutual understanding and help to minimize stereotypes and discrimination (Berry, 2006).

Another component that language can present as a barrier is the acquisition of employment. Language abilities are significantly connected to the acquisition of jobs for international students. In Scott and El Masri's (2015) study in Canada, students with lower competence in speaking English were unlikely to be considered for employment. Fewer skills in English hindered international students' abilities in expressing their knowledge to prospective employers in job interviews. Admittedly, language is the first component judged without consideration of other skill sets and strengths. Thus, students may find it a challenge to enter the

labor market. This creates financial constraints and obstructs the development of professional experience for after-school employability.

4.3.3 Academic Adjustment of International Students

The number one priority of international graduate students involves adjustment to their degree requirements and general academic life (Lewthwaite, 1997). One common stressor faced in adjustment to academic life stem from instructional differences. In a study among Canadian universities, international students complained of struggles with teaching and presentation styles in the face of the lack of confidence in their oral abilities. International students identified concerns with the delivery of academic lessons despite the high quality of education. This presented disconcerting feelings in assimilating academic materials. Complexities regarding the pace of lectures and the content of material often skew international student academic performance (Scott & El Masri, 2015).

Language difficulties about adjusting to different communication styles and accents of professor's impact assimilating academic content at the early stages of academic life (Scott, & El Masri, 2015; Senyshyn et al., 2000; Tompson and Tompson, 1996). International students whose educational teaching styles are essentially passive with a specified focus on reading rather than conversational skills may find it challenging in conversational skills and classroom participation (Clément & Bourhis 1996; Sawir's, 2005; Scott & El Masri, 2015; Tompson and Tompson, 1996).

Moreover, issues around lack of academic awareness around cultural differences such as speaking without raising hands, taking notes during lectures add to international students' frustrations and anxieties, exacerbating feelings of isolation and alienation in the classroom due to judgments of a colleague who may find them lacking competency (Bastien, Seifen-Adkins, &

Johnson, 2018). While international students may be trying to be effective in adjusting academically, the lack of academic engagement between domestic and international students creates a cultural misunderstanding that puts them at a disadvantage.

Rienties, Nanclares, Jindal-Snape, and Alcott (2013) discovered that students with cultural similarities are likely to work well together compared to students from the country of settlement. Although the study indicates that within 14 weeks foreign students could engage well with domestic students, nonetheless, international students' experiences noted better outcomes with students who share similar backgrounds and cultures. For this reason, Akanwa (2015) suggests the impact knowledge and cultural value play in students' learning and engagement with educational content as well as relationship building.

Essentially, the instructional design of teamwork has a strong influence on how international and domestic students work and learn together (Rienties, et al., 2013, p. 332). Akamu (2015) and suggests that even as students may inherently and inadvertently draw close to students who share things in common, a teaching style that combines teamwork between domestic and international students could encourage social connection. Rienties et al., (2013) highlight classroom teaching style, particularly group work, as valuable to increase cultural connection among students of different backgrounds. Consequently, enabling a "diverse academic environment" that creates a safe space for student interaction between international and domestic students is significant to academic performance (Akanwa, 2015).

4.3.4 Financial Adjustment and Labor Market

International student's stresses include financial vulnerabilities in their attempt to study for a promising future (Sherry, et al., 2009). Generally, studying in a different country brings

substantial financial constraints. Often, international students lack awareness around financial expectations of what it is like to study and live in a different setting and under unfamiliar conditions. One of the problems of dealing with financial struggles pertains to the disparities in tuition between domestic students' tuition and international students. Particularly, international students often pay higher tuition fees (Banyong, 2015) coupled with general living expenses. This creates the need to find employment opportunities to offset high expenditures.

Dauwer (2018) reveals several factors and obstacles in integrating into the labor market in Canada. Typically, international students come in with several personal and family support expectations. These pressures create stress in the face of other psychological and socio-cultural adjustment processes. The need for international students to find employment while pursuing their academic interests becomes urgent. Although international students can obtain jobs to support themselves financially during their studies, transition into the labor market accompanies numerous setbacks and barriers (Trilokekar et al., 2014).

First, Dauwer (2018) identifies employer's preference for Canadian work experience because of language and cultural adjustment issues. Roach (2011) illustrates through interviews in four Canadian post-secondary institutions discriminatory experiences by international students because of lack of Canadian work experience. Dauwer's study also discovered that employers considered students based on their knowledge of "workplace culture." As a result, international students need education and preparation on Canadian employers' objectives since this is important to the job market (Dauwer, 2018). According to Qain (2017), lack of job preparation and work experiences outside Canada are not easily recognized by some employers. This lack of recognition delays employment acquisition in the face of an urgency to meet financial needs.

Secondly, the temporary immigration status for international students creates a problem in the attainment of a job. New international students often immigrate to Canada on a student visa which allows them to stay temporarily. Being on temporary status creates another hindrance to finding employment (Dauwir, 2018). The problem for international students regarding their temporary status is that administrative processes regarding documentation and government process are arduous (Scott, & El Masri, 2015); thus, employers do not find the administrative processes expedient to hire students.

Thirdly, limited work opportunities and placement in relevant employment are known obstacles for international students in the labor market. According to Dauwir (2018), several research studies demonstrate that international students find limited job opportunities placement. Qian's (2015) research highlights that limited capacities in social and professional contacts and English language skills were the main impediments to job opportunities. This advertently affects students' preparation for entry into the labor market after school with repercussions on their long-term professional objectives. Thus, international students suffer disproportionately given these limitations (Trilokekar et al., 2014).

4.3.5 Social Adjustment and Belonging Barriers

Social adjustment correlates to the psychological approaches in dealing with social conditions and customs towards individual integration (Jain, 2012; Kılıçlar et al., 2012). Friendship, a key component of social adjustment is identified as a significant element towards social adjustment (Martirosyan, Bustamante, & Saxon, 2019). In Gerdes and Mallinckrodt's 1994 view (as cited by Berry, 2006), social adjustment is determined by variables such as developing social networks and freedom of participation in social life within a receiving location such as a

university, city, or country. New students face the challenge of securing a sense of belonging through creating and sustaining social connections.

In Gündüz and Alakbarov's (2019) view, once international students leave their home country into their host environment, they are faced with the pressure to adjust socially. They are required to socialize independently and engage with new people and confront environmental pressures and norms. By adapting to a new culture, international students develop relationships and learn various forms of etiquette and customs. How well students adapt to these changes and the adjustment period determines their ability to build social friendships. Literature has shown that international students with stronger social support experience minimum incidents of stress and isolation and can adjust to their host environment with less difficulty (O'Reilly et al., 2010).

Loneliness is a fundamental struggle for international students by being in an unfamiliar environment, with no friends, social network, and cultural and linguistic competencies (Sawir et al. 2008). Transitioning from one way of life to another presents shifting one's way of being from the most primary issues surrounding eating or talking to multiple socialization styles. Thus, one ought to define ways of adapting and coming to terms with the facing change (Study International Website, 2018). Language, of course, is an essential medium to build a connection with domestic peer groups, helping to minimize isolation and loneliness.

Engagement between international and domestic students fosters intercultural knowledge building. Also, it promotes building social interaction, networking, and a sense of belonging, the lack of which has adverse impacts on international students' integration and well-being. In a Canadian study, international students expressed concerns due to the absence of interactions with domestic students outside of school. This situation weakened relationship building that enhances supportive networks (O'Reilly et al., 2010).

Another significant barrier to the adjustment process of international students reviewed in numerous literatures is the perception of discrimination and racism. In a study by Brown and Jones (2013), racism correlates with students' adverse feelings concerning the host environment and loneliness. Evidently, among 150 international student groups, one-third experienced some form of racial discrimination. The adverse impact of emotional abuse led to negative experiences and generated unfavorable outcomes on the country of settlement (Brown and Jones, 2013). This suggests international students with a high level of social connectedness and minimal experiences of discrimination are likely to feel accepted and willing to stay in the host settlement than otherwise.

Similarly, community connectedness where international students receive support in navigating their host community, finding community resources, and exploring the labor market, were reasons international students expressed intents to stay or leave Canada (Scott, & El Masri, 2015).

4.3.6 International Student Adjustment to New Cultural Norms in a Foreign Culture

Cultural norms are common practices involving everyday activities such as appropriate communication skills during conversations, ways of dressing and behavior, and environmentally acceptable norms governing a group of people. Typically, these norms are behaviors and attitudes that are organic to a society or group. The application of cultural norms is essential to social interaction and building relationships. Generally, such habits similarly connect or segregate people (Belyh, 2017).

Essentially cross-cultural differences may pose a threat or bring confusion to international students in building close relationships due to their inexperience with appropriate norms. To

illustrate, students from “collectivistic cultural backgrounds” may find it bewildering interacting with ones from an individualistic model of the “self-reliant, assertive, and independent” such as found in the North American culture (Yeh & Inose, 2003, p. 16). Adjustment to cultural norms plays a crucial part in successful academic performance (Nasir, 2011). A research study conducted by Sherry et al. (2009) indicates the struggles international students encounter in adapting to new cultural norms. Hence, cultural norms are crucial in building interaction with others, and it is a significant element in the adaption process of international students.

5.1 Components of Cross-Cultural Adjustment Cycle of International Students

5.1.1 Introduction

Trifonovitch (1977), suggests that cultural learning/cultural teaching determines cultural adjustment in four areas: the honeymoon stage, hostility stage, humor stage, and home stage. These stages are informative areas that could help build cultural sensitivity among multicultural educators. Essentially, the awareness of these stages could create the opportunity to enhance support for immigrant students. It is opportune that these stages may also give educational institutions a clearer understanding of cultural adjustment for international students to improve on supportive institutional and community networks. In Trifonovitch's view, many people experience four stages of cultural adjustment in a new culture, society, or settlement. The following text will illustrate the four stages in detail.

5.1.2 Honey Moon Stage

Trifonovitch (1977) describes this period as the excitement around the new experience. It embodies the initial recognition of fulfillment in living in a new culture and enthusiasm over

positive life experience and achievement. For most international students, it could mean the reality that one's idea of residing abroad to pursue one's academic and professional opportunities come true. To illustrate in my own experience, the realization after the Canadian Consulate approved my Canadian student visa after numerous failed attempts and refusals over the years was replaced with an overwhelming joy knowing that I was close to living my best dream life.

Although Trifoniv (1977) posits that students at this stage may have some support in place buffering them on their arrival, he asserts it is often short-lived due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Subconsciously, people often lose their cooperative enthusiasm and withdraw from the new student. To illustrate, instructors may no longer support new students to feel accepted by being culturally sensitive towards them in the adjustment process.

Therefore, students' actions and behaviors can be assessed in contrast to culturally acceptable norms within the host culture. New students may feel alienated/isolated and begin to exhibit confusion relating to the misunderstanding of his/her culture within the host culture. New students may experience feelings of ridicule from domestic students and even educators who may overlook the complex situation of new students who are still navigating the new settlement. This situation may lead to the hostility stage.

5.1.3 Hostility Stage

In the hostility stage, international students struggle to handle the confusion and misinterpretation of the current culture. New students advance from demonstrating undesirable behaviors to hostility towards the new culture. According to Mesidor and Sly (2016), new students may experience personal disorientation due to "culture shock," evoking negative emotional states such as stress, confusion, anxiety, depression, and frustration being in contact

with an unfamiliar way of life. Further, students may potentially blame their challenges on external influences attributed to the host culture. Student hostility towards a new culture could lead to cultural mistrust and lead to disengagement, lack of motivation, and indifference in following through with their educational objectives.

5.1.4 Humour Stage

This stage characterizes new students feeling more relaxed in new conditions and experiences while adjusting to the new culture continues. At this stage, the previous period of misunderstanding and confusion from the hostility stage is less threatening. They can look at the adjustment process with humor. Students may have a better understanding of perceiving new situations and experiences with a lighter heart and disposition. Here students can engage in rewarding and socialization activities. Students can interact and build social connections and can enjoy their academic activities. It is also a period where new students reflect, and process challenges faced during the hostility stage.

5.1.5 Home Stage

This embodies the stage new students begin to feel at home. New students feel more adapted and settled in their new culture. Students embrace and learn the new cultural norms and standards and integrate their own into the host culture (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). At this stage, students still identify with their own cultural identity and patterns while utilizing new cultural norms and practices of the new culture; this is referred to as biculturalism. Berry's (2005, 2006) studies examining cross-cultural transition and mental health indicate the positive impacts on well-being through the psychological integration of home and host culture. Trifoniv (1997)

highlights academic institutions need to enhance the biculturalism outlook within the classroom. It emphasizes the significance of cultural diversity. Moreover, Trifonovit (1997) delineates that although these stages are readily identifiable, defining the stages is a challenge as they generally intersect. Essentially, one stage can be linked with other stages with students fluctuating between stages.

6.1 The Problem of Lack of Support Systems during the Adjustment Process

Dauwer's (2018) studies indicate the inconsistencies and limitations in the support service provision by Canadian educational institutions. In assessing support service gaps as concerns, international students identified "differential service provisions" within several institutions (Roach, 2011: p. 29). The lack of social support has proven to maximize acculturation stress of emotional pain, isolation, loneliness, and powerlessness (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Mallinckrodt and Leong (1992) and Nasir (2011) Chuah & Singh (2016) Sandhu (1994) Lee et al. (2004), emphasize the buffering impacts of social support as a powerful coping resource for persons experiencing stressful life changes including stresses adjusting to an unfamiliar culture. Thus, international students' academic performance and ability to cope during the adjustment/adaptation process increase when support systems are available and easily accessible.

For instance, international students settling in the U.S. report a sense of loss, leaving their social support system in their home country (Sandhu, 1994) while finding it threatening to build new ones in the U.S. Mallinckrodt and Leong (1992) have shown that support systems from family, friends, and academic institutions directly impact the psychological stress levels of international students. Hence, international students leaving original support systems from their

home country are likely to depend on their academic institution to enhance their transition and improve their welfare.

Given varying cultural perspectives on social support systems, international student's satisfaction with the available social support system affects acculturation stress. Social support is essential to positive functioning and a solid coping resource for a person encountering stressful life-altering changes. Contrarily, the lack of social support is at the root of stress; this follows that the accessibility of social support affects the adjustment process positively.

6.2 The Significance of Social Support Systems to ease the Adjustment Process

6.2.1 Introduction

As mentioned, social support shows positive effects on the psychological, socio-cultural, and physical domains of international students. Cohen and Makay (1984) have analyzed the buffering social support model on stress, specifying the implication of social support on the well-being of individuals. The buffering model support resources highlight four areas: emotional, practical, informational, and social companionship — discussed in the following pages.

6.2.2 Emotional Support

In Cohen and Makay's (1984) view, emotional support comprises information that increases one's sense of esteem and belonging. As international students, they need to fit in while bearing the loss and distance of familiar friends, family, and loved ones. For most universities, counseling services may foster a new student's emotional support. A student may find a safe space to process challenges, build insight, and problem-solving. Thus, they feel valued and cared

for as part of a flow of communication. “Social support would presumably provide a reserve of these resources and thus protect one (or help one recover) from stress-induced loss” (p.259).

Self Esteem: Cohen and Wills (1985) highlight the significance of being aware of conditions that may influence self-defeating feelings. Thus, the experience of uncontrollable stresses may lead to one’s lack of confidence in their abilities. Thus, behaviors that show encouragement, approval, and concern could enhance one’s confidence to seek help in finding possible solutions presented. For international students, established support systems within host institutions may promote self-esteem to enhance help-seeking behavior. In this way, esteem support may encourage self-efficacy in problem-solving.

Feelings of Belonging: Chen and Makay (1985) assert that feelings of belonging, and solidarity improve one’s affective state. They explain that this support system is essential in shielding people from stress-induced mental problems such as anxiety and depression. As psychological stress is every day among international students due to the loss of a familiar support system from their home environment, the provision of mutual support from host institutions may hold the key to preventing affective disorders.

6.2.3 Practical/Tangible Support

According to Chen and Makay (1984), tangible support is often disjointed from psychological support. However, they suggest the interplay of the mind and body as providing material support for people under stress is in line with support service. Admittedly, tangible support in the provision of financial aid, material resources, and other needed services (Chuang & Sigh, 2016) may positively impact students’ psychological feelings of being cared for and valued (Chen & Makay, 1984). In Chaung and Wills’s (2016) view, practical acts such as

supporting international students with language support, transportation, and loaning money are imperative. In many instances, solid support may not be as essential as the recognized notion of solidarity. (Chen & Makay, 1984).

6.2.4 Informational Support

Provision of help in defining, understanding, and coping with problematic events (p. 313) as well as academic support, guidance, and referral to other support services (Chen & Makay, 1984) is critical for new students. In Chaung and Wills's (2016) study findings, international students required informational support including university statutes and regulations, guidance relating to courses/programs offered, and financial guidance. These could be areas where new settlers find it confusing due to a lack of intercultural competencies.

Often, there is no guidance in aiding new students to interpret information even when accessed. Primarily, financial guidance is often lacking in most institutions. For new international students, financial guidance in interpreting currency and financial management/planning may be beneficial in their financial planning and decision making. Financial planning could help students meet their academic objectives and benefit one's emotional and mental health.

6.2.5 Social Companionship Support

Friendships can be emotionally and personally rewarding. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, friendship is illustrated third on the human need as an element that provides a sense of love and belonging. Social companionship support implies one's sense of integrating into a social group for recreational purposes beyond the academic circles (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012). International students with social support in companions that transcends the classroom have a

higher chance of building intercultural communication and feelings of belonging among host students and the environment as a whole (Chaung & Will, 2016).

In Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) study, they identified the benefits of friendships between domestic students and international students including academic and psycho-social support. Essentially, this relationship helps international students feel relaxed and comfortable living and studying abroad even in differing cross-cultural awareness and possible challenges. Similarly, the established relationships build a sense of connectedness that buffers international students from feelings of isolation in a foreign country (Hendrickson et al., 2011).

Cross-cultural social interactions also enable cultural diversity and tolerance. This contact may benefit domestic and international students in building multicultural awareness and sensitivity, which may have benefits expanding beyond academic parameters. Although there are barriers to building friendships and social connections, social companionship has shown to be the number factor that builds a sense of social support for international students (Hendrickson et al., 2011). A study by Westwood and Baker (1990) found out that well-adjusted international students had higher rates of social companionships. For this reason, Chaung and Wills (2016) suggest academic institutions explore proactive measures in building social companionship among international students and domestic students.

6.3 The Role of University Resources and their Effects on International Student

Adjustment

Banjong's (2015) study on a higher educational institution in the U.S. reveals the importance of university resources in promoting international students' academic life and well-being. The research discovered the role of campus resources such as the international office,

writing center, counseling center, and academic success center support students to cope with their educational challenges. However, the study purports that international students generally do not access available resources due to lack of awareness about their location and functions. Thus, the need for growing awareness through diverse channels, especially on students' arrival, has the potential to significantly minimize struggles for a smooth transition process.

English proficiency classified as a major concern for international students is positively mitigated when students accessed the student success center on campus. Students reported beneficial results when they utilized the centers. While the lack of English proficiency showed to impede building relationships, building proficiency strengths from these centers similarly enhanced social skills and academic success (Banjong, 2015).

Concerns related to loneliness and isolation adversely impacted students' academic performance due to increased emotional vulnerabilities, but counseling support is demonstrated to modulate emotional struggles. Yet international students do not make effective use of this resource as their domestic counterparts. International students found it increasingly hard when they cannot make friends particularly in the face of language and other significant barriers already discussed in this paper. Social connection significantly decreases the occurrence of homesickness and leads the way for a happier and more meaningful stay. Banjong's (2015) studies found that international student's under-utilized counseling centers due to the attachment of negative perspectives and misconception that it's mainly aimed at students with special needs and handicaps. This uncovers the profound deficiencies in student's understanding of academic and community resources available to facilitate the process of adjustment for improved outcomes (Banjong, 2015).

Issues surrounding financial crisis tend to influence students' decision to either persist or quit school. In Canada, international students are allowed to work for 20 hours a week their entire educational period, so cannot make an additional income to offset their tuition and living expenses. Besides, international students pay more for their education than domestic students and are disadvantaged in foreign currency exchange. This is because students need more money in exchange for a small sum of currency in the country of settlement. This creates stifling burdens on students' overall adjustment period. Banjong's (2015) studies points that student who encountered financial distresses ultimately turned in for counseling support when they could no longer cope with their stresses.

Although Bayong's (2015) research indicates that students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds may experience and solve problems differently - the implication is to emphasize the significance of campus resources for international students. Thus, higher institutional personnel need to increase student's awareness about the location and functions of support services and encourage their use. Creating opportunities for mentoring from seasoned international students with good knowledge about resources to support newcomers; explaining functions and locations of resources can be very beneficial. This acquired information and awareness about resources can minimize difficulties and enhance student's transition process (Banjong, 2015).

6.4 Summary

The availability of social support systems in buffering international students during the adaptation process is imperative. Chen and Makay's (1984) social support buffering model review provides evidence consistent with the beneficial effect it may have on the well-being of international students. The generalized positive effect may provide international students with a

sense of predictability and stability. Thus, it could enhance satisfying experiences in the academic and community circles. In effect, international students' psychological needs may improve in the long term by examining their acculturation stresses (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Chapter 3: Project Plan

7.1 Introduction

The attached guidebook is an informational guide to help create awareness of international student's struggles and provide support ideas through the transition process. Essentially, the project integrates the cross-cultural phases and possible support systems/coping strategies within the UNBC academic institution and community of Prince George. The thematic literature review found in Chapter Two informs the identified areas that make up the guide clarifying student challenges within Canada as related to UNBC academic institution. The themes have been evident through the literature review uncovering the ubiquitous international student challenges across Canada.

7.2 Description of Project Design

The outline of the guide module starts with an introduction and includes an overview of Canadian culture and life to build an awareness of the Canadian cultural atmosphere and living. As part of the introduction, I include welcome and arrival information and preparation for settling for new immigrant students. This topic builds awareness around the Prince George community, weather conditions, appropriate clothing for the seasons, accommodation, and transportation system.

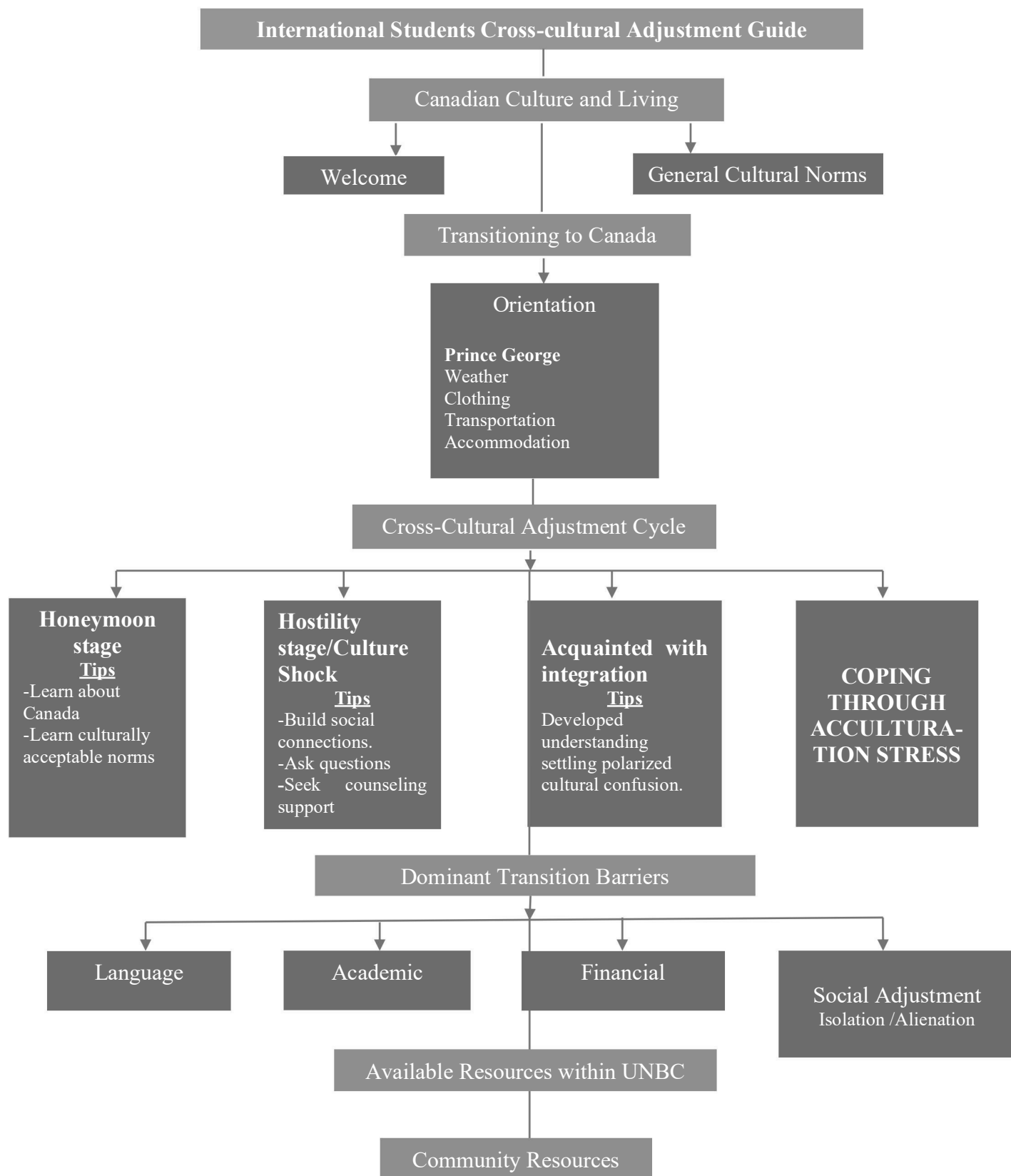
Secondly, I present an overview of cross-cultural adjustment stages and identified transition stresses and their impacts on international students' general well-being and academic success. The first two cultural adjustments include the honeymoon stage and the hostility stage. Focus is given to these two stages as both are problematic areas. Thus, tips for mitigating possible struggles will be suggested. A brief overview is given to the last two stages (humor and home

stages) as both are more adaptable stages for international students. The intent is to demonstrate that transitional adaptation may appear at some point within the transitional process.

Thirdly, I discuss the four dominant cultural barriers in language, academic, financial/labor, and social domains. I describe each adjustment barrier to uncover possible struggles and solutions. I also present available resources and support systems within the University of Northern British Columbia. Finally, I address available community resources that international students can access in their transition process. The guide is open to modifications and updates continuously to meet the needs of international student education as time evolves. The intent is to create awareness in enhancing areas for development.

In summary, the guide that follows provides a structure for learning about international student's transition struggles and possible support systems — intended to provide awareness for new international students and continuing students at large. Primarily, the guide provides informational support for preparation and functional areas in accessing support for an enhanced cross-cultural transition experience.

Although this guide intends to provide a succinct tool for students to easily locate the support available to them in their transition and cultural integration, there is a need to examine the potential ethical implications of the project. The following sections will discuss the ethical dilemmas of this project.

Figure 3: Layout of the International Student Cross-Cultural Guide-UNBC

7.3 The International Students Cross-Cultural Guide-University of Northern British Columbia

This guide is designed to enhance the transition process of international students pursuing higher education at the University of Northern British Columbia. It is aimed at all international students from diverse backgrounds. The guide emphasizes providing knowledge regarding the transitional phases of adjustment/coping strategies and informs collective struggles that have been identified throughout the research reviewed. Further, it attempts to serve as a central informational point that can guide students, especially newcomers, in locating and identifying service functions regarding available support services within the school system and community.

Admittedly, international students come in with different perspectives and needs often influenced by their backgrounds, thus the guide has limitations in responding to all areas that may be of concern to different cultural groups. However, the guide gives a broad overview of international students' key areas of concern gathered across institutions. Thus, it is important to note that available support systems identified in this guide may lack the capacity to meet all the needs of every international student at the University of Northern British Columbia. Nevertheless, it may offer general ideas and areas to address desired questions.

Herein, the management of international students within the university has the role to examine specific multicultural needs to better serve the international student population.

7.4 Ethical Consideration

Ethical principles are gaining stronger emphasis as a crucial element to social science research (Barai, 2000). Ethical norms focus on standards of research conduct that govern behaviors or actions in the interest of subjects (Gajjar, 2013, Bhattacharyya, & Ray, 2021).

Specifically, ethical consideration protects the rights, safety, and dignity of researchers and their participants. Therefore, it promotes the appropriate research process and methods (Bhattacharyya, & Ray, 2021). In research, ethical norm's function and apply the objectives of researchers in causing no harm to participants through their academic study pursuits. According to Gajjar (2013), there are several reasons for research to observe ethical principles; one of these principles is advancing "knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error." This can be achieved through, lessening "fabrication, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data" (p. 8).

I have taken the practical measure to minimize any potential misinformation through a critical examination of sources of information, providing awareness and design of the project as well as adequate details to enable students to make informed decisions. The orientation of providing the information needed to exercise decision-making power could advance collaboration, communication with service providers and staff to minimize the risk of exploitation and distress. This enhances trust (safety), accountability, and transparency (Barai, 2000; Bhattacharyya & Ray, 2021).

In consideration of my standpoint, it is key for me to utilize an objective lens to avoid implicit bias based on race, discrimination, personal decisions/agenda as well as interpretation of research data. Herein, I have disclosed my standpoint and interest in this subject topic to foster openness and integrity. As such, the harm of influencing users' self-determination in their thoughts and action is reduced. Further, this allows for "responsible mentoring" (p. 10) designed to provide education towards international student welfare in the cross-cultural adjustment process allowing them to make their own decisions (Gajjar, 2013).

7.5 Conclusion

In this project, I have identified underlying struggles of international students across various Canadian institutions through creating a guidebook for international students at the University of Northern British Columbia. Predominant areas of transitional challenges are discovered in the academic, language, social, employment, and labor markets. In identifying these struggles, the project also draws attention to support systems within the academic and community environment that may improve international students' survival as they brace the adjustment phases.

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Hilda Boateng, M.Ed.

International Students

A black and white photograph of a rugged landscape. The foreground is dominated by large, dark, jagged rocks along a shoreline. In the background, a steep, rocky mountain face rises, partially covered by a dense forest of evergreen trees. The sky is clear and bright.

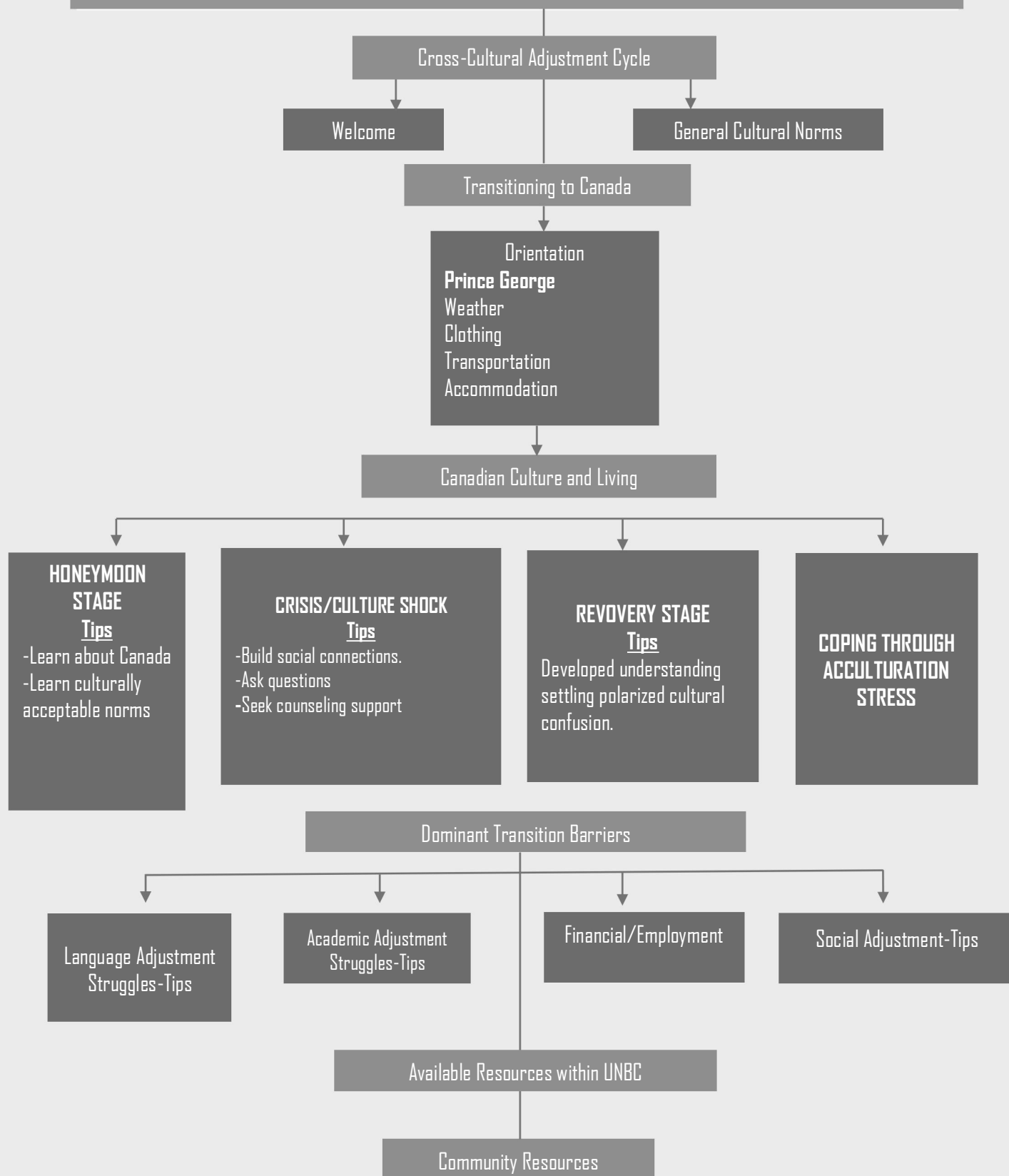
UNBC

Cross-cultural guidebook

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International Students Cross-cultural Adjustment Guide



International Students Cross-Cultural Guide



Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

Since time immemorial indigenous peoples have walked gently on the diverse traditional territories of where the University of Northern British Columbia community is grateful to live, work, learn and play. We are committed to building and nurturing relationships with indigenous peoples. We acknowledge their traditional lands, and we thank them for their hospitality.

Overview

International student experiences in a host culture may present diverse experiences both on the emotional, psychological, and physical levels. For most, the excitement of a dream come true has seemingly been realized. However, the challenges of transiting to a new culture may be recognized in settling. The experience of acculturation struggles is often different from person to person.

While international students start to acquaint themselves with the new home through the initial processes of registration, attempts to build social connections/engagements, navigating through the academic and community circles, and learning of new cultural norms and lifestyles, they may at the same time find some level of stresses. This is part of what is called the cultural adjustment or adaptation phase. Through the faces of cultural adaptation, they may encounter one or more challenges that are often unavoidable. However, building awareness of the challenges and recognizing them as they occur can be beneficial in making informed choices in seeking appropriate available support to help minimize some of the adaptation struggles.



Canadian Culture and Living

Welcome

As a new or prospective student, it is important to familiarise myself with Canada and Prince George. Here, research will be significant to build knowledge. Some of the areas that will be important to learn to include cultural norms, weather conditions, appropriate clothing, support services, and social connection among others. This can be done by attending the orientation ceremony which normally happens in September. Make it a point to tour around the school and take note of crucial areas such as the international student office, counseling center, school clinic, and financial office. Other pivotal areas include learning about the bus system to enable commuting grocery shops, hospitals, and other community resources.

General Cultural Norms

Tradition

The Canadian cultural tradition prioritizes multiculturalism and diversity. The country is considerably diversified from varied immigrant heritage. Thus, tradition

maybe appropriate to individual families and largely influenced former homeland. Despite, Canadian tradition is closely tied to the country's holidays as well as individual festivities and anniversaries such as:

- Birthdays
- Graduation and wedding anniversaries
- National celebrations such as Christmas and Easter festivities, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Canada Day, Family Day, and others.
- Statutory Holidays

Canadians prioritize special occasions and anniversaries. Special occasions are generally honored by giving presents/gifts as well as social events, and mutual displays of shared affection and appreciation (canadianguide.com).

Manners and Etiquette in Canada

Canadians are generally friendly and polite in their social engagements. The use of please, sorry, and thanks are acceptable conventions of social etiquette during interactions. People put a high value on honesty, humility, and sensitivity in relationships with friends and strangers. Canadians also prioritize individuality and privacy. Exchange of a smile is a common manner of Canadians to everyone including strangers. More often there is an exchange of a handshake and a hug with familiar people. People are relatively outspoken and independent and may relate to close relations such as young, elderly in a more casual manner. Canadians value time and schedules. People are often exact with

time schedules and expect the same from others. When you are scheduled for 2 pm you are expected to show up at 2 pm. Showing up late for a scheduled appointment is considered disrespectful and merit an apology and/or explanation. Showing up too early too may also be unexpected causing unease when the host is unprepared (canadianguide.com).

Transitioning to Canada



City of Prince George

Prince George is situated on the traditional lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nations. The name in Carrier language signifies “people where the river comes together.”

The city is the largest in Northern British Columbia with a population of about 74,000 inhabitants. The convergence of railways, highways, rivers reveal the name of togetherness and centers the city as a Northern BC Service hub.

Prince George can boast such the University of Northern British Columbia, accessible good-paying jobs, housing, and transport system. The community's essential transport system includes an international airport, buses, and taxi and train connecting people, industries, and transporting natural resources such as mineral, forest, and farming products across Canada and around the world. There are various recreational activities and sites for building on positive engagements on your leisure and weekends. To learn more about the City of George, services, and upcoming activities/events follow the link: [Learn About Prince George | City of Prince George.](#)

Weather/Climate:



Canada has four seasons comprising of

Fall (September to November)

Characterizes a beautiful colorful season

**Winter (December to March)**

Winter is quite cold in most places in Canada.
In Prince, George winters are cold and temperate.

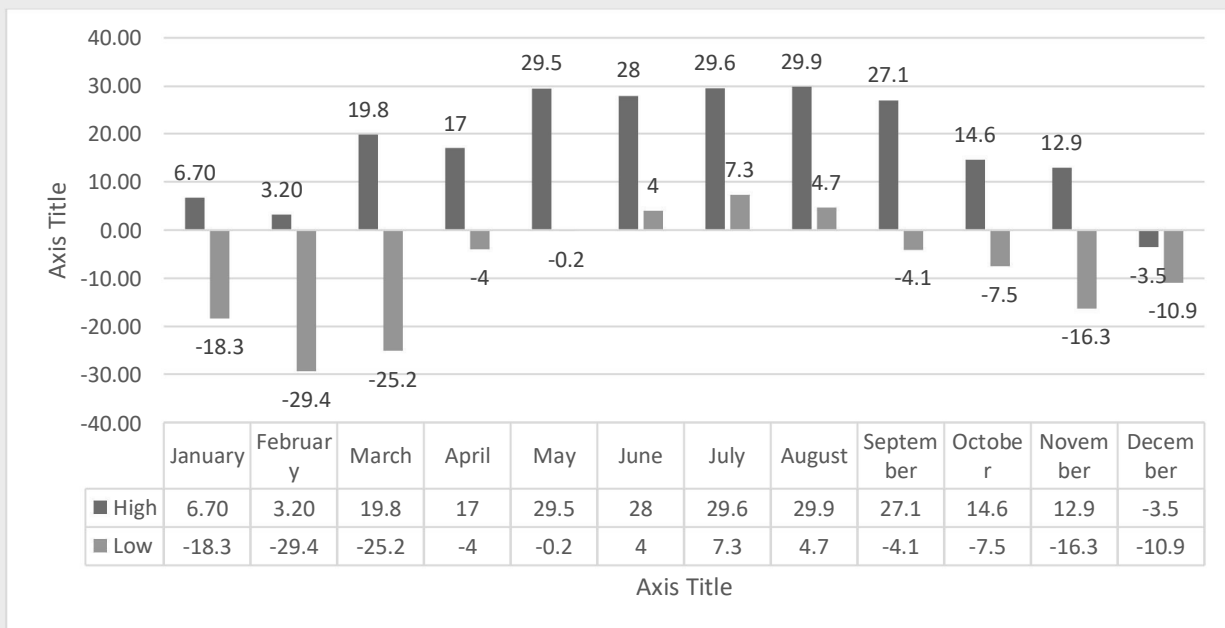
**Spring (March to May).**

This is often a rainy season. Rain boots and umbrellas
and raincoats will come in handy

**Summer (June to August)**

Summer is generally warm and sunny.
Often characterize a lot of outdoor activities

Average Temperatures in Prince George



Source: UNBC-International Office Virtual Content

Clothing

Winter is a beautiful time of the season. However, it can present unfamiliar temperatures, especially for international students. This is due to harsh weather conditions often experienced in the north. Winter is a season you will need special clothing to help battle the elements. The following diagrams describe the necessary layering and accessories for the winter season.

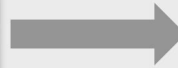
Layering your clothing in 3 steps will help you to stay warm

1. Base Layer

Jeans, leggings, shirts, skirts, and pants

2. Middle Layer

Cardigans, Sweaters



Make sure this layer is adjustable

3. Outer Layer (Shell)

Jackets and Coats

Winter Accessories

Headwear: Winter headbands, hats, caps, toques, and face masks

Ear/Neck: Ear and face masks, earmuffs, knitted/wool/fleece scarfs

Hands: Winter mittens, Knitted/wool/fleece gloves.

Feet: Thick warm socks, toe warmers, and boots

Source: UNBC International Office Content

Transportation



Lack of familiarity with public transport can be a hurdle as an international student. BC transport is the main public transit system that commutes people around the Prince George community. As part of easy access around the community, full-time international students can access the BC transit system through a valid U-Pass pasted on the student ID card (a mandatory charge which comes as part of international tuition fees on a semester basis). U-PASS gives all UNBC students unlimited access to all PG transit routes. For more info: [Public Transit | University of Northern British Columbia \(unbc.ca\)](https://unbc.ca/public-transit)

The BUS transit rides 7 days a week except for Christmas and New years day. Find the **Rider Guide on Campus (International Office)** for schedules information, commuting times, and routes. Make sure to be on time at the bus stop to avoid missing the bus. Buses have numbers and will indicate on their screen where they are heading.

Prince George Transit

RIDER'S GUIDE

Effective September 6, 2021

CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE

BC Transit

Fares


subject to change

Cash	
Adult/Student/Senior*	\$ 2.50
Child, 12 and under	free
Tickets (10)	
All fares	22.50
DayPASS	
All fares	5.00
(available onboard only)	(or 2 Tickets)
Monthly Pass	
Adult	60.00
Student/Senior*	50.00
Semester PASS (students only)	
Semester is Sept – Dec, Jan – Apr, and May – Aug	135.00
ProPASS	
Available through monthly payroll deduction	51.50


* Reduced fare with valid I.D. for persons 65 and over and students in full-time attendance.


DayPASS

A DayPASS is valid for unlimited travel on any route. Purchase a DayPASS from your driver with either \$5.00 cash or two tickets. Only available on the bus.



OR





BE PART OF THE SOLUTION... REUSE YOUR RIDER'S GUIDE.

Transit Info 250-563-0011
bctransit.com

This guide is printed on environmentally responsible paper. 21180 - JK

Tools

- ✓ Trip Planner helps you find plan a trip, and which bus to take to connect to places.
- ✓ Download Bus Schedules and Maps on your computer or Phone. **PG Transit Mobile App**

Link to access Trip planner and download
[Public Transit | University of Northern British Columbia \(unbc.ca\)](https://unbc.ca/public-transit)

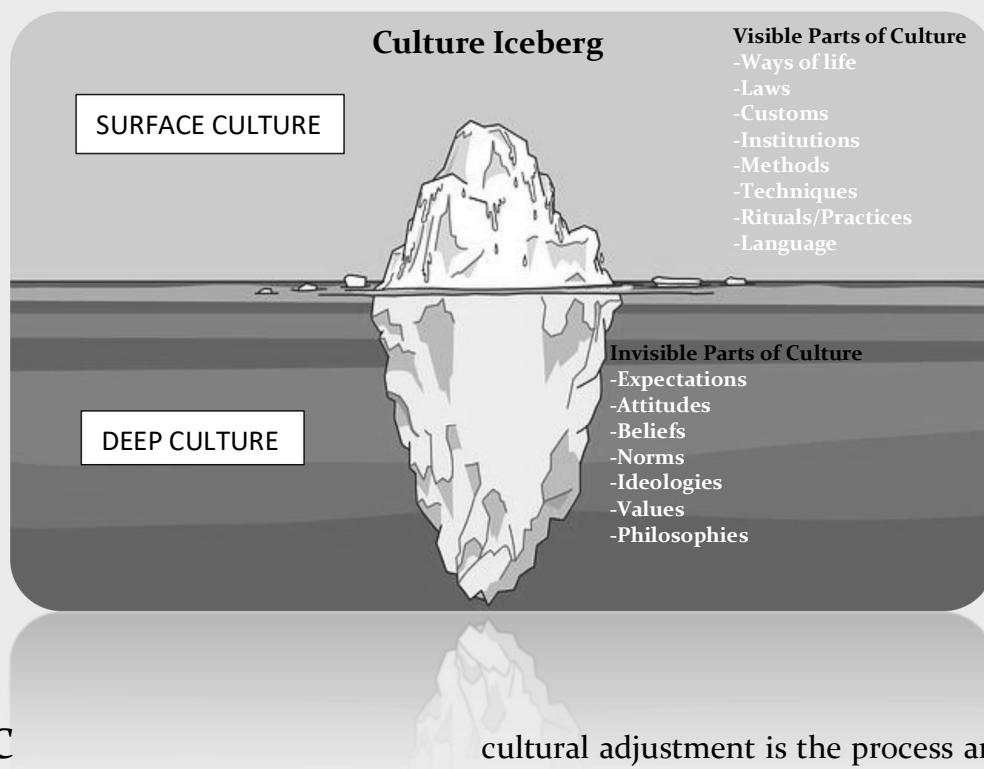
Bus Etiquette

- ✓ Enter through front door and exit through back door
- ✓ Respect other riders' personal space when moving around to find a seat
- ✓ Find areas with extra seat to sit quietly
- ✓ Stay behind red line when bus is in motion
- ✓ Ask for the stop button to press for your stop
- ✓ Bus drivers are good with answering your questions

Accommodation

Seek accommodation before arrival. Speaking with the international office, academic supervisors and familiar people from your cultural group are ways to access accommodation. Sometimes opportunities for temporary accommodation may help in settling at the initial stage. With time you may find a preferable place.

Cultural Adjustment Cycle



takes one to adjust to a new cultural environment different from your own. It is often not

an easy transition and can present several feelings/emotions and experiences. The transition process during cultural adaptation usually happens in four phases: honeymoon, crisis/cultural shock, recovery, and adjustment.

Honeymoon Stage

This stage characterizes your initial arrival into a new culture where you find yourself fascinated by the new. Feelings of excitement and curiosity may extend over a couple of weeks but are often short-lived due to cultural and language barriers. However, anxieties over normal daily tasks such as navigating the school, community, speaking a new language, locating places to use the transport system would present challenges.

Tips

- Learn about Canada and the city of Prince George
- Learn culturally appropriate norms

Crisis Stage/ Cultural Shock

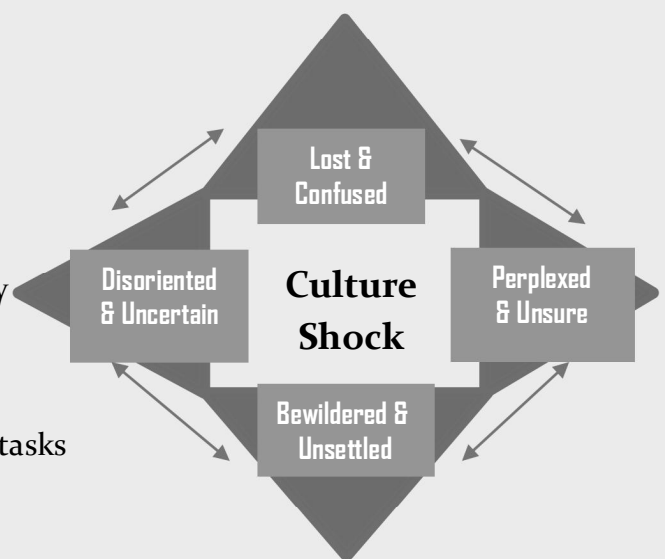
This stage may start a few months (3 to 4 months) after you arrive. Culture shock gradually begins from difficulties in integrating and identifying with the new culture. Essentially, this causes challenges in knowing and acceptance of new ways of being from what you are familiar with. You may start feeling confused in understanding the new culture.

You may notice eminent signs of stress, confusion, anxiety, depression, and frustration being in contact with an unfamiliar way of life as feelings of isolation/alienation from people and community creeps on you. You start to experience the differences between your original culture and the new.

This stage is often more difficult for new immigrants to manage.

Signs of Cultural Shock

- ❖ recurring anxiety, frustration, and irritability
- ❖ Sense of loss and helplessness
- ❖ Loss of sleep, focus, and ability to complete tasks
- ❖ Feelings of rejection
- ❖ Withdrawal from people and activities creates a sense of loneliness that nobody cares about.
- ❖ intense feelings of missing family and friends back home “homesickness,” and the sense of going back home.
- ❖ depression, sadness, and self-doubt
- ❖ sense of failure and disappointment
- ❖ sense of dissatisfaction with your new culture and may complain about unfamiliar occurrences and experiences.
- ❖ Chronic illness



Tips

- Ask questions
- Build a social connection
- Seek counseling support

Recovery Phase

Recovery from the cultural crisis is held differently among individuals. This because is people come from diverse backgrounds, possess different strengths and weaknesses, and abilities. Giving yourself time and patience, you will start to experience the positive impacts of cultural adjustment including enhanced cultural awareness, self-confidence, and motivation to connect with people and activities around you.

Gradually you will start to feel more flexible and comfortable in your host environment. Increased ability to expand your social network, engage and explore different places and activities. You are also able to identify with your own cultural identity as well as practice new cultural norms and traditions of the new culture. While bearing this phase, it is important to utilize available support systems in the school and community. Allowing yourselves to connect and engage with institution and community support systems whiles going through the challenges; you are likely to minimize experienced stresses.

Coping through Acculturation Stress

Any challenging life event can stir our stress response. One such occurrence is moving to a new country. Although, challenges often point to us that we are in the direction of growth. However, the major life event such as moving to a new country can present overwhelming experiences when having to deal with a lot of transitional changes all at once. As you may have already learned, the exciting phase of cultural adjustment can be positive until our limits are run when we start confronting barriers of integrating and identifying with the new culture. Increase your awareness around coping strategies to mitigate perceived and real stresses. This information may provide you with some educate you on what stress looks like and its management. You can access individual or group support through the universities counseling unit to help cope with your specific challenges: [Counselling Services | University of Northern British Columbia \(unbc.ca\)](https://unbc.ca/counselling-services). More information at the academic resource page (p.15)

Stress Response

Situation —→ Interpretation —→ Response

Often stress response gets activated when we think we may not have what it takes to handle a difficult situation. Essentially you might be safe but may believe you are in danger. Thus, it is important to think about how you are thinking about events and challenges. For example: if you think your inability to understand your professor is

humiliating, you might fear going for lectures and avoid it. You can cope with stress by dealing with the situation, the interpretation, and the stress response

Sustaining Lifestyle to Cope Cultural Shock

- ✓ Be familiar with the university, educational system, courses, and campus
- ✓ Learn about the host city and country
- ✓ Learn about the new cultural environment related to interpersonal skills
- ✓ Establish contacts before and after arrival
- ✓ Demonstrate confidence in the phase of barriers
- ✓ Have realistic expectations about life abroad
- ✓ Make sure to attend the first-year orientation to receive significant information about the transitional process and academic success

Managing Stress

Situation (the real world)	Interpretations (Our thoughts)	Response (feelings and action)
Define the problem, break it down into pieces, and set goals to overcome	Change the way you think about challenges Sometimes we show signs of stress in minor situations.	Find support services available to you such as mentioned in this guide.

General Tips towards Transitioning

Acknowledge current struggles as normal

It is important to acknowledge your experienced challenges as part of the transition process. The unpleasant feelings and discomfort are temporary and transient. They are part of the natural process that a person experiences through change and unfamiliarity. Give yourself time and be compassionate with yourself as you navigate through the process.

Mistakes and Discomforts will be part of the transition

You might be overly self-conscious about making mistakes or failing at something. This could create discomforts and feelings of helplessness. Mistakes can be useful since that's how we all learn to be good at something. It will be part of your learning and that's fine. Embrace the discomforts and work through challenges with accessible support systems around you.

Be an observer with a curious mind

Ask questions and be less judgemental. Use your current connections such as your academic advisors, mates, and professors who may know more about the culture to build more knowledge about your new environment. Be respectful with your manners and language.

Try to use words such as "I am curious about..." "Tell me about...", "can you tell me more about..." to know more about the new culture. In observing try to relate your cultural knowledge from home to the same situations you see. This allows you to learn about yourself and your culture in comparison to the host culture.

Learn about the cultural norms and traditions

There are many ways to learn about another culture. Some suggestions include research, asking questions, and observation.

Prepare in advance for the weather changes

Winters can be hard for a new immigrant. Prince George is generally known for long harsh winter seasons and unpredictable snowstorms. Prepare for the winter by stocking up winter clothing, snow boots, gloves, and hats so you can keep warm.

Learn about your new surrounding

This can be done by participating in student programs and activities. Explore your academic institution and community. Ask people to show you and teach you about how to use the bus system and hours of operation. Try to notice important places like in the school environment such as the international offices, school clinic, and counseling center. The international student office can help you answer a lot of the questions you may be struggling with. In the community be aware of hospitals, grocery shops, post offices, and recreational centers. (Some resources in the school and community can be found in this guide)

Dominant Transition Barriers/Tips

Academic Adjustment Struggles

- ✓ Difficulty in assimilating teaching/academic content
- ✓ Differing teaching and presentation style
- ✓ Complexities in the pace of lectures
- ✓ Lack of confidence in-class participation
- ✓ Adjustment to communication style
- ✓ Academic awareness around academic cultural knowledge.
- ✓ Academic pressure with assignments

Tips

- ✓ Find learning support in senior students especially those of cultural groups
- ✓ Find peer support among course mates
- ✓ Talk to tutors and express your concerns
- ✓ Seek support from faculty and academic instructors
- ✓ Access the academic success center
- ✓ Build a study habit/Have a timetable
- ✓ Team work with domestic students

Language Adjustment Struggles

- ✓ Linguistic obstructions and interpretations
- ✓ Language competence and communication standards
- ✓ Trouble processing extensive information
- ✓ Complexities in accents and tone
- ✓ Anxiety in making errors and avoiding speaking
- ✓ Lack of self confidence and fear in interacting with peers

Tips

- ✓ Make effort beyond discomfort to interact with domestic students irrespective of language deficiencies
- ✓ Read to understand cultural differences and standards
- ✓ Build competency in home country before arrival
- ✓ Take an English course/classes
- ✓ Try social activities and clubs
- ✓ Practice and don't stress

Dominant Transition Barriers/Tips

Social Adjustment Struggles

- ✓ Difficulty building connections and making friends
- ✓ Significant cultural differences in social skills
- ✓ Unfamiliar cultural norms in building relationships
- ✓ Feelings of alienation and Isolation
- ✓ Racial differences and minimal interaction
- ✓ Feelings of discrimination
- ✓ Homesickness

Tips

- ✓ Learn about cultural norms and social skills
- ✓ Find opportunities to interact with people
example: volunteering, social clubs, and peer programs
- ✓ Seek company with own nationals or other international students
- ✓ Connect regularly with familiar connections at home particularly family and friends
- ✓ Familiarise with interests, hobbies and activities enjoyed by domestic students
- ✓ Understand beliefs and ideas of the new culture

Financial/Employment Struggles

- ✓ Lack of knowledge about the exchange of Canadian currency
- ✓ Securing bank account
- ✓ High cost of studying abroad
- ✓ Personal and family expectations
- ✓ Delays in the acquisition of employment
- ✓ Lack of education and skills for the Canadian workforce

Tips

- ✓ Learn about the exchange of Canadian currency
- ✓ Seek support in the opening a bank account
- ✓ Learn about financial management
- ✓ Have realistic financial expectations in response to your needs and others
- ✓ Prepare adequately for study abroad
- ✓ Seek financial aid as needed
- ✓ Seek counseling in stresses related to finances
- ✓ Gain information about required jobs and prepare adequately for interviews

Academic Services UNBC

Teaching and Learning Services	Functions	Location
A cademic Success Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provides support for student learning and academic challenges <input type="checkbox"/> Provides face to face, drop-in & online tutoring services <input type="checkbox"/> Provides peer-led support learning such as supplemental instruction, and peer lead learning <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Located on first floor of the library <input type="checkbox"/> Tel: 250-960-6367 Toll-free: 1-888-440-3440 (wait on the line and ask for the ASC)
A ccess Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provides services for students with disabilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Services: Provides information for prospective students, Assessment of student needs, Academic accommodation letters, Assistive technology and services coordination, Grant and funding opportunities for eligible students, Information and referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Located: Room 5-157. <input type="checkbox"/> Tel: 250-960-5682 Email: arc@unbc.ca
S tudent Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Help with attaining personal academic goals <input type="checkbox"/> Advices students about resources and university lifestyle <input type="checkbox"/> Support with students in areas such as choosing a program and program requirements, prepare and register for courses, university transfer credits <input type="checkbox"/> Help students optimize their educational experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> advising@unbc.ca with your questions <input type="checkbox"/> Tel: 250-960-6306
C enter for Teaching, Learning and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supports the teaching and learning community at UNBC <input type="checkbox"/> Support areas include: instructional technology, instructional consultation and design, workshops and conferences, advocating for teaching excellence, professional development and mentoring 	<p>Location: Room 10-3040 Email: ctl@unbc.ca Phone: 250-960-6509</p>
L aboratory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supports teaching labs, research labs and commercial analytical lab <input type="checkbox"/> Provides safety for laboratory users 	<p>Call Security at Local 3333 or 250- 960-7058</p>

Health & Wellness Resources

Health & Wellness	Functions	Location
C ounseling Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Individual Counseling offers support for students specific challenges. ❑ YMINDS (ages 18-30) Group Counselling helps students to develop skills, increase social networks to enhance overall well-being 	<p>Individual Counseling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Room: 5-168 ❑ Phone: 250-960-6369 ❑ Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm <p>YMINDS Group Counselling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Start date: September 14th, 2021 ❑ Time: 1pm-3pm ❑ Room: 5-174 ❑ Email: wellness@unbc.ca
H ealth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ UNBC Medical Clinic provides variety of medical services ❑ Help coordinate students health care needs while studying at UNBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Room: 5-161 pay for their health services. ❑ Hours of Operation: Monday to Thursday: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm / 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm Friday: 9 am -12 pm ❑ Phone: 250-960-6370 ❑ Email: clinic@unbc.ca
S afety and Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Safety and risk management department ensures the health and safety of UNBC community, Students, Faculty, Staff, Contractors, and Visitors. ❑ Services centers on preventative measures relating to harms and injury to the University's property and reputation 	<p>Assistant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Phone: 250-960-5020 ❑ Email: safety@unbc.ca <p>Campus Security Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Non-Emergency Phone: 250-960 7058 ❑ Campus Emergency DIAL: 3333 (internal use only)
N orthern Sports Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre provides fitness, sports programs and recreation engagements all year-round. ❑ Fulltime UNBC students have automatic membership included in yearly tuition fees excluding parking fees. 	<p>Northern Sport Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Email: nsc-operations@unbc.ca ❑ Phone: 250-960-6366
S tudent Health Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ International student must be covered by the British Columbia Medical Services Plan (MSP) or have equivalent coverage to be able to access healthcare under Northern BC Graduate Students Society Health Plan benefits. ❑ For new international students, there is a 3-month waiting period before MSP starts. During the waiting time, you can buy a private basic health insurance plan equivalent to MSP. This can be accessed through the UNBC international Office. 	<p>Contact International Office for more information on MSP or the equivalent private plan provided through UNBC.</p>

Financial Resources

Financial Services	Functions	Location/Inquiries
A wards and Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Provides students with financial aid towards their UNBC education for new, continuing, in-program undergraduate and graduate students ❑ Funding sources include public scholarships, bursaries, UNBC awards, government and bank loans 	<p>For questions and deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ UNBC - Office of the Registrar Awards & Financial Aid Unit ❑ Phone: 250-960-6319 E-mail: awards@unbc.ca
C ashiers Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Facilitates student payments ❑ Obtain services through the Cashiers Office and the Finance Department. 	<p>For information and inquiries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <u>Cashier's Office</u> Student Services Street by the Office of the Registrar. Mon - Fri: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. ❑ Phone: (250) 960-5631
F inance Department	Responsible of all UNBC financial activities. Access information such as tuition and fees, U-Pass opt in, Student ID cards, tuition tax receipts and refunds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Finance Department Charles J. McCaffray Hall (ADM-1005) Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. ❑ Phone: 250-960-5510 ❑ Student Inquiries Registered Students: Email: accountsreceivable@unbc.ca Phone: 250-960-6390 Prospective Students: Email: futurestudents@unbc.ca Visit UNBC website for more info.

Employment Resources

Employment Resources	Functions	Location/Inquiries
Careers at UNBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Learn about employment opportunities including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student postings ▪ Faculty postings ▪ Staff postings ▪ Graduate TA postings ❑ Learn about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment information for working at UNBC ▪ Job opportunities for students ▪ Developing skills for continuing students 	Human Resources Department Room: Charles J. McCaffray Hall ADM 1038 Email: hr@unbc.ca Phone: 250-960-5521
Co-operative Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Co-op program helps students to gain paid work experience that meets your academic interests ❑ Offers undergraduate students tools and support in gaining relevant work experience while studying ❑ Offers employers opportunity to connect with and hire UNBC Co-op students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Room: 7-234 (across from the UNBC Bookstore) ❑ Phone: 250-960-5447 ❑ Email: co-op@unbc.ca
Student Career Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Learn about employment opportunities to help pay towards your tuition and living expense as well as build on relevant work experience through the student career center ❑ Provides services for preparation for job market such as resume/cover letter writing, interview preparation, job search assistance 	Career Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Agora Student Street 7-232 ❑ Phone: 250-960-6426 ❑ Email: hirestudents@unbc.ca Current services are provided through telephone, email and video conferencing Access student job board online through myUNBC Student portal

Prince George Community Services

**Welcome to Prince George
Community Resources**

Multicultural Services Society (IMSS)

The multicultural Services Society is a community service provider that facilitates integration and settlement support for immigrants and refugees for successful adaptation across Prince George and the Northern parts of British Columbia.

Services provides are FREE and include:

- ☐ Ensures newcomers build knowledge and awareness about life in Canada including laws, rights, responsibilities and pathways to access community resources.
- ☐ Language training services
- ☐ Immigration and Settlement Services
- ☐ Labor Market Services
- ☐ Offers life Skills Workshops

General IMSS supports include:

International Students, Temporary Foreign Workers, Permanent Residents, Approved Permanent Residents, Provincial Nominees Awaiting Permanent Residency, Approved Permanent Residents, Refugee Claimant, Naturalized Canadian Citizens and Live-in Care-givers.

Location: 1270 – 2nd Avenue, Prince George, BC V2L 3B3.

Phone: (250)562-2900. Toll Free: 1-877-562-2977.

E-mail: imss.pg@imss.ca

Prince George Community Services

**Welcome to Prince George
Community Resources**

City of Prince George

Services:

Billing and taxes, by-law services, solid waste, transit, utilities, recreation activities etc.

Location: 1100 Patricia Blvd, Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

Email: 311@princegeorge.ca

Phone: 311 (or 250-561-7600 outside city limits)

Service BC

Services:

Business information and referrals, Driver's license, relocation permits and registration, medical services plan registrations and billing payments etc.

Location: 1044 - 5th Avenue, Prince George BC V2L 5G4

Phone: 250-565-4488

Service Canada

Services:

Assists with social insurance, employment insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security etc.

Location: 1363 4th Avenue Prince George, BC

Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Language: English, French.

Phone: 1-800-622-6232

Recreational Resources

Recreational activities could help mitigate some of the daily stresses and connect you to social engagements around Prince George.

Prince George Aquatic Centre

The Aquatic Centre provides swimming, sauna, and hot tub recreational services for the Prince George community. Services are available to internationals.

Find information on Aquatic Center hours of operation, admission fees, rules, safety, and more at the City of Prince George website:

Aquatics | City of Prince George

Location: 1770 George Paul Lane. Prince George, BC v2n oE1

Tel: 250-561-7787

Indoor and Outdoor Skating Service

Skating is one of the activities to stay active during the winter season.

Indoor Public Skating (North Edge): Season runs from October and March.

Location 1384 5th Avenue, Prince George V2L 3L4

Tel: 250-564-5981

Outdoor Skating/Community Outdoor Ice Ranks: Offer outdoor skating options.

Learn more about community rinks sites by downloading the ice rinks map on the City of Prince George website. **[www.http://princegeroge.ca](http://princegeroge.ca)**. Tel: 250-564-5981

Art, Galleries, Museums, and Public Library

Galleries

Find beautiful arts and sculptors that promote the history of Prince George and Canada.

Studio 2880: Operated by Prince George and District Community Arts and Council.

Feature's art pieces and programs such as music festivals and others.

Location: 2880 15 Avenue, Prince George, BC

Two Rivers Gallery: This is the cities premier gallery service and encourages learning through art and exhibitions.

Location: 725 Canada Games. Learn more through the City of Prince George

Email: 311@princegeorge.ca

Tel: 250-561-7600

Museums

Exploration Place Museums and Science and Center

Explore the indigenous history and practical science through exhibits and galleries. The museum features traditional and connective interactive displays. Learn about the history of L'heidli T'nenneh, dinosaurs, and live animals and reptiles.

Website: <http://explorationplace.com>

Tel: 250-562-1612. Toll Free: 1-866-562-1612

Location: 333 Becott Place, Prince George, BC V2N 4V7

Railway and Forestry

Features historical artworks from Prince George railway, industrial and forestry exhibits. Experience vintage railway, mini-rails, and trains. Offers educational programs, tours, and events.

Location: 850 River Road, Prince George, BC V2L 528

Tel: 250-563-7351

Email: admin@pgrfm.bc.ca

Prince George Public Library

Provides a variety of educational services such as readings, audio, online collection, and resources. Offers free and affordable programs, clubs, and events for all ages. Find the two sites below in Prince George below:

- **Bob Harkins Branch (Downtown)**

Location: 888 Canada Games Way, Prince George, BC V2L 5T6. Tel: 250-563-9251

- **Nechako Branch Hart Highway**

Location: 6547 Hart Highway, Prince George, BC V2K 3A4. Tel: 250-563-9251

CN Center

The center premiers Prince George' largest entertainment venue. The facility hosts a variety of national and international performing arts and large-scale events

Location #100- 2187 Ospika Boulevard South, Prince George, BC V2N 6Z1.

Tel: 250-561-7777

To learn more about Prince George City events and programs contact:

City of Prince George [www.http://princegeroge.ca](http://princegeroge.ca)

Email: communityrecreation@princegeorge.ca

Tel: 250-561-7600

Prince George Community Resources for Vulnerable People

Salvation Army Food Bank: Provides emergency food and groceries for people in need.

Location: 3500-A 18 Avenue, Prince George, BC V2N 1A9.

Tel: 250-564-4000

Saint Vincent De Paul: Services include, meals, hampers, support finding resources, clothing, and home furniture's.

Location: 1220 2nd Avenue. Prince George. Tel: 250-564-7871

Affordable Clothing, footwear, books, home appliances and equipment's

Find second-hand clothing, food wear, furniture, books, home appliances and equipment's at thrift stores around Prince George. A few of the popular ones in Prince George include:

Value Village: Find opening hours by contacting **Location: 1666 Spruce St, Prince George, BC V2L 2L2** **Tel: 250-561-031.**

Salvation Army PG Thrift Store: **Location 3500 18 Avenue, Prince George, BC V2N 1A9.** **Tel: 250-569-7475**

St Vincent de Paul Thrift Store: **Location 1645 3rd Avenue.** **Tel: 250-562-5136**

Student Clubs

Graduate Student Association (NBCGSS)

Tel: 250-960-5671

Email: gssoffice@unbc.ca

Northern Undergraduate Student Association (NUGSS)

Tel: 250-960-6427

Email: nugss-hello@unbc.ca

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC Afro-Caribbean Student Association Facilitates cultural integration and showcases diverse cultures in unity, and love.	Email: acsa@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_acsa
UNBC Alpha Pi Beta Sorority	Email: alphapibetasorority@unbc.ca Instagram: alphapibeta
UNBC Best Buddies A friendship club that exists to pair UNBC students in a 1-1 friendship with adults from the community with intellectual or developmental disabilities.	Email: bestbuddies@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcbestbuddies
UNBC Chemistry & Biochemistry Club	Email: chemistryclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcchembiochemclub
UNBC Commerce Student Association	Email: commercesa@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_csa
UNBC Computer Science Club	Email: csclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbccompsci
UNBC DIY Club	Email: diyclub@unbc.ca Instagram: diyunbc

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations...cont'd

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC Education Club	Email: educationclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_educationclub
UNBC Environmental Engineering Student Association	Email: eesa@unbc.ca Instagram: unbceesa
UNBC Fencing Club	Email: fencing@unbc.ca
UNBC Forestry Club	Email: forestryclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcforestryclub
UNBC Health Sciences Student Society	Email: healthsciencess@unbc.ca Instagram: unbchealthsciences
UNBC IMPAKT (formerly Random Acts of Kindness)	Email: impakt@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_impakt
UNBC Instrumental Music Club	Email: musicclub@unbc.ca

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations...cont'd

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC InterVarsity Christian Fellowship	Email: ivcf@unbc.ca Instagram: ivcf.pg
UNBC Islamic Relief Club/Muslim Student Association	Email: msairc@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_msairc
UNBC Jack.org	Email: jackproject@unbc.ca Instagram: jack.orgunbc
UNBC JDC West	Email: jdcwest@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcjdcw
UNBC Medieval Club	Email: medievalclub@unbc.ca
UNBC Model United Nations	Email: unbcmun@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_mun
UNBC MS Student Support Club	Email: msstudentclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_ms_club

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations...cont'd

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC Musical Productions	Email: musicalproductions@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcmusical
UNBC Nerdy Gaming Club	Email: nerdygamingclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_nerdygamingclub
UNBC Northern Anthropological Student Club	Email: nasc@unbc.ca
UNBC Northern Pride Centre	Email: pride@unbc.ca
UNBC Nursing Club	Email: nursingclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcnursing
UNBC Outdoors Club	Email: outdoorsclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcoc_official
UNBC Parks and Conservation Club	Email: pcc@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcpc

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations...cont'd

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC Pre-Med Students Association	Email: premed@unbc.ca Instagram: unbcpremed
UNBC Pre-Veterinary Club	Email: prevetclub@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_prevetclub
UNBC Psychology Club	Email: psychologyclub@unbc.ca
UNBC South Asian Student Association	Email: sass@unbc.ca Instagram: sassclub
UNBC Sports Appreciation Club	Email: sac@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_sac
UNBC Student Chapter	Email: csce@unbc.ca
UNBC Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society	Email: tw@unbc.ca Instagram: tws.unbc

UNBC Student-Led Organisations and Associations...cont'd

UNBC Student-Led Organizations	Email Address/Instagram
UNBC Student Planners' Association	Email: studentplanning@unbc.ca
UNBC Students for a Green University	Email: sgu@unbc.ca Instagram: sgu.unbc
UNBC Synthetic Biology Club	Email: sbc@unbc.ca Instagram: northernbcigem
UNBC Timberwolves Student Athlete Society (TSAS)	Email: tsas@unbc.ca
UNBeeC Apiary Club	Email: UNBeeC@unbc.ca Instagram: unbeec.apiaryclub
UNBC World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	Email: wusc@unbc.ca Instagram: unbc_wusc_local_committee

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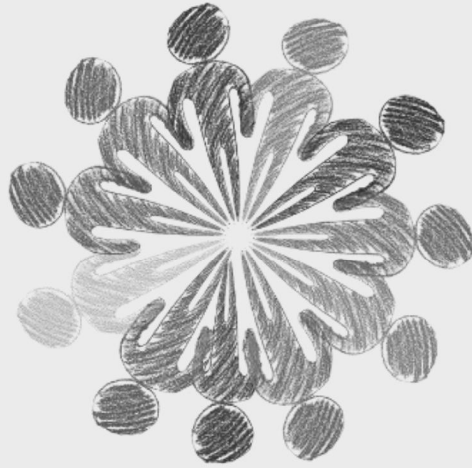
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