



Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ

Host Family Program - Quito and Cumbayá

The following document outlines the vetting process and requirements that must be met by any and all host families that participate in a program with the Office of International Programs (OPI) at Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ (USFQ).

Vetting Process:

1. Prospective host families apply through an online application form. The online application form asks for the following information:
 - Names and ages of all the individuals that live in the household
 - Address and phone numbers
 - Number of pets (if they have any pets in the household, if the pet lives inside or outside the house, etc.)
 - Dietary restrictions
 - Smoking habits
 - If they are open to hosting students who smoke or have dietary restrictions
 - Information about the family's hobbies and what they do in their free time
 - Information about any relatives who may come for extended visits and stay in the house
 - Their reasoning behind wanting to become a host family.
 - Ecuadorian tax identification number
 - Confirmation that all members of the family are fully vaccinated for COVID19. USFQ is not working with families with unvaccinated household members, including children under 16 years of age.
 - Additional information from any high-risk person living in the house (COVID19 related).
2. With this information USFQ OPI staff will determine based on the household's location and the host family's responses whether to arrange a house visit. Our staff will check that the household meets the following requirements:
 - The household must have a separate bedroom to be occupied by the prospective student only
 - The room has to have a lock and keys
 - The household must have a storage/safe place for the prospective student's belongings
 - The household must have 24/7 Wi-Fi internet access. We require a good internet connection especially in the student's bedroom
 - The household must be equipped with a fire extinguisher
 - The household must be equipped with a first aid kit
 - The household must be equipped with smoke detectors
 - The household must be accessible by public transportation



- The student must have access to a bathroom to be shared by no more than 4 people
 - The household must have a disinfection station at the entrance of the house with the following items: spray bottle with 70% concentration alcohol, Anti-bacterial soap / gel, thermometer and oximeter for the use of all members of the household.
3. Once OPI establishes that the household meets with the above-mentioned requirements, USFQ also requires that the prospective host family provide a **criminal background check** and a **contingency plan** in case of emergencies (e.g., volcanic eruption) in order to be approved into the host family program with USFQ. Finally, all pre-approved host families must attend a **yearly sexual harassment seminar**. At this seminar, USFQ invites an expert to explain what constitutes sexual harassment under Ecuadorian law and to discuss cultural differences and gender issues
4. OPI will also conduct **unannounced** visits during the semester to the homestays to check that all these requirements are being met. Households who do not meet these criteria will be required to immediately rectify the problem or be removed from our pool of approved host families.

Obligations Before and During Student's Stay:

Before the student's arrival, the host family agrees to abide by the following obligations:

- Contact their student via email
- Prepare the bedroom for the student
- Have the copy of the house and room keys ready
- Print a card with this information to give to the student:
 - Name of the Family
 - Address
 - Phone numbers
 - Name and address of the neighbor
 - Name of the bus stop that they will have to get off at to go to the house
- Sign a contract with USFQ stipulating the responsibilities of each party.

When the student arrives, the host family agrees to abide by the following obligations:

- Track their student's flight and make sure the flight is not delayed
- Have a poster with the student's name for the airport
- Be on time at the airport to meet their student
- Be aware that not all the students feel comfortable with hugs
- Ask the student how you pronounce his/her name
- Tell the OPI staff that you are with the student
- Discuss house rules & sign mock contract indicating house rules and other arrangements agreed upon by both parties (see below)



All host families agree to abide by the following obligations whilst hosting a student:

- Give the student their own bedroom with a desk where they can study
- Ensure the student has Wi-Fi Internet access 24/7 especially in the student's room
- Wait for the student in the airport at the time of the arrival
- Give the student space in the fridge and give them access to all the household amenities
- Give the student a copy of the house and room keys
- Equip the house with fire extinguishers and first aid kit
- Provide the student a healthy breakfast and dinner every day
- Respect the dietary restrictions of the student
- Encourage a friendly environment where the student can talk with the family on a daily basis
- Respect the privacy of the student
- Offer laundry service once a week. If the student wants to do laundry by themselves, the host family must explain how to use the laundry and dryer
- It is not mandatory that the members of the families speak English since most international students who take courses at USFQ know Spanish, but some members of the household may speak English. However, we ask that families communicate in English as little as possible in order to facilitate an immersion environment
- The family agrees not to take vacations and leave the student by their own while they are hosting the student
- None of the family members can be struggling with a serious illness
- The host parents can't be dealing with a divorce or separation

Covid19 related requirements and rules:

- Only families with all members fully vaccinated can serve as homestay for USFQ.
- Students cannot have visitors unless is authorized by the office of international programs. Said visits will be reserved for members of the student's family who may be visiting the country or OPI personnel who must visit the student in an exceptional case.

Protocol in case a household member (including the international student) shows symptoms related to COVID19

- The person should notify the head of the host family if they begin to feel typical symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever or chills, difficult breathing (feeling shortness of breath), cough, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, loss of smell or taste, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea).
- The family must notify the Office of International Programs (OPI) of the case using the emergency number.



- The person in question must perform a PCR to rule out symptoms and isolate themselves in their room until they have the test result.
- During this time, the host family must provide food (breakfast, lunch and dinner) in separate dishes, internet access, etc., for this person until the results of the test are known.
- If positive, the person in question must isolate themselves for 15 days and must continue to receive food and other services provided by the host family. Other exposed persons should not have a PCR test unless they are showing symptoms. A voluntary PCR test can be performed 7 days after the initial positive diagnosis.
- In case someone has tested positive for COVID 19, the student can request to be removed from the host family temporarily, whilst the person is in quarantine, they can request to be changed from host family indefinitely, or they can request to be moved out of the host family program (with the permission of the home institution).
- In the event that the person worsens, the host family must coordinate their transportation to a hospital at the expense of the person in question (e.g., the student). OPI must be notified of the developments of the case.
- Once the isolation period is completed, the person in question can return to normal activities (including attending campus). It is not necessary to perform a PCR test to terminate the quarantine period.

Conflict Management & Student Support:

In order to anticipate potential conflicts, both the host family and student will **sign a mock contract** where arrangements regarding shared living and house rules are clearly stipulated. This may include, but is not limited to, the following things:

- Times at which meals will be served
- Time until guests are allowed to be over at the host family's house, if any
- Whether or not the student will notify the host family if they are staying over at a friend's home or if they are going on a longer trip outside of Quito
- Who will do the student's laundry (host family or student themselves)
- How often rooms will be cleaned and by whom

If the student or host family have any issues with the shared living arrangements, they are encouraged to address them directly with the other party. If, however, they feel that they cannot address the issue for whatever reason or if they feel that the issue has been raised with the other party but there has been no improvement or change, OPI staff will mediate the situation.



If the situation cannot be resolved despite efforts from both parties, or in the case of emergency of any kind, **OPI will place the student with another host family** that most closely matches their preferences.

Process for Removal of a Student

Depending on a student's home institution, they may be required to live in a homestay family, or they may have the option to live in independent housing. In the case that a student wishes to leave their homestay family to live in an apartment either alone or with roommates, their home institution must provide authorization of the move and OPI can support with local housing recommendations, but will no longer be responsible for the student's housing.

Should a student need to move out of their homestay family, OPI will adhere to the following procedure:

1. In the case of an emergency the student will be moved out as soon as possible into a hotel while arrangements are made for long term housing.
2. In non-emergency cases, students will first visit a new host family to see if they are compatible.
3. Once the student has accepted a new host family or an arrangement for interim housing has been made, OPI staff will accompany the student during the move out process.
4. The host family will only be notified immediately before the student is removed from the house so as to avoid discomfort for the student.

OPI staff will then accompany the student to their new lodging and handle any and all follow up communication with the family.

Reimbursement Process

In the **Cumbaya Main Campus Program**, students who decide and are authorized by their University to move into independent housing will be reimbursed for their housing for the days starting **after** the day they move out of their homestay. The reimbursement process is reviewed on a case by case basis.

- If the student's home institution has paid USFQ for housing, OPI will contact the university and determine whether the reimbursement will be made to the university or directly to the student in the form of a check.
- If the student has paid USFQ for their accommodations, the student will receive reimbursement in the form of a check.

For the Galapagos Semester Program, all students are required to stay in homestays during their first Module in Cumbaya. The GAIAS Program Coordinator will notify students before arrival of the deadline to opt out of a host family in the Galapagos and receive a 20% discount on their track fees.



USFQ will make every effort to **accommodate special diets and foster an inclusive environment** for individuals from different backgrounds, sexual orientations, religions, or identities. However, we cannot guarantee that we can fulfill every student's expectations with regards to their home stays. Accordingly, **a degree of flexibility in this intercultural setting is expected from the students.**

Finally, USFQ offers **counseling services** to all international students who are dealing with cultural shock or are struggling with any issue.

Please contact us if you have any other questions regarding the homestay services at USFQ.

Office of International Programs USFQ (opi@usfq.edu.ec)