

# GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Cali, Colombia

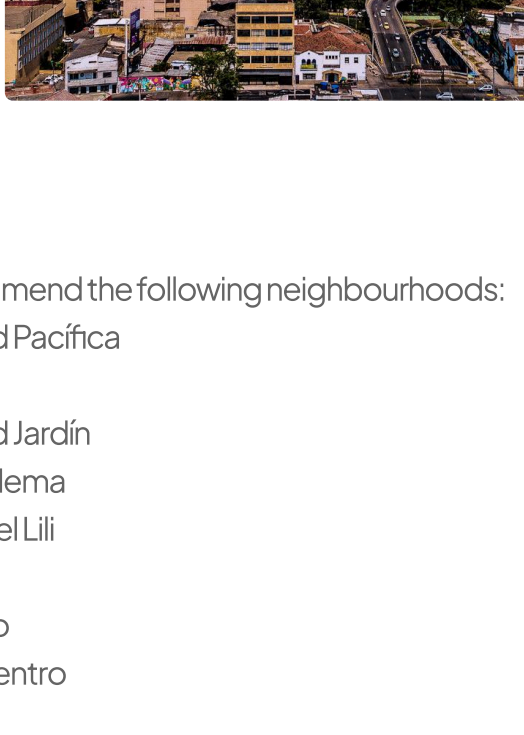
International Relations Office

## Accommodation

Icesi University is located in southern Cali, an area favoured for its balance between urban and natural environments. This area combines quiet residential neighbourhoods, shopping centres, and a wide range of medical services.

The highlights are its numerous parks, trails, and green spaces, ideal for relaxing and exercising outdoors. Students can connect with nature and learn about Colombia's unique biodiversity.

Although the university does not have on-campus accommodation, it has a partnership with Inside by Boho, a private university residence located just a 5-minute walk from Icesi.



## Searching tips

- Carefully review the terms of the contract. Check whether the price includes utilities such as water, gas, electricity, and Wi-Fi.
- Ensure that the space has everything you need for a comfortable and functional stay, such as basic furniture, facilities in good condition, and secure access.
- Ask current or former students directly about their experience: what it has been like to live there, how peaceful the place is, and how the staff responds to problems.

We recommend the following neighbourhoods:

- Ciudad Pacífica
- Pance
- Ciudad Jardín
- Bochalema
- Valle del Lili
- Caney
- Ingenio
- Multicentro
- Capri
- La Hacienda
- Limonar

## Arrival in Colombia

- Student Visa**
  - Depending on your nationality, you may need to apply for a visa before travelling.
  - Check the requirements and documents on [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website](#).
- Foreign ID Card**
  - If you enter with a student visa, you must apply for one within the first 15 days after your arrival.
  - It is mandatory for extended stays and serves as an identity document.
  - The application is made at Migración Colombia.
  - During the induction week, mobility advisors will guide you through this process.
- Entry Permit/Stamp (for short programmes)**
  - If your nationality allows you to enter without a visa, the initial permit is valid for 90 days.
  - You must renew it online on the Migración Colombia website before it expires.

## Keep in mind!

- If you are pursuing a double degree or spending an exchange year at Icesi University, you must obtain a student visa.
- In the case of a double degree, this is an essential requirement for receiving your Icesi diploma.
- After your arrival, you must send a photo of your entry permit or stamp to the mobility advisors at: [mobility@icesi.edu.co](mailto:mobility@icesi.edu.co)
- All immigration and visa procedures are the direct and exclusive responsibility of each student.
- The International Relations Office can only provide support with information and guidance, but cannot handle procedures on your behalf.

## Transport

To make your daily life in the city easier, it is important to know the main transport options:

### MIO (Masivo Integrado de Occidente)

- Public bus transport system.
- Requires a smart card, available at stations and shopping centres.
- The card must be topped up at authorised points; at Icesi University there is an automatic point in Building A.
- You can use Google Maps to plan your routes.



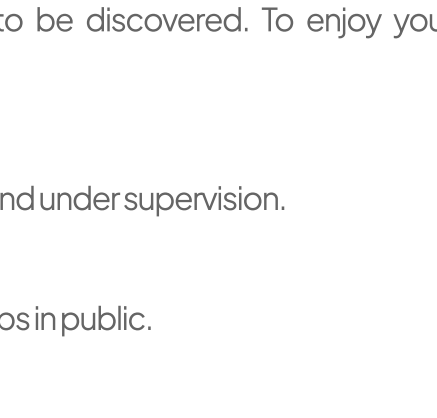
### Taxis

- It is recommended to request the service through apps; try not to catch a taxi directly from the street.
- Before getting in:** ask for the estimated fare and request that the meter be turned on.
- Write down and share the vehicle's licence plate number with a family member or friend.
- Remember:** all taxis must have a fare chart displayed.
- Fares increase by approximately COP \$1,600 at night, on Sundays, and on public holidays. For transfers from the airport, ask your mobility advisor for a recommended contact from the DRI office.



### Private Transport Apps

- Apps such as Uber, Didi, InDriver, and Cabify operate in Cali.
- Always verify that the vehicle and driver match those in the app.
- It is recommended that you share your location in real time with someone you trust.

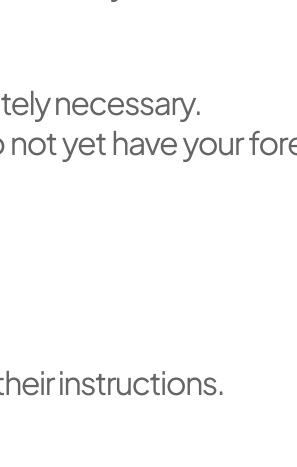


### Bike

Cali has more than 110 km of cycle paths in the city.

Recommendations:

- Always wear a helmet.
- Check that your bike is in good condition (especially the brakes).
- Plan safe, well-lit routes.
- Never leave your bike unsecured; use a good lock.



## Safety

Colombia is a country full of culture, landscapes and cuisine waiting to be discovered. To enjoy your experience safely, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Be careful in public spaces**
  - When waiting for transport, always keep your belongings close by and under supervision.
- Objects of value**
  - Avoid displaying mobile phones, watches, chains, cameras or laptops in public.
- Using ATMs**
  - Do not withdraw large sums of money.
  - If necessary, do so in the company of someone you trust and, preferably, use ATMs inside Icesi University, shopping centres or supermarkets (e.g. Carulla in front of the University).
- Important documents**
  - Keep your passport in a safe place and only carry it with you when absolutely necessary.
  - Keep a digital copy of the identity page and entry stamp in case you do not yet have your foreigner's identity card.
- In case of theft**
  - Stay calm and do not resist.
  - Prioritise your physical safety over material objects.
  - Once you are safe, report the incident to the local authorities and follow their instructions.

## Tips on how to use money

### Currency and Money Management in Colombia

- The official currency is the Colombian peso (COP), which is the only currency accepted in shops.
- Coins in circulation:** 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1.000 pesos.
- Available banknotes:** 2.000, 5.000, 10.000, 20.000, 50.000 and 100.000 pesos.



### Suggested use

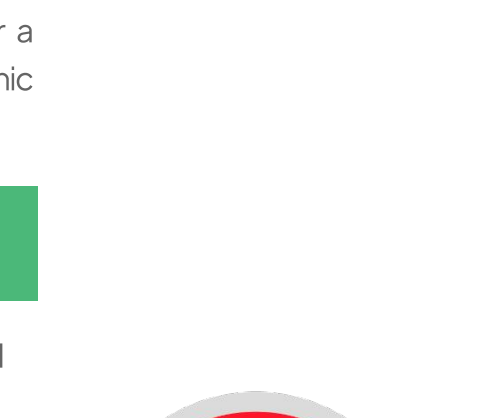
- Always carry some cash, as some establishments and private transport apps prefer it.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money and prioritise digital payment whenever possible.

### Digital options

- Platforms such as Nequi and Daviplata are widely used in shops.
- To open these accounts, you need:**
  - Citizenship or foreigner ID card
  - Mobile phone line from a Colombian operator

### Opening a bank account

- Only available to students with a visa and foreigner ID card.
- Main banks:** Bancolombia, Banco de Occidente, BBVA, Itaú and Davivienda.



## Useful Tips for Travelling in Colombia

### Personal safety

- Avoid displaying valuables in public.
- Walk in safe areas and do not stray too far from tourist attractions.
- Before travelling, find out whether it is more common to use cards or cash at your destination.

### Connecting with the local culture

- Colombians are known for their friendliness and hospitality.
- Take the opportunity to chat with locals to learn more about their culture, customs, and way of life.

### Weather and preparation

Colombia does not have seasons like other countries, but rather two main climatic periods:

- Dry season** (known as summer)
- Rainy season** (known as winter)

Depending on the region you visit, the climate can vary considerably. That is why it is important to:

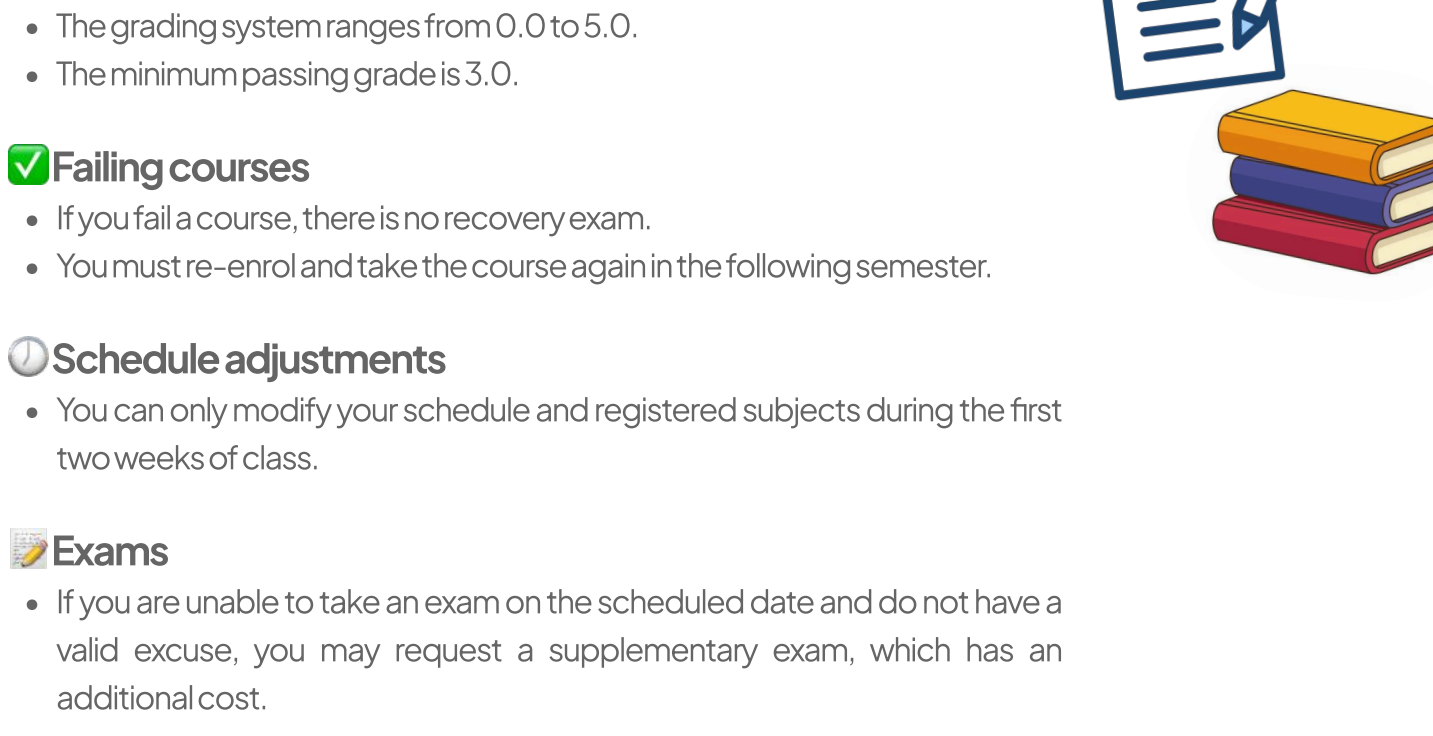
- Plan your trips according to the season** to avoid heavy rains or very high temperatures.

### Shopping and costs

- Before purchasing products or services, compare prices in different places.
- Asking questions and negotiating is common and will allow you to get the best deal.

## Cali: Ciudad de Cultura y Salsa

Cali is one of Latin America's most versatile destinations: a multicultural and multi-ethnic city that is constantly on the move. It offers visitors a **vibrant mix of culture**, cuisine, nature and, above all, salsa, the musical genre that characterises and gives identity to this region of the country.



## Academic topics

### Grading scale

- The grading system ranges from 0.0 to 5.0.
- The minimum passing grade is 3.0.

### Failing courses

- If you fail a course, there is no recovery exam.
- You must re-enrol and take the course again in the following semester.

### Schedule adjustments

- You can only modify your schedule and registered subjects during the first two weeks of class.

### Exams

- If you are unable to take an exam on the scheduled date and do not have a valid excuse, you may request a supplementary exam, which has an additional cost.

### Spanish Course (ELE)

- The Spanish as a Foreign Language (ELE) course is mandatory if the result of your placement test determines it.

### Regulations

- Consult the **University's Book of Rights, Duties and Regulations** for a thorough understanding of the regulations that will govern your academic stay.



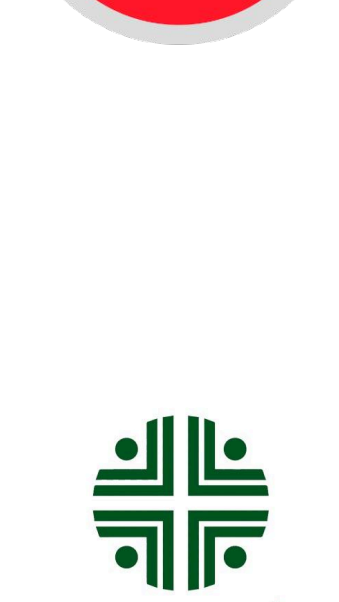
## Health and Emergencies

All exchange students are required to have valid international medical insurance for the entire duration of their stay in Colombia.

Before travelling, make sure your insurance includes:

- Medical emergency coverage.
- Clearly defined restrictions and exclusions.
- An explanation of the claims process.
- A 24-hour helpline number, which you should always have to hand.

Check if your insurance has agreements with clinics or hospitals in Cali, which will facilitate quick access to medical services.



### What to do in case of a medical emergency in Cali?

#### Serious emergencies

- Call 123 (national emergency number).
- Go to the nearest hospital - Fundación Valle del Lili
- Once the situation is under control, immediately inform the International Relations Office for support.

#### Minor or moderate health problems

- Go to the university infirmary or inform the International Relations Office for guidance and, if necessary, to refer your case.

#### Communicating with your health insurance company

- Call your insurance company's 24/7 number and report your situation.
- If you need assistance making the call, contact the International Relations Office.



#### If you need to go to a hospital

- Take the following with you:
  - Health insurance card
  - Identification document
  - Credit card (in some cases necessary for initial procedures)



#### During medical care

- Follow all recommendations from the healthcare staff.
- Keep copies of invoices and documents for subsequent claims with your insurance company.

## Commitment

- ☐ I confirm that I have read, understand and accept the terms and conditions set out in the International Student Guide.
- ☐ I confirm that I am familiar with and will abide by *the Book of Rights, Duties and Regulations* for students at Icesi University.
- ☐ I agree to allow the International Relations Office to use my photos and testimonials for the purpose of promoting Icesi University's international programme.
- ☐ I confirm that I have received the schedule for the induction week organised by the International Relations Office.
- ☐ I undertake to provide a testimonial of my experience at Icesi University.

First and Last Name

Signature

Passport Number

Date

## Contact



**Instagram**  
@icesiglobal

#### Website

<https://www.icesi.edu.co/internacionalizacion/>

#### Email

[mobility@icesi.edu.co](mailto:mobility@icesi.edu.co)