



Universidad San Francisco de Quito

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).

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 house
 - 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
2. With this information USFQ OPI staff will make 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 household must have a storage/safe room for the prospective student's belonging
 - The household must have 24/7 Wi-Fi internet access
 - The household must be equipped with fire extinguishers and first aid kit
 - The household must be accessible by public transportation
3. If 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.
4. Finally, all pre-approved host families must attend to a **yearly sexual harassment seminar**. At this seminar, USFQ invites a legal expert to explain what constitutes sexual harassment under Ecuadorian law and a trained anthropologist to discuss cultural differences and gender issues.
5. OPI will also conduct **un-announced** 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 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:

- The family has to contact their student via email
- Prepare the bedroom for the student
- Have the copy of the house 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

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

- Call the airport and make sure the flight is not delayed
- Have a poster with the student name for the airport
- They have to be on time at the airport
- They have to 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.
- Wi-Fi Internet access 24/7
- The host family must wait for the student in the airport at the time of the arrival
- The host family can't go out for vacations and leave the student by their own while they are hosting the student
- None of the family members can be struggling with any medical conditions or serious illness
- The host parents can't be dealing with a divorce or separation
- It is required to give the student space in the fridge and give them access to all the household amenities
- The host family has to give the student a copy of the house keys
- The household must be equipped with fire extinguishers and first aid kit
- The host family has to give the student a healthy breakfast and dinner every day
- The host family must respect the dietary restrictions of the student
- The host family must 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

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)
- Etc.

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.

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