



NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY
A Seventh-day Adventist Institution

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HANDBOOK



JAMAICA



SERVICE

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Greetings

The Office of International Student Services (ISS) gladly welcomes you to Northern Caribbean University (NCU)! You had other options but you chose NCU where you can receive the best in quality, values-based and Christ-centred education.



About NCU

Northern Caribbean University (NCU) is one of the leading tertiary education institutions in Jamaica. It was founded in 1907 and is owned and operated by the Jamaica Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The university has institutional accreditation from the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ), an ISO 900 certified organisation. NCU is also accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA), which makes it part of the second largest private network of tertiary education institutions in the world.



Locations of the Jamaica Union Conference and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Conference in the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

The university has four campuses in Jamaica, namely Mandeville Campus - its headquarters, East Jamaica Regional Campus - located in Kingston, West Jamaica Regional Campus - located in Montego Bay, and North Jamaica Regional Campus - located in St. Ann's Bay.



NCU gives a unique spiritual and multi-cultural experience. Currently, The student population comprises of Jamaican students and international students from the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe. As a student you can study while gaining work experience through the work-and-study programme.



NCU uses a semester, summer sessions and a modular system for classes. A semester is approximately 16 weeks (4 months) while summer session is about 4-6 weeks (1 ½ months). Modular classes take place during the day or evening with daily classes for approximately seven (7) weeks and cater mostly to working persons.

There is also a credit system. A “credit” is one hour of instruction per week. Most classes occur as 3-credit courses, that is, a total of three hours are spent in class weekly.

This institution offers full-time (day-school) degree and part-

time (modular/evening) degree programmes as well as non-degree offerings. Degree programmes include undergraduate programmes (Associate and Bachelor degrees) and graduate programmes (Post-graduate diplomas and certificates, Master and Doctoral degrees). Non-degree offerings include short courses.

There are thousands of NCU alumni around the world who are making their mark! They can be found globally in various industries such as health, medicine, commerce, religion, civic service, politics, music and media. Alumni also give back to NCU through gestures like student scholarships and grants.

Do you need to learn more about NCU and its offerings? Contact us at...

**General Information and Undergraduate Programmes
Office of Recruitment and Admissions**

Telephone: 876-618-1625, ext. 7157 or 876-372-7662 **Email:** admissions@ncu.edu.jm

Graduate Programmes - Office of Graduate Studies

Telephone: 876-618-1652, ext. 7401, 7402, 7403 or 7149 **Email:** graduatestudies@ncu.edu.jm



Mission Statement

The mission of Northern Caribbean University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, is to improve the human condition by providing quality, Christ-centred education, achieved through academic excellence, values-based focus, spiritual and physical development, social interaction, and a strong work ethic, thereby equipping each student for committed professional service to all people, and to God.

Vision Statement

Northern Caribbean University will be the premier institution of higher learning in the Northern Caribbean region offering quality and accessible Christ-centred education.

NCU Core Values

CHRIST-CENTREDNESS
INNOVATION
RESPONSIBILITY

COLLABORATION
INTEGRITY
AFFIRMATION

DIVERSITY
LEADERSHIP
SERVICE

EXCELLENCE
RESPECT

The International Experience at NCU



International students depict African culture during an International Diversity Week programme.

NCU boasts a diverse population, which has always been the case since 1907. Our international students are found mostly on our Mandeville Campus. They represent collectively over 20 countries in a typical semester. Each semester these students share their cultures with the NCU community through the International Diversity Week celebrations. All international students automatically become members of the vibrant International Students' Association.

The Office of International Student Services (ISS) exposes our international students to the best of Jamaican art, culture and entertainment. As an international student, you will feel right at home with us!



International students play steel drums during an International Diversity Week programme.

Need to learn more?

Request for more international student information to be sent to you by International Student Affairs (ISA):

Website: <https://ncu.edu.jm/internationalstudents>

Email address: isscom@ncu.edu.jm | Contact number: 1-876-484-0432

International **Student Services**

"Meeting the World in One Place"



Mission Statement

The International Students Services has as its premise, a solid Christ-centred philosophy thereby commissioning all international students to produce humble, respectful, genuine and exceptional service to their colleagues and country, using a productive holistic approach as exemplified by Christ Himself.

Vision Statement

International Student Services envisions the development of a stronger global network through effective and enriching collaborative programmes while maintaining equitable Christian principles.

Value Statement

R.E.A.C.H. (Regarding Education & Acceptance of Cultural Heritage)

Philosophy

The Department of International Student Services operates within the framework of the philosophy, mission and vision of Northern Caribbean University. Therefore, holistic development is the basic element found within the ethos of our department. As such, the department has as its philosophy that the positive development of every human faculty is a divine mandate established to create valuable citizens of this world and the world to come. This means that each student is seen as an ambassador for this university and a candidate for heaven.

INTERNATIONAL F.O.R.T.

We are there with you every step of the way! Through our International F.O.R.T. programme, we provide for you an immediate “transition cushion”. The “cushion” is to provide an easier changeover into our culture. International FORT constitutes:

Fellowship – Events designed for fellowship will give you the opportunity to mingle with fellow countrymen, freshmen, and, our current international students.

Orientation – We will meet with you during the orientation process.

Registration – As international freshmen, you will be aided with registration. Student Tertiary Experience Programme (STEP) participants will be available to take you through this process. Please comply with all instructions given during the orientation process.

Tour – STEP participants will be assigned to guide you through an all-campus tour, inclusive of classrooms and to accompany you on excursions, outside activities and receptions. This tour will also include a trip to the Mandeville town and neighbouring communities.



If **English** is not your native language, you will find life at Northern Caribbean University, and the Jamaican culture, as a whole, an interesting, rich and diverse experience. You will not only learn English through daily interactions with native English speakers but through various classes in language offered by the Department of Humanities.

Passport, Visa and Other Travel Requirements

The government agency that deals with passports in Jamaica is the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA). For international students, immigration and passport issues are handled by the Immigration Unit. The PICA Immigration Unit also deals with extension of stay for students and other foreign nationals. If you are an international student with claims to Jamaican citizenship, you can apply for a Jamaica passport and use it for entering the country. For all information pertaining to you as an international student, visit the links pic.gov.jm/immigration. For contact information of the various PICA offices, visit the link <http://www.pica.gov.jm/contact-us/>.

What documents do I need as a Non-Jamaican and Jamaicans to enter Jamaica?

For Non-Jamaicans, you will need your passport, your visa (student permit) and a completed and signed Immigration Landing Card. As for Jamaicans, you will need your passport, and a completed and signed Immigration Landing Card. Non-Jamaican students intending to work may also need a work visa or a CARICOM Single Market Economy (CSME) certificate (if such a person is

a CSME citizen). If family members are accompanying you, other visas for each family member may be required.

Visa Requirements for Non-Commonwealth and Commonwealth Foreigners

Commonwealth countries are countries that were formerly under British Empire rule. Foreigners from Commonwealth countries are not required to have a visa to come into Jamaica. However, persons from these countries will need a visa: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Cayman Islands, Nigeria and the British Virgin Islands.

For more information on Commonwealth Countries, go to thecommonwealth.org and select Member Countries. To know if you are required to have a visa to enter Jamaica from your country, please visit the link <http://www.pica.gov.jm/immigration/general-immigration-information/requirements-for-travel-to-jamaica>.



What is Unconditional Landing?

According to PICA, “Unconditional Landing (UL) is a stamp placed in a passport which allows the holder to remain in Jamaica indefinitely.” Persons qualifying for this include those born in Jamaica or have Jamaican parents, those who were naturalised or those with Caribbean Community (CARICOM) unconditional landing. To apply for this, you must have all original documents and submit a filled out Extension of Stay form.



The requirements for Extension of Stay are:

- A valid passport for at least six (6) months
- A letter of registration from NCU, prepared by ISS, and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of PICA.
- A completed Extension of Stay Application Form
- A non-refundable processing fee of JM\$10,000.00.

For additional information, visit the PICA Website at <http://www.pica.gov.jm/immigration/processing-fee>

Be assured that Northern Caribbean University is registered with and recognised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information in Jamaica. To get your extension of stay as a student, you must visit a PICA office within two weeks of arriving on the island. Applications for extension of stay can take 3-7 working days for processing.

Extension of Stay

All new international students are expected to report to the ISS Office within the first week of arrival in Jamaica. Upon arrival as an international student, you are landed as a visitor and so you are required to obtain an Extension of Stay from the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA). In this Extension of Stay process, we will ensure that your visitor status is changed to that of student status. This entire process is facilitated by the Office of International Student Services, where documents will be vetted then submitted to and collected from PICA on behalf of the student.



Air Travel to Jamaica

Airlines to the Country

Jamaica is one of the most popular hubs to the Caribbean and Latin America. It is also a popular route for airlines traveling to and from Canada, United States and Britain. Among the airlines that fly to Jamaica are American Airlines, JetBlue, Caribbean Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Virgin Airlines and Delta. You can go on any of these airline's websites and book your travel. Be sure to also look at regulations regarding what you can carry and how to pack the same.

Transportation from the Airport

The two main airports serving Jamaica are the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston and the Donald Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay. For transportation, you can book the Knutsford Express and have NCU International Student Services department assist you with transport from the Knutsford Express stations to the university.



Norman Manley International Airport <https://nmia.aero/>

Donald Sangster International Airport <https://www.mbjairport.com/>

Knutsford Express <https://www.knutsfordexpress.com/>

Custom Matters

For personal and other non-commercial items that you may find necessary to have shipped to Jamaica, please check this link at the Jamaica Customs website for policies regarding the same: <https://www.jacustoms.gov.jm/faq-page/255>

COVID-19 Procedure to Enter Jamaica

Since March 2022, international travellers to Jamaica are not required to be quarantined upon entering the country. However, such travellers must have negative COVID-19 Antigen or PCR test results.

To learn more about health procedures in Jamaica, check these links:

Jamaica Updates COVID-19 Protocols for Travellers, March 2, 2022

<https://today.caricom.org/2022/02/25/jamaica-updates-covid-19-protocols-for-travellers/>

Public Health Enforcement Measures (COVID19 Order 2022)

<https://opm.gov.jm/news/public-health-enforcement-measures-covid19-order-2022/>

COVID-19 protocols still in place for Northern Caribbean University are as follows:

- Incoming travellers aged 12 years and older, regardless of vaccination status, must present a negative result from a molecular (PCR, RNA, or NAAT) or antigen COVID-19 test taken no more than three days before the date of travel.
- The isolation, quarantining and monitoring of an individual who displays flu-like symptoms.
- The reporting of said patient to the Ministry of Health
- The washing or sanitizing of hands upon entry into an office space or facility
- The use of facemasks in certain enclosed confined spaces

Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and Permanent Missions

In Jamaica, there are several foreign embassies, high commissions, consulates and permanent missions. These are all located in the island's capital city, Kingston. Jamaica also has its own embassies, high commissions and consulates in other countries. To see the complete list, visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Foreign Trade at <https://mfaft.gov.jm/jm/about-us/> or Embassy Pages at EmbassyPages.com/Jamaica.

COVID-19 HEALTH TIPS



WEAR A MASK



WASH HANDS

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before eating food



STAY 6 FEET AWAY...

- From another person

STAY HOME...

- If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms
 - If you suffer from any chronic disease
 - If you are over age 65

Occupational Safety & Health Office (OSHO) number: 876-618-1652, extension 7169
Ministry of Health number: 888-663-5683, 888-754-7792, 888-542-5998,
888-542-6006, 888-542-6007 or 876-961-0128

Things to Know and TIPS for Getting Settled

Immersing yourself in a new culture, no matter how similar it is to your own, is somewhat overwhelming, especially in an entirely new country! Here are a few things you should know and some tips to getting settled:

- 1 Research on Jamaica.** It always helps to do some research before you get to a foreign country. Using the internet you can find valuable and current information on Jamaica for things like road codes, transport system, money currency, phone and telecommunication systems, housing, politics, language, religion, music, weather, etiquette, laws, food, taxes, cost of living, holidays, customs and social life.
- 2 Ensure you register before classes begin.** Get registered on time and avoid late registration.
- 3 Ensure you have all you need for classes.** Obtain all pertinent brochures, handbooks, text books et cetera, *before* you begin classes.
- 4 Consult the NCU Calendar before booking flights.** Visit the NCU website and also contact the ISS Office to ensure good dates to make your arrival and departure airline bookings. This will alleviate any unnecessary costs attached to your change of flight schedule as well as allow for a more informed itinerary. It is also helpful to note public holidays in Jamaica as these days tend to have limited activities in commerce and transportation.

- 5 Public General Holidays.** In Jamaica, there are public holidays (also known as Public General Holidays) designated by law.

These typically are as follows:

New Year's Day	January 1
Ash Wednesday	
Good Friday	
Easter Monday	
National Labour Day	The twenty-third (23rd) of May
Emancipation Day	August 1
Independence Day	August 6
National Heroes Day	Third (3rd) Monday in October
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26.

When Holidays Fall on Weekends

However, some public holidays are kept a day after their typically designated time if they fall on a Sunday. In the case of National Labour Day, if such falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the holiday is kept on the following Monday.

Easter Dates in Jamaica

Easter holidays are determined in Jamaica similarly as to how they are determined internationally. Easter is usually determined by the first Sunday after the full moon in March. There are different factors that result in the dates for the Easter season slightly changing each year. See the link below to learn more:

Calculating the Easter Date

<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/determining-easter-date.html#:~:text=Easter%20falls%20on%20the%20first,celebrated%20on%20the%20following%20Sunday>.

Ash Wednesday is usually observed as a holiday 40 days before Easter Sunday. At NCU, Sports Day is usually the day before Ash Wednesday. In Jamaica, Easter Monday is a holiday.

The Holidays (Public General) Act

For more on Jamaica's public holidays, please read page 7 at the link below:

<https://moj.gov.jm/laws/holidays-public-general-act>

Other National Observances and Activities

The Jamaica Information Services usually provides information on Easter season dates for the current year, as well as other special non-holiday dates that are observed locally and internationally. You can learn all you need to from their website at <https://jis.gov.jm/>

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Safety tips. Always be aware and secure yourself and your property. Like anywhere else in the world, criminals like to prey on unsuspecting persons. Jamaica is a wonderful country but when you arrive, you must be “street smart”. When on the streets, avoid displaying cash, phones and other valuable items. Ensure that your things that you carry are secure and not exposed. Be aware of who is around you. Do not share your travel plans with strangers or advertise the same on social media. Do not take unregistered taxis and buses. Avoid late night travel on your own.

Things to Know and TIPS for Getting Settled

Do not leave doors and grills unlocked. Most Jamaicans are friendly, especially if you are kind and polite to them.

- 7 Get a cellular phone.** Accessing a cellular phone should be one of your main priorities. There are two major network providers - LIME and Digicel. LIME works with Bmobile and Digicel carries anywhere. Try to maximize their package offers so that both you and your family can communicate more for less.
- 8 Transportation.** Unlike other parts of the world where you can book your ride on the internet or go to a transportation hub and wait for the next taxi or bus that comes in the queue, most transportation in Jamaica is random and is by taxi. You stand along a road and wait for a taxi to come. You enter the taxi, go to your destination, and pay your fare. The ordinary “route” taxis will pick up persons along a particular route, so you will be travelling with a wide variety of ordinary Jamaicans on a regular basis. Official route taxis are labelled and have red license plates.

There are other forms of transportation. You can pay to “charter” a car or a bus to take you and others to a destination, without sharing the ride with strangers. This, however, will cost you more but the drivers usually deliver on all arrangements agreed. For long distance journeys, bus companies like the Knutsford Express and the Mandeville Express provide affordable alternatives to the capital city of Kingston and other parts of Jamaica.



- 9 **Food.** Jamaican food comes from a variety of cultures. However, one basic with Jamaican food is that it can be spicy and flavourful. Many Jamaicans rely mostly on natural rather than artificial ingredients. Some of these include onion, garlic, ginger, Scotch Bonnet pepper, scallion, thyme and pimento. Artificial spices consist of meat and fish seasoning, “all-purpose seasoning”, jerk seasoning and black pepper. Some Jamaicans are vegetarians.
- 10 **Church Culture.** Most Jamaicans believe in God and many go to church, whether on a Saturday or Sunday. NCU has regular church services and other Christian worship services. The dress code and behaviour in church are usually conservative.
- 11 **Weather.** Jamaica, in most areas, is very hot but at the Mandeville Campus, the climate can get very cold. Pack clothes for both hot and winter weather. Also find out details about the dress code of NCU so that you may know how to pack.
- 12 **Language.** The official language of Jamaica is English (British English) and the dialect is Jamaican Creole, otherwise called Patois. Getting a book on Jamaican Patois can be very useful to you.
- 13 **Money in Jamaica.** Jamaican dollars (JMD\$) are used in Jamaica. Foreign currency accepted are the United States dollars (US\$), the Canadian dollar (CAD\$), the Pound Sterling (GBP£) and the Euro (€). The most popular foreign currency is the US currency.



Most prices and costs are quoted in Jamaican dollars. Sometimes costs are quoted in US dollars. There are Cambios in Jamaica where you can convert your money. Some online banking platforms also allow you to convert to Jamaica dollars and US dollars.

14 Be familiar with Jamaican money and open a Jamaican bank account. Learn the monetary denominations and the exchange rates. Open a local bank account with a bank of your preference, if you do not have access to your home account here in Jamaica.

15 Taxes in Jamaica. The General Consumption Tax Act provides for two main types of taxes. These are the General Consumption Tax (GCT) and Special Consumption Tax (SCT). SCT is payable on a few items. These are alcoholic beverages, most tobacco products and some petroleum products. Most items attract only GCT, while some attract both GCT and SCT. The petroleum products which attract SCT do not attract GCT.

The information presented has been excerpted with permission from the booklet, Inside Customs, prepared by the Jamaica Customs Department.

16 Accommodation. On-campus accommodation is only provided on the Mandeville Campus at the residence halls of Cedar Hall for males, Jamaica Hall and Leila Reid Hall for females. To reach the dormitories, call 876-618-1652 and dial the extensions: Cedar Hall 7346 or 7348, Jamaica Hall 7331 or 7333 and Leila Reid Hall 7341.

An option for accommodation is boarding or renting in communities near to the university. Several surrounding communities will rent rooms, apartments and houses to students. The rent sometimes, but not always, includes electricity, internet, furniture and water. Most times you will have to get your own cooking gas and groceries. Most students try to get housemates/roommates. Student Services keeps a list of student accommodations in the communities. Student Services can be contacted at studentservices@ncu.edu.jm or the ISS Office at 876-484-0432.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply to Northern Caribbean University?

Go to <http://ncu.edu.jm> and click on APPLY NOW at the top right-hand corner of the screen, or just click on <http://apply.ncu.edu.jm/>

How can I find out more about your academic programmes at the undergraduate level and the graduate level?

You can learn more about our academic programmes at the undergraduate level (diplomas, certificates, Associate degrees and Bachelor degrees) and graduate level (post-graduate certificates, post-graduate diplomas, Master degrees and Doctoral degrees) by clicking on:

Undergraduate Programmes

<https://www.ncu.edu.jm/undergradprograms>

Certificates and Diplomas

<https://www.ncu.edu.jm/certificateprograms>

Graduate Programmes

<https://www.ncu.edu.jm/gradprograms>

Academic Bulletins

<https://ncu.edu.jm/bulletins>



What is the university's academic calendar and where is it found?

The University's academic calendar is a schedule of all university activities and events and also important dates such as when final exams begin, the last day to add or drop a class etc. You can find the calendar on the NCU Website at www.ncu.edu.jm or by following the link <https://www.ncu.edu.jm/academiccalendar>. The Undergraduate Bulletin also gives information on the timelines for these important activities.

Things to Know and TIPS for Getting Settled

Where do I find the various telephone numbers for the departments on campus?

To call the university, dial 876-963-7400 for the operator and choose from a list of options. You can also dial the university at 876-618-1652 and when asked, put in the extension you wish to reach. The extension number for the various departments across our campuses can be found at <https://www.ncu.edu.jm/searchDepartment>. The most frequently used numbers can be found at <https://www.ncu.edu.jm/FrequentlyCalledNumbers.pdf>.

How do I know the cost of my tuition and fees for school?

The cost of your tuition for a semester is dependent on the number of classes you register and the credit weighting of each course.

A “credit” for a semester means one 60-minute class activity or instructional modality per week for the duration of the semester. A 3-credit class meets twice per week for one hour and a half each day. The NCU Tuition and Fees information is available at the following link: <https://www.ncu.edu.jm/tuitionfees>.

Where will I live while at NCU in Jamaica?

In Mandeville, Jamaica, where the Main Campus is located, there are three dormitories:

- 1 Leila Reid Hall for freshmen ladies, The Residence Dean is Lorna Watt, Tel: 876-618-1652, ext. 7341
- 2 Jamaica Hall for sophomore to Senior Ladies, The Residence Dean is Lilieth Scarlett, Tel: 876-618-1652, ext. 7331 or 7333
- 3 Cedar Hall for all gentlemen, The Residence Dean is Sefton Brown Tel: 876-618-1652, ext. 7348

Please contact the deans for information regarding the cost of the dormitories and to make arrangements for moving onto one of the dormitories prior to the start of a semester or summer session.

Students who are 18 years old or younger, and who are not residents of Mandeville, are expected to live in the halls of residence. If you are 18 years old, as at the first day of the semester in which you are accepted, you will be required to live in campus housing.

There are off-campus accommodations provided by members of the community. For off-campus accommodation please contact the Office of Student Services at telephone 876-618-1652, ext. 7172. However we strongly suggest that you consider boarding on campus for at least your first year of being at the University.

What are the rules and regulations of the university?

The rules and regulations of the University are guidelines for student conduct while on any of our campuses. The rules and regulations are contained in the Student Handbook at

https://www.ncu.edu.jm/Student_Guide.pdf.

What are the foreign currencies used in Jamaica?

Jamaican dollars (JMD) are used in Jamaica. Foreign currency accepted in the island are the United States dollars (USD), the Canadian dollar (CAD), the Pound Sterling (GBP) and the Euro (€).

Most prices and costs in Jamaica are quoted in Jamaican dollars. The most popular foreign currency is the US currency. However, sometimes costs are quoted in US dollars. There are Cambios in Jamaica where you can convert your money. Some online banking platforms also allow you to convert to Jamaica dollars and US dollars.

How can I find out more about the university's news, events and culture?
You may visit the following links to find out more:

- **Feature Stories**

<https://www.ncu.edu.jm/allfeaturestories>

- **Hilltop Trumpet student news**

<http://hilltoptrumpet.ncu.edu.jm/>

- **NCU Media Group**

<http://ncumediagroup.com/>

- **NCU TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NCUMediagroup>

- **The Beacon university magazine**

<https://www.ncu.edu.jm/beacon/>

- **NCU Culture**

<https://www.youtube.com/c/NorthernCaribbeanUniversityCCMPR/playlists>

