



## **Welcome to CEDEI!**

We are thrilled that you have decided to join us here at CEDEI and are looking forward to meeting you in person. We imagine at this point that there are many unknowns lingering in your mind and perhaps some doubts and anxieties. This is normal. Switching gears and moving to a new country, family, and language entail some very big adjustments. That's why we have an experienced team on the ground to help ease you through these adjustments. Don't worry- we have a constant stream of students who happily and healthily adjust to life in Cuenca!

This orientation information is designed to answer many of your questions and give you a clearer idea about the program in which you are enrolled. Included is:

- Background Information on CEDEI, Page 1
- Emergency Contact Information, Page 2
- Services Available to you at CEDEI, Page 3
- What to Expect During your First Week, Page 3
- Activity Information, Page 4
- Logistical Essentials in Cuenca, Page 5
- General Health and Safety Recommendations, Page 6

Please read this information in its entirety, as it will assist you in making a smooth and relaxed transition to CEDEI

### **About CEDEI**

Our Cuenca Center, the Fundación Centro de Estudios Interamericanos, was founded in 1992 in recognition of the 500th anniversary of the meeting of the Old and New Worlds. The Centers for Interamerican Studies (CEDEI\*) is a not-for-profit institution of higher learning, dedicated to the study of American languages and cultures. To foster understanding among the people of the Americas, CEDEI sponsors a variety of academic activities independently and in conjunction with universities in North and South America. The Centro offers individual and small-group instruction in English, Spanish and Quichua for adults in the Cuenca community and for visiting students and researchers. Courses on the literature and culture of the Americas are also offered in Spanish and English. Research and publication in the fields of American languages and cultures are sponsored by the Centro de Estudios Interamericanos, as well as presentations of art and music and a host of other social and cultural activities.

CEDEI maintains a library for use by students, visiting scholars and the general public. Additionally, thousands of Ecuadorian students receive English lessons from CEDEI each year. CEDEI's charter was approved by the Ecuadorian Congress, and is accredited by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education.

### **The Office of International Programs**

The International Programs staff works closely with all students that come to Cuenca to study. This includes 24-hour availability and assistance. We can help you with homestay information, visa requirements, embassy contacts, doctor referrals, and basic information about Cuenca. Our office has

over a dozen years of experience working with international students, both on an individual basis and in university and high school groups. Please see our website: [www. International.cedei.org](http://www.International.cedei.org), to read more about our various international programs and the various departments of CEDEI.

In this packet you will find information about the services provided by CEDEI and a basic guide to life in Cuenca. If you have any questions that aren't covered in this packet, please let us know- we're here to help. We look forward to seeing you here in Cuenca and want to ensure a smooth transition for you into your time at CEDEI.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

*To call any of these numbers from another country first dial: 593-7, preceded by your international calling code (in the U.S. this is 011). To call a cell phone dial 593 and drop the 0 on the cell phone number.*

**Please write down or print this contact information. In case you have any problems on your journey to Cuenca do not hesitate to call us.**

**School Address:** Luis Cordero 5-66 entre Honorato Vazques y Juan Jaramillo.

**EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 2848-012 (**This number functions 24/7**) (from a cell phone dial 07-2828-012)

**TAXI in Cuenca:** Radio Taxi Transvista: 2818182 (from a cell phone dial 07-2818-182)

### **OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS STAFF:**

#### **Mr. Esteban Figueroa**

International Programs Director

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## **Services provided by CEDEI**

### **Office of International Programs**

In our office, which is open to you at any time, we have a number of resources that are available to our students. We have human resources people who have lived and worked in Ecuador for years and have suggestions on trips to take, visits to make in the city, cultural adjustment, homestay problems, and Spanish classes. We also have a collection of articles about various issues in Ecuador and a collection of brochures and information about things to do in the area. Please take advantage of us when you are here!

### **Library**

The CEDEI library is open from 8:30am – 12:30pm and again from 2pm – 6pm. Our library has over 8000 titles in both English and Spanish, including fiction, guidebooks and reference materials. In addition, there are over 200 videos in both English and Spanish. To borrow books, you must show your CEDEI I.D.

### **Computers**

Students with laptops are able to access Internet through our wireless server. Students without laptops are given 2 free hours of Internet at a café close by for each week of study. In addition the International building has multiple public computers available for student use.

## **What to Expect during your 1<sup>st</sup> week at CEDEI**

### **Arrival**

When you arrive in Cuenca you will first meet your host family. For group programs, you will all meet your family together on the day you arrive. For individuals, if you are arriving on a flight to Cuenca, they will be at the airport waiting for you. If you arrive by bus you should call them upon arrival in Cuenca. If possible, try to call them before boarding your bus and let them know your approximate arrival time or let a CEDEI staff member know so that they communicate your arrival with your new host family. Your families are given information about you, your study program, and your arrival time before you come. They are also given a basic orientation on what to expect when hosting a foreign student.

### **First Day at CEDEI**

Your family will bring you to CEDEI on your first day. Most people arrive in their family's home over the weekend and come to CEDEI Monday morning with a member of their host family. Please be sure to note your class schedule and arrive roughly 15 minutes prior to your first class. You will meet your Spanish teachers in the Academic Office on the second floor of CEDEI. If you have any questions about anything please feel free to come to the Office of International Programs for answers. Anyone in our office can help you.

### Orientation

Every individual student at CEDEI is given an orientation on the program, culture, health and safety. You will also have a city tour and a tour of the CEDEI facilities, where you will be introduced to staff members and learn about where to find various resources. Every student receives an Orientation Booklet with extensive cultural, health and safety advice, along with the information on CEDEI, activities within Cuenca, suggested day-trips, restaurant lists, maps and articles.

Orientation generally happens on your first day of classes at CEDEI. A staff member will find you to discuss the time of the orientation.

**Please be sure to read the pre-arrival orientation materials on the CEDEI website available at: [http://international.cedei.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=325](http://international.cedei.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=325)**

At this link you will find:

- ❖ Preparing for Your Trip
- ❖ What to Pack
- ❖ Health & Immunization Information
- ❖ Living with a Host Family
- ❖ Contact Information

### Classes

**(Group Programs)** Please make sure to verify with a CEDEI program coordinator what books you must bring for your classes in Cuenca. If you are an *individual student*, you do not need to bring any materials except for a notebook, a pen, and a good Spanish-English dictionary. All other study materials will be provided for by your teachers. As you will have both a grammar and a conversation teacher, your classes can be flexible and may include conversation cooking classes and city & museum visits.

### Meals

All meals will be provided by your family. Most students go home every day for lunch, as lunch is one of the most important family times in Cuenca. Students typically head home around 12:30 or 1 and return to CEDEI around 3 for afternoon classes or other activities.

## Activities

If you are enrolled in the Full Immersion Spanish Program (FISP) or any of our group programs, all of the activities below are available to you. If you are enrolled in the Spanish Immersion Volunteer Program (SIVP), and you want to join to the activities below, you must ask at the International Programs Staff for arrangements and coordination. The group programs often include, but are not limited to, those listed below as well.

### Music Class

Andean musical tradition has been passed down since pre-conquest times. In this class, you will learn some of the basic rhythms and techniques used in making this unique sound through contact with traditional Andean instruments.

### Day or Weekend Trips

Visits are included in Program fees for FISP students. Speak to Expediciones Apullacta to sign up for these trips. The FISP includes 1 visit per week. If the student has more than 4 weeks for FISP no more than 4 excursions are included.

### Art Class

Cuenca, and Ecuador in general, contains a world full of art and as a part of this it is important to mention the variety of techniques your instructor will teach you.

### Intercambio (Language Exchange)

This is a very informal program that CEDEI can arrange for any student. An intercambio simply entails connecting a Spanish and an English student from CEDEI who are both interested in improving their language skills and learning about each other's cultures. Once students are introduced, they are free to decide how the intercambio will function. It is expected, however, that conversation will take place in a mixture of both Spanish and English.

### City Visits

It is possible to arrange various visits with your conversation teacher to museums, shops, markets, and other sites in Cuenca. Feel free to arrange these visits with your teacher.

**Upon arrival you will receive a schedule of these activities complete with meeting places, etc.**

## **Logistical Essentials in Cuenca**

### Banks

Many students use the Banco de Guayaquil or Banco del Pichincha, both of which can be found on the corner of Luis Cordero and Presidente Borreo. Daily limits are usually in the range of \$300 for ATM cards and \$500 cash withdrawal from credit cards. CEDEI does not recommend Banco del Austro, as several students have reported problems.

To change traveler's checks, you can go to VAZ Casa de Cambio (on the corner of Luis Cordero y Gran Colombia), Banco del Pacifico or Banco de Guayaquil (American Express only). Changing traveler's checks can often be a hassle; ATM cards are a better idea.

### Phone Calls

There are several ways to make international calls from Cuenca. The most popular and inexpensive way is from the many Internet cafes in Cuenca. There are also phone companies with booths in Cuenca that charge more, but have better quality.

If you have an international calling card, you must first find the carrier, who will then connect your call. *You can not dial a US 1-800 number from Ecuador.* The local 1-800 numbers for the carriers are as follows: ATT 1-800-999-119; MCI 1-800-999-170; Sprint 1-800-999-171.

### Doctors

Check the "Emergency Contact Information" sheet in your orientation booklet for the names of general practitioners who we recommend. You can also speak with the staff of International Programs in order to arrange an appointment. There is a wide range of qualified doctors in Cuenca, many of whom speak English.

## **Health and Safety Recommendations**

#1 We recommend you don't carry anything you won't need. Carry a copy of your passport in a secure place, such as a money belt or something under your clothes. You might also want to carry your camera in front of you, where it is more secure. You should ask before taking pictures of strangers.

#2 We recommend that you don't approach gatherings or demonstrations or any group of people that seem to be engaged in a political activity. If you are unsure as to what is happening, we recommend that you keep your distance.

#3 We recommend that you don't wear expensive jewelry such as watches, necklaces and bracelets around town.

#4 We recommend that you avoid dogs. If you are bitten, contact the CEDEI staff immediately, and try to remember where it happened.

#5 We recommend that you be careful when crossing the street. Pedestrians DON'T have the right of way here.

#6 We recommend that you don't eat street food or drinks, no matter how good they look.

#7 We recommend that you be aware of your surroundings at all times. Try to act like you know what you are doing, and keep your eyes open in public (especially crowded) places.

#8 We recommend that you don't walk around the city at night. Call a taxi, the number is on your CEDEI card. Always call a taxi, don't get one off the street.

#9 We recommend that you lock all valuables in a suitcase in your room. If you can not lock a suitcase, keep all valuables out of sight.

#10 We recommend that you stay relaxed and try to have a good time. Try not to get frustrated by the language barrier or because some things may be different than what you're used to. You'll become more accustomed to these differences in time and may even find them comforting.

#11 Ask questions if you have them, we're here to help!

Please feel free to contact us at anytime before you come with questions or concerns. We are on call to assist you 24 hours a day.

Again, welcome to CEDEI and to Cuenca. We are looking forward to facilitating your experience in Ecuador.

Best wishes to you,  
Office of International Programs

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*International Programs Director*

*Mrs. Dunia Cabrera*  
*Administrative Sub-Director of International Programs and Coordinator of families*

*Mr. Christian Guzmán*  
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*Ms. Mayra Vicuña*  
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