



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO



UWVC

COSTA RICA



OUR STORY

Mission. UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. To promote this mission, UWC Costa Rica incorporates our six competencies into all activities and learning opportunities: social responsibility, diversity, conflict transformation, sustainability, leadership, and healthy lifestyle. At UWC Costa Rica, we aim to educate a diverse group of students to become happy, healthy, and committed individuals. Our students become capable in leadership and engagement, which they use to foster positive change in their communities in order to contribute to achieving a more sustainable and peaceful world.

Background. UWC Costa Rica opened in 2006. It evolved from the pre-existing SOS International College Hermann Gmeiner, a development of the SOS Children's Villages Association. In recognition of our unique heritage, UWC Costa Rica is committed to offering scholarships to students with SOS backgrounds. Additionally, to honor our status as the only UWC in Latin America, one-third of the student body represents most of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Location. UWC Costa Rica is located in Santa Ana, a suburb of the capital of San José. Despite its proximity to the country's largest city, Santa Ana maintains the feel of a small Costa Rican town, with many craft vendors, local restaurants, and a large Sunday market. Costa Rica is a small and beautiful country, and the college enjoys proximity to beaches, national forests, and a major metropolitan area. UWC Costa Rica is within a 15-minute drive of all necessities and comforts, including the best hospital in Costa Rica.



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UWC COSTA RICA IS...

INTERNATIONAL

Our 174 students represent 69 countries and nationalities.

ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS

All students pursue the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program, which is one of the most well-regarded and widely known secondary school qualifications in the world. It is recognized by all of the world's leading universities.

BILINGUAL

UWC Costa Rica is the only UWC that offers a bilingual IB diploma. Students may pursue the IB diploma in English, English/Spanish, or Spanish.

SOCIOECONOMICALLY DIVERSE

More than 70% of students attend on full or partial scholarship.



FAST FACTS about Costa Rica

Costa Rica is the happiest country on Earth, according to the Happy Planet Index.

Costa Rica has no standing military—it was abolished in 1949.

An expression meaning ‘pure life,’ *pura vida* is described as a national philosophy, and is frequently used to answer nearly any greeting.

26.9% of Costa Rica is protected within National Parks & Biological Reserves.

The literacy rate is 96.3%—one of the highest in Latin America.

Costa Rican cuisine is a blend of Native American, Spanish, and African cuisines. Traditional dishes include gallo pinto, tamales, and rice and beans.

In 2007, the Costa Rican government announced plans for the country to become carbon-neutral by 2021.

Costa Rica is the longest standing democracy in Central America.

Main exports include coffee, bananas, sugar, pineapples, and textiles.

Costa Rica takes up only .03% of the earth’s surface but contains 5% of its biodiversity.

RESIDENCIAL LIFE

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

“I noticed myself accidentally calling the campus ‘home’ after the first month. This was after I had hung up fairy lights in my room, eaten *gallo pinto* for the seventh time, no longer have to ask for directions to the classrooms, and recognized the yellow birds flying around everywhere as ‘Yellow Kiskadees.’”

—Nina Negi
(Germany/Class of 2017)

Community living is central to the UWC movement—learning to live with peers from around the world with different backgrounds and points of view is a unique way to gain insight into different cultures and perspectives. The Residential Life program at UWC Costa Rica uses **an experiential learning approach to seek to empower students as agents of change**. Students learn and live together, creating a community built on diversity.

UWC Costa Rica has eight residences named after different destinations in Costa Rica (Cabo Blanco, Cahuita, El Coco, Flamingo, Hermosa, Montezuma, Mal País, and Tortuguero). Each residence is single-sex, and has eight dorm rooms housing three students each. There is a maximum of 24 students per residence. **The students are assigned to their houses to best represent the diversity on campus** in an intentional effort to create a learning process based on experience and reflection.





SUPPORT BY THE NUMBERS

1 RESIDENTIAL DIRECTOR: The Residential Director supports and guides all aspects of the Residential Life program. She seeks to provide a home-like environment for students in which they will feel a sense of belonging and where they will feel appreciated, respected, and valued as individuals.

8 RESIDENCE COORDINATORS: Staff members who support the students throughout the school year in community life and with their emotional needs. Each Residence Coordinator is in charge of one residence and holds a weekly meeting with its members.

15 RESIDENCE ASSISTANTS: Students who act as leaders within their living group. RAs are trained in First Aid, emergency procedures, peer listening, and emotional support to promote the physical and emotional well-being of students.

18 TUTORS: Staff members who are responsible for providing support and guidance to a group of students. Tutors advocate for students within the College, help them through disciplinary processes, help them set goals, and hold them accountable to those goals.

3 PSYCHOLOGISTS: Professionals who assess and support the emotional needs of students. They counsel the students when necessary or refer them to external professionals depending on needs. The Psychologists work on the prevention of issues they have determined as priorities for the community.

1 NURSE: The nurse provides necessary and proper support in physical health. Her job is focused on prevention and intervention. She decides when it is necessary to consult the doctor.

2 DOCTORS: The doctors provide medical assistance to staff and students when necessary. They are on campus for two hours four days a week, and are on call 24/7.

2 EMERGENCY & NIGHT COORDINATORS: Staff members who serve as an immediate first line of response to emergencies occurring on campus while most of the staff is off-duty. Additionally supports students in several aspects of student life.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM

The Co-Curricular Program allows students to apply their education in a variety of settings. Throughout the program, students develop and actively participate in a variety of social and cultural activities to strengthen their awareness and respect for UWC Costa Rica's six competencies.

CONOCIENDO COSTA RICA

The Conociendo Costa Rica (Getting to Know Costa Rica) program provides students with the opportunity to get to know Costa Rica outside of the UWC Costa Rica campus. Through the program, students visit a variety of places, such as national parks, archaeological sites, organized communities, and other locations that are unique to the country.

DIVERSITY WEEKS

To celebrate the regions of the world represented at the college, students organize Diversity Weeks to share culture and traditions from the regions they come from.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WEEK

Students spend one week each academic year at sites throughout the region. At each site, students perform a service project with the community. Throughout the week, students learn about the communities through interaction and cohabitation.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

As part of the CAS program, students participate in a wide variety of sports activities. Students are encouraged to explore sports that they may not have tried before. Additional activities include health fairs, local sports championships, or visits to sports facilities in Santa Ana and the neighboring areas.



ABOUT ACADEMICS AT UWC COSTA RICA

All UWC schools and colleges teach the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP). The DP is one of the most well-regarded and widely known secondary school qualifications in the world. It is recognized by all of the world's leading universities. The DP was developed to provide students with a balanced education, to facilitate geographic and cultural mobility, and to promote international understanding. With this foundation, the DP curriculum goes hand-in-hand with the ethos of the UWC movement.

Students are educated and supported by 27 teaching faculty. The teaching faculty are highly educated and experienced in their fields. They are from Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, Kosovo, Lithuania/Russia, New Zealand, Spain, the UK, and the USA.

Currently, UWC Costa Rica is the only UWC college offering the full IB Diploma in two languages (English and Spanish).

SUBJECT CHOICES

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
First Language	Second Language	Individuals & Societies	Experimental Sciences	Math & Computer Sciences	Arts
English Lit.	Spanish B	Economics	Chemistry	Math	Visual Arts
Lit. School-supported self-taught	English B	History	Physics	Math	Theater
English Language and Lit.	French B	Psychology	Biology	Math Studies	Film
Spanish Language and Lit.		Cultural & Social Anthropology	Environmental Systems & Societies		
		Global Politics			9

University Matriculation for Classes of 2012-2015

Asia Hong Kong University of Science & Technology University of Hong Kong Waseda University, Japan	United Kingdom Aberystwyth University Cambridge University Cardiff University King's College London Lancaster University Queen Mary University of London School of African and Oriental Studies University of Birmingham University of Buckingham University College London University College London-Sciences Po, Dual BA University of Edinburgh University of Glasgow University of Manchester University of Nottingham	Johns Hopkins University Lake Forest College Lewis and Clark College Luther College Macalester College Methodist University Middlebury College Minerva Schools at KGI Mount Holyoke College New York University Oberlin Conservatory of Music Pomona College Princeton University Purdue University Reed College University of Richmond Ringling College of Art and Design Sarah Lawrence College Skidmore College Stanford University St. Lawrence University St. Olaf College Smith College SUNY Maritime College Tufts University University of California, Berkeley University of California, San Diego University of Florida University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University of Oklahoma University of Rochester Wartburg College Wellesley College Westminster College Wheaton College (IL) Wheaton College (MA) Whitman College Williams College Vassar College Yeshiva University
Australia/New Zealand University of Melbourne		
Canada McGill University Queen's University Quest University Simon Fraser University St. Francis Xavier University Université de Montréal University of British Columbia University of Toronto		
Europe Amsterdam University College, Netherlands Bard College Berlin, Germany Delft University of Technology, Netherlands Design Academy Eindhoven, Netherlands IE University, Spain Jacobs University, Germany Sciences Po-Reims Campus, France University of Barcelona, Spain University of Bern, Switzerland University College Amsterdam, Netherlands University College Utrecht, Netherlands University of Copenhagen, Denmark University of Oslo, Norway	United States Bard College Bates College Brandeis University Berklee College of Music Binghamton University Brown University Bryn Mawr College Claremont-McKenna College Clark University Colby College College of the Atlantic College of Idaho Colorado College Columbia University Columbia University-Sciences Po, Dual BA Cornell University Dartmouth College Deep Springs College Duke University Earlham College Emory University Hampshire College Harvard University Hendrix College Hood College	
Latin America Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México		
Middle East New York University-Abu Dhabi		





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