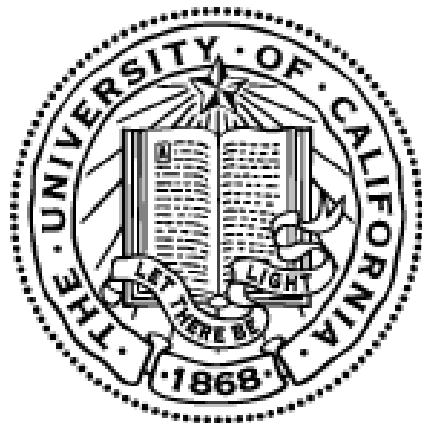


**Reciprocal Exchanges**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**  
**Education Abroad Program**

**EXCHANGE VISITOR GUIDE**  
**2008-09**



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## The University of California

UC is the major public research university in the state of California serving both undergraduate and graduate students. There are ten campus locations: Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced (under construction), Riverside, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, San Diego and San Francisco (a graduate medical school). The eight undergraduate campuses of the UC system are located throughout the state of California, the most populous state in the U.S. From UC Davis, located in northern California near the capital (Sacramento) to UC San Diego, located in one of the world's largest port cities, the campuses encompass the physical and geographic diversity of California.

The UC system is home to more than 201,000 students and 160,000 faculty and staff. According to several different studies, all of the UC campuses rank in the top 50 public universities in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Each campus offers attractive and distinct facilities, specialized schools, and remarkable opportunities for visiting scholars from all over the world in almost any discipline.

## The Education Abroad Program (EAP)

The **University of California (UC)** promotes international educational exchanges as a key part of its mission. Over 1300 students from abroad participated in the Education Abroad Program's Student Reciprocal Exchange in 2007-08.

The **Universitywide Office of EAP (UOEAP)**, a division of the UC Office of the President, establishes and operates EAP programs and coordinates EAP administration systemwide. The University of California hosts Reciprocal Exchange students from over 150 institutions located in 35 countries. All students, both UC outbound and Reciprocal Exchange students on the EAP program earn degrees at their home university, though they are enrolled at a host university abroad for a year or semester.

UOEAP coordinates Reciprocal Exchange students and scholar placement at one of **UC's host campuses**. Each of these campuses also has an **EAP Campus Office** that, along with the International Students Office, assists Reciprocal Exchange visitors once they arrive in California. Prior to departure, the Reciprocal Exchange visitor communicates both with their home university UC Liaison, the UC host department and faculty, and to UOEAP for coordination of the visit arrangements. While preparing to go abroad visitors and UC Reciprocal Exchange Liaisons work closely with the **UC Study Centers** (UC offices abroad) and **Study Center Directors** (UC faculty directors) in their area, if one is present.

A select few EAP-affiliated universities nominate and send, in lieu of student reciprocity, **scholarly visitors** to the University of California. Visitors for whom non-student status is appropriate include faculty and advanced degree candidates who are able to conduct research at the post-graduate level without benefit of graduate student status and who do not require UC transcripts.

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<sup>1</sup> *News and World Report, National Research Council, Forsythe Report.*

## Housing

Thirteen percent of the US population lives in California. Finding housing in any area of California is a challenge for both international visitors and California residents. Visiting Scholars are not usually eligible for university owned housing and must be willing and able to look for housing in community.

There are housing resource links for each campus available on the [Visiting Scholar website](#) . If necessary, you must be willing and able to arrive prior to the start of the term to look for housing in the community. Visa regulations allow you to arrive no more than 30 days prior the date indicated on your DS-2019

### Community Housing Options

In order to rent an apartment you could be asked to provide rental references, a Social Security number, and extensive written proof of your finances, particularly if your sponsors live in another country or another state. Some landlords may require a US sponsor to co-sign your lease agreement. Most Visiting Scholar, therefore, find it more convenient to rent a room or a room-to-share in a household that is already established.

Your host campus' Community Housing Office can provide you with information, rental resources and important advice about your rights and obligations as a renter. They cannot, however, find housing for you or guarantee that you will find an apartment. Visit the UOEAP Visiting Scholar web page for campus-specific links to community housing pages.

### Temporary Housing

Make arrangements for temporary housing prior to your arrival in the US, particularly if you are arriving in the summer. Many good guides to inexpensive accommodations are available through bookstores and on the Internet.

The *California Housing Board* provides an electronic forum for all Education Abroad Program participants— both UC students and visitors returning from or departing to their EAP study abroad destinations and UC bound Reciprocal Exchange students and visitors—to share information about housing for rent and housing situations wanted in California. Visitors are encouraged to post messages about housing sublets, shared housing situations, rooms for rent and rentals wanted. For the user's security, we suggest that visitors not post personal information such as their telephone or address on the board. Participants should use their e-mail address only. More detailed conversations should be continued outside of the housing board. Visitors should understand that the majority of reciprocal exchanges are students, so finding something suitable on the *California Housing Board* may be challenging for a visiting scholar.

The board can be accessed from the EAP website: [eap.ucop.edu](http://eap.ucop.edu)

**Tip: Visitors should also ask the host to send a note around in the department asking for housing on their behalf (maybe there are grad students, faculty or staff who might be away, need house sitter or know someone with a room for rent). This is often effective.**

## Visa Requirements

Toward the goal of improving domestic security, the U.S. government has begun implementation of a series of initiatives pertaining to foreign visitors to the United States.

Government policies and procedures can change rapidly and information that will have an impact on visa application and international student status may not yet be known at the time this guide is published.

### Documents and Definitions

The **certificate of eligibility**—also known as the DS-2019—is issued by the host UC campus and must be presented along with a valid passport to request a visa.

The **visa** specifies the terms under which you may *enter* the United States and must be obtained from the US embassy or consulate before leaving your home country. Note that the visa is for entry only. Once you are in the United States, you are allowed to stay until the end date of your program as listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 **even if your visa has expired**.

**Visa status** is assigned to you by a US immigration officer upon entry into the United States. Each type of status carries with it certain conditions that the visitor must follow in order to remain in the country legally. Examples of types of status are **tourist, F-1 student, and J-1 exchange visitor**.

A **passport** is required to obtain a visa and enter the United States. While you can usually have your passport extended while in the United States by contacting your country's embassy or consulate, we recommend that you apply for the visa with a passport that will not expire **within six months** of the program end date, including any extension of program you might be considering. In countries where **machine-readable** passports are available, students are advised to obtain one before applying for the visa.

Your program start date **is printed on your certificate of eligibility. This date is not always exactly the same as the first day of the term or the first day of instruction at your host UC campus.**

It is important to **plan ahead**, and to remember that required personal interviews and enhanced visa application security screening could create delays at the US embassy or consulate. June, July, and August are the busiest months in most consular sections. Students applying to arrive in the US in January may experience delays in processing if they apply for the visa during the holiday season.

### Obtaining a Visa

#### Obtaining the Certificate of Eligibility: DS-2019

Our office will coordinate the issue of the Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status, known as the DS-2019. You will not be able to apply for your visa until you receive your certificate of eligibility.

#### Applying for the Visa

Applicants must contact the US embassy or consulate for application procedures and application fee information. These may vary, depending on your location. In most countries, applicants are required to make an appointment for a face-to-face interview.

- Apply for a J-1 exchange visitor visa as soon as possible after receipt of your DS-2019.

- Note that the US embassy or consulate can issue a visa no more than 90 days prior to the start of your study program. If you apply more than 90 days before your program start date, the US embassy consulate will hold your application until it can issue a visa.
- Be prepared to provide:
  - Required forms;
  - Certificate of eligibility (DS-2019);
  - Transcripts and diplomas from institutions attended;
  - Financial evidence that you and/or your sponsors (i.e., parents, school, or other agency) have sufficient funds to provide for your living expenses while on exchange;
- During the application process, be prepared to demonstrate:
  - That you plan to remain in the US for a specific, limited time;
  - That you have strong social and economic ties in your home country that will ensure that you return home at the end of your visit;

### **US Citizens and Canadian Citizens**

US citizens do not need a DS-2019 to enter the United States; a US passport is sufficient. Individuals born in the US are automatically US citizens, and must use their US passport while participating in the exchange program, even if they have dual citizenship.

Effective January 2007, Canadian citizens must have a passport to enter the US by air. Though a passport is not yet required for travel between the US and Canada by land or sea, Canadian citizens are strongly advised to obtain a passport. If you are a Canadian citizen, you should check with the US embassy or consulate to determine if a visa is also required in your case.

### **Applying for a Visa Outside Your Home Country**

Visa applications are now subject to a greater degree of scrutiny than in the past. Students who are applying for a visa in a country other than their home country may need to plan for a longer visa application processing time.

### **Visa Related Fees and Expenses**

**Non-immigrant Visa Application Fee:** Each applicant is required to pay a non-refundable non-immigrant application fee of US \$100.

**Visa Processing Fee:** Depending on your citizenship, there may be an additional visa processing fee that is usually equal to the fee charged to a US student applying for a visa to your country. Check with the US embassy or consulate or consult the Department of State website at [www.travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm)

**SEVIS Fee:** The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an electronic system for collecting and managing information about international students and scholars. There is a SEVIS fee of \$100. This fee is in addition to the fee paid to the US embassy or consulate for visa application and processing, and must be paid at least three days in advance of the visa interview appointment. You will receive information about how to pay for the SEVIS fee online when you receive your certificate of eligibility.

**Other Expenses:** Depending on where you live, it may be necessary for you to travel to an in-person interview at a US embassy or consulate. When planning for the exchange, you should consider costs for transportation to the US embassy or consulate, food, and lodging (should an overnight stay be required).

Some US embassy or consulate offices may require that you call a toll number (there is a charge for the phone call) to make an appointment or receive visa information.

### **What visitors can do to be most successful in getting their visa?**

- Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate early on to be certain you understand local visa application procedures. Check periodically to be apprised of any changes. For links to U.S. Embassies/Consulates, go to the EAP Reciprocal Exchanges web page.
- Make travel reservations that allow adequate time for processing of your visa application prior to departure. Regulations allow you to arrive in the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the start date of your academic program. Plan all leisure travel for holiday breaks and after your EAP studies.
- Do not enter the U.S. under a tourist visa unless you have determined from UC that this is an appropriate category for you.
- Check the EAP Reciprocal Exchanges web page for visa updates. Government policies and procedures are subject to change.

### **Maintaining Visa Status**

#### **Check-in on Arrival at Your Host Campus**

Visitors must go to the International Students Office of the host UC campus as soon as possible after arrival for check-in and document verification.

#### **SEVIS Address Reporting**

A California address, once established, and any subsequent changes of address must be reported to the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE) by the university through SEVIS. Visitors should see the visa advisor at the International Students Office for instructions on how to report a change of address.

### **Other Documentary Considerations**

#### **Dependents**

Visitors' dependents (spouse and children) who will be in the U.S. will also be entered into SEVIS and will be issued certificates of eligibility. Special visa advising may be required from the host UC campus.

#### **Passports for Family Members**

We highly recommend that at least one adult member of the family have a valid passport. This will allow them to travel to the U.S. more quickly in the event of an emergency where their assistance is needed.

#### **Keeping Documents Safe**

While in the U.S., the law requires that you carry your passport and certificate of eligibility with you at all times.

**Tip:** Make a copy of the identification and visa pages of your passport, your *DS-2019*, and the *I-94 card* and keep them in a secure place, separate from the originals. If your passport is missing or stolen, you must contact your embassy/consulate and the local police immediately. An official, certified birth certificate is useful if your passport is lost or stolen and you need to obtain a replacement.

## Health Insurance and Health Services

In the U.S., each individual is responsible for paying the costs of his or her own medical care. In many countries, the government pays for health care costs for citizens, and sometimes even for visitors, but in this country the individual and families must pay these costs themselves.

Severe illness and serious accidents can lead to medical bills of thousands dollars. For international visitors in the U.S., purchasing medical insurance for the duration of the visit is the only way to protect against unexpected medical emergencies.

### UC Health Insurance Requirement

The U.S. Department of State requires all J-1 visitors and their dependent family members to have the following minimum health insurance coverage throughout their stay:

- Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness (\$100,000 is recommended).
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500.
- Medical evacuation expenses in the amount of \$10,000.
- Deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

Visitors who do not have insurance that meets these requirements may enroll in one of the insurance plans specifically designed for visitors. Costs vary depending on the age of the visitor and the length of stay.

Please see quote and coverage on the [reciprocity visiting website](#) and [contact EAP](#) for enrollment information.

For visitors who already have insurance coverage valid in the U.S., they will need to make sure that the coverage is adequate by U.S. federal standards.

Before buying a health insurance, read the policy information carefully. For a glossary of Health Insurance Terms, please see [www.healthinsurance.org](http://www.healthinsurance.org) (*This glossary is intended as a general reference guide and it not intended to provide specific advice nor it is inclusive of all health insurance terms.*)

### Supplemental and Travel Insurance

The UC policy above might not include all of the benefits visitors are accustomed to having in their home country, and they may want to purchase supplemental insurance. In the U.S. it is standard for 80% of the cost for certain services to be paid by the insurance provider and 20% of the cost to be paid by the patient. If desired, visitors can buy travel insurance for coverage prior to the starting date of their UC insurance.

### UC Student Health Centers and Routine Health Care

At each campus there is a student health center equipped to provide care for routine health problems and minor injuries. Basic services are free or offered at low cost, but in general medical care in the U.S. is very expensive and visitors should attend to any annual health care visits, as well as dental and vision care before leaving their home country. Dental and vision expenses are not covered under UC insurance unless care is required as the result of an accidental injury.

## **Money Matters**

### **Social Security Number (SSN)**

The Social Security Administration (SSA), a department of the US government, issues Social Security numbers (SSNs). If you are authorized to work on campus by the International Students Office of your host UC campus you will need to obtain a number and a card through the nearest SSA office. An SSN cannot be issued for non-work purposes (e.g., opening a bank account or renting an apartment).

When a non-US citizen requests a Social Security number, the SSA must verify the applicant's immigration documentation with the Department of Homeland Security. SSA uses an on-line process for verification whenever possible. If the applicant has just arrived in the US and his or her data are not available in electronic form, manual verification is necessary and issuing of the SSN might be delayed by several weeks or months.

Ask the International Students Office for advice on how to apply for an SSN, should you need one.

### **Opening a Bank Account**

Opening a checking or savings account with a US bank is not complicated and is most likely a necessity for students planning to be in the US for more than one quarter. An SSN is not required to open a bank account in the US. If a bank representative informs you otherwise, ask to speak to a bank manager about how to open your new account.

You may wish to obtain an international money order before departure in a dollar amount equal to about **two months living expenses**, and use that sum to establish an account. Alternatively, you might use a bank draft, although the money will not be immediately available when you open your account in the US. Bank drafts from abroad may take two to three weeks to "clear" or be applied to your account. Students report that they have difficulty opening bank accounts in the US with checks (cheques) drawn in foreign currency. Delays of up to eight weeks have been reported.

Students have many banking options. You may find that a minimum deposit is required to open an account.

### **Foreign Exchange**

Currency exchange facilities in the US are less common than they are in many countries, and changing money at US banks can be quite expensive. The use of a debit card is highly recommended, especially as debit cards often give the best rate of exchange available. Some banks do exchange foreign money, but only if the currency is in notes, not in coins. There are no currency exchange offices on the streets in the US.

### **Rental and Utility Bills**

In the US, most rental and utility (i.e., gas, telephone, water, electric) bills are easily paid by check, money order (cashier's check), or online. A fee is charged for money orders, generally a flat fee or 1 percent of the transaction value over \$100. They can be obtained in banks but also at some grocery/convenience stores, and at certain host campus university centers (e.g., centers where the bookstore, student services, restaurants, etc. are located). Transfers of money to pay utility and rental expenses may be services provided by your bank. Most off-campus landlords require a cashier's check or a money order to initiate a rental agreement.

### **ATM and Debit Cards**

Visitors find it convenient to use ATMs with a foreign debit card or credit card. Most ATMs support multiple client banking systems (PLUS, STAR, etc.). Check with your financial institution about debit

card access to your account from the US. Ask about any fees that may be associated with the use of ATM services and the maximum amount that may be dispensed daily.

### **Credit Cards**

Major credit cards are accepted all over California. Cards are preferred at hotels, gas stations and car rental agencies. In fact, many hotels insist on payment in advance, unless you present a credit card on arrival. Some hotels do not accept guests who lack a credit card. If you wish to open a credit card account, it may be easier to obtain one in your home country.

### **Income Taxes and Sales Tax**

For non-residents in J-1 status who receive U.S.-source income, they will need to file tax return forms and pay any applicable taxes. The federal taxing bureau in the U.S. is called the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). Even visitors who do not have any reportable income will need to file IRS Form 8843 by the required deadline.

The U.S. tax system is confusing to international visitors (and to U.S. citizens too). The International Students Office on the host campus will have informational material and resources that can help one understand tax reporting obligations. If applicable, check the International Students Office web page to see if a tax workshop will be offered in the spring before the filing deadline of April 15. Remember that International Students Office staffs are not tax experts and cannot answer specific tax questions.

For complete information and forms see the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (federal taxes) web pages at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). See the California Franchise Tax board (state taxes) at [www.ftb.ca.gov](http://www.ftb.ca.gov). See also the UC Berkeley Services for International Students and scholars tax page at [http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/multiple\\_use/taxes.php](http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/multiple_use/taxes.php)

**Sales tax** is a state tax added to any item sold, except for essential food items. The sales tax in California is approximately 7.25% to 8.25%, depending on the city and county. Sales tax will not be included in the price marked on items for purchase or even on menus in restaurants. You must be prepared to pay the full amount of your purchase, including tax, when you get to the register.

## What to Know Before You Go

### Communication

- **Important Telephone Numbers**
- **911** is the **national emergency number** for police, ambulance services, and fire department.
- **For an EAP emergency** after business hours, on a weekend, or during a holiday, call the EAP emergency answering service at 1-805-893-4762. An EAP staff member will call you back immediately.
- **To make a long-distance call** within the US dial 1+ (the three-digit area code) + (the seven-digit number of your correspondent).
- **To place an international call**, dial 011 + (the country code) + (the area code) + (the number of your correspondent).
- Numbers that begin with “1 - (800), (888), (877), (866), or (855)” are **toll-free numbers** (there is no charge to the caller).
- Dial 411 or (area code) + 555-1212 for **directory assistance** (a service that provides phone numbers of businesses and individuals for a small fee).

### Email

The host UC campus provides each visitor with an email account. For visitors who prefer to use a non-UC account, they can ask how messages from their UC account can be forwarded to their personal account.

### Telephone

In some areas, students may be able to choose their long-distance telephone service provider. Many US-based long-distance phone companies (such as AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon) provide special services and rates that make it easy for students to phone home from abroad. You are advised to “comparison-shop” to find the service that best suits your needs. Before leaving home, you may also want to investigate the purchase of pre-paid phone cards.

### Cellular Phones

Cellular phones have become more common and less expensive around the world. Although local calls may be inexpensive, international calls may have a high cost. Short text messages sent from a cell phone may be a cheaper way to communicate internationally, provided that the person you are messaging can receive messages on his or her cell phone.

### Driver Licenses and California ID Cards

All individuals driving are responsible for knowing California’s driving laws. For more specific information, pick up a copy of the California Driver Handbook at the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or go to the DMV website <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/>

California does not recognize an International Driving Permit as a valid driver’s license, so licensed drivers should bring their valid home country driving licenses with them to the U.S..

A California Driver's License is not expensive and can be obtained in by passing a written, as well as a road test. The written test is available in several major languages. You will also need to show a U.S. Social Security card (or documentation that indicates you do not qualify for a Social Security Card) when you apply for the California driver's license so it will not be possible to apply immediately after arrival. Ask your host campus International Students Office for advice about where and how to apply for the California Driver's Licence at the local DMV.

A California Driver's Licence also serves as an identity document for check cashing, use of credit cards, verification of age, etc. In some locations passports will not be recognized as identity documents for such transactions.

If you are not planning to drive, but would like a California Identification (ID) card, you can apply for one at the local DMV. For more specific information, see [dmv.ca.gov/idinfo/idcard.htm](http://dmv.ca.gov/idinfo/idcard.htm).

### **Automobile Insurance**

According to California law, every owner and driver must be covered by an automobile or motor vehicle insurance policy. This insurance may be more expensive if you do not have a US driver's license. Many insurance companies classify international visitors in the "assigned risk" category (i.e., the least coverage for the highest fees).

Before you purchase insurance, make sure that the agent/broker and insurance company you select are licensed by the California Department of Insurance (1-800-927-4357 or website at [insurance.ca.gov](http://insurance.ca.gov)). Contact numerous companies to compare rates (also known as "premiums") to find out for which policies you qualify, and which coverage is the best for you.

### **What to Take**

#### **Climate**

During the fall and spring, the temperature ranges from about 60°F to 80°F (16°C to 27°C) during the day. A sweater or light jacket should be warm enough for most days. From December to February, the weather is colder and wetter north of Santa Barbara. Nonetheless, a good fall coat in colder countries would serve as a winter coat at most UC locations. Spring is beautiful all over California, with temperatures ranging from 70° to 90°F (21°C to 32°C). From June to August, most of California is quite warm. Inland temperatures routinely top 100°F (38°C).

#### **Packing**

Before packing for the US, learn about regulations that may prohibit the entry of certain items. For example, importing fruit, vegetables, and plants, as well as certain meat products, is prohibited. Because insects and disease can cause serious harm to US agriculture, regulation of these items is strictly enforced. You may even encounter inspection check-points when you travel to California from another state within the US.

For an overview of regulations, see the US Customs and Border Protection publication Tips for Visitors Coming to the US at

[cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news\\_releases/archives/2004\\_press\\_releases/062004/06102004\\_1.xml](http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news_releases/archives/2004_press_releases/062004/06102004_1.xml)  
/ For more detailed information on customs and agricultural restrictions, visit the US Customs and Border Protection website at [customs.gov](http://customs.gov).

#### **Tips:**

Identify each piece of luggage on the outside with your name, home address, and destination. For extra protection, include identification inside your luggage as well.

When traveling, always personally carry your passport, certificate of eligibility, ticket, prescription medications, and money.

Never put valuables in your checked luggage.

### **Clothing**

UC locations in California generally do not have a very cold and snowy winter season. Most students prefer clothing that can be worn in layers. Campus fashion is fairly casual. Weather permitting, many students wear shorts, a t-shirt, and sandals to class. If you are planning on sending additional items by mail, it is better to have a friend or family member ship them to you once you arrive at a UC campus. Boxes cannot be shipped or stored at the Campus EAP Office.

### **Electrical Appliances**

Past program participants have said it is much easier to buy small electronic devices in the US than to bring them from abroad. The US uses electrical current of 60 cycles and 110 volts. Plugs are flat with two or three prongs. A transformer and adapter plugs may be needed to use appliances from your home country. Travel irons, curling irons, blow dryers, and electric razors with built-in adapters for all currents can be purchased in the US.

### **On Arrival at UC**

#### **Mandatory Check-in**

**Check-in with the International Students Office is required.** Visitors must present passport, visa and any other travel documents to the international student advisor. Visitors must also contact the international student advisor prior to any travel that will require exit and reentry to the United States.

**The EAP Campus Office** should be another point of contact upon arrival. Current address and phone number should be given to the EAP Campus Office staff and they should be kept informed of any changes to this information throughout the visit.

#### **EAP Contact**

##### **Visiting Exchange Coordinator**

Francesca Agostini

[fagostini@eap.ucop.edu](mailto:fagostini@eap.ucop.edu)

Tel: (805) 893-2398

<http://www.eap.ucop.edu/reciprocity/visiting/>

Reciprocal Exchanges

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