Welcome to Georgia State University and to Atlanta, Georgia! We are very glad you’ve chosen to visit us, and we look forward to helping you have a wonderful experience here. This handbook is designed to help you learn more about our university, our city, and what you can expect during your time at Georgia State. Moving to a new place is never easy, but we hope that we can provide you with enough information to make the transition as smooth as possible. The International Student & Scholar Services office is here to assist you in any way we can, so please contact us if you have questions or concerns during your time in Atlanta.

Good luck in all your endeavors, and we wish you the best during your time at Georgia State!

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) offers immigration and support services to international students, faculty, and staff in order to support the intercultural and international dimensions of the University. In order to ensure the University’s compliance with federal laws and to enhance international retention rates, International Services offers the following services to non-immigrant students, scholars, and staff: pre-admission services; orientation programs; immigration and personal advising; advocacy; student program support and leadership development; non-resident tax compliance programming; insurance support; and post-completion immigration services.

Location:
Sparks Hall - Room 252
ISSS, Georgia State University
33 Gilmer St. SE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: (404) 413.2070
Fax: (404) 413.2072
E-mail: isss@gsu.edu
Website: www.gsu.edu/isss

Mailing Address:
International Student and Scholar Services
Georgia State University
P.O. Box 3987
Atlanta, GA 30302-3987

In-Person Advising:
Scholars are seen by appointment only. Please call our front desk at 404-413-2070 to make an appointment.
J-1 SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

United States federal law (Section 501©(1)(D) of P.L. 107-173) requires all J-1 scholars to report to their host institution upon arrival in the United States and commencement of program activities, but no later than 30 days past their DS-2019 start date.

To meet this requirement, all J-1 scholars are assigned to a mandatory orientation in the ISSS office. Orientation is designed to inform you of important immigration regulations, and to assist you with your transition to life in the United States, in Atlanta, and here at Georgia State University.

J-1 scholar orientation is held weekly, and your assigned orientation date is based on your DS-2019 start date. Please refer to the cover letter issued with your DS-2019 form for your specific orientation date.

IMPORTANT: If you do not report to orientation, your J-1 visa status will be automatically terminated no later than 30 days after your DS-2019 start date. Therefore, it is extremely important that you communicate with the Scholar Advisor in ISSS if there are delays in your visa processing and/or travel plans that will prevent you from attending your scheduled orientation.

Bring the following documents to your orientation:
- Passport
- DS-2019 form
- I-94 card
- The full address where you live in the Atlanta area

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION FOR GSU-FUNDED SCHOLARS

If you are being paid by Georgia State University during your stay, you may also be required to attend the Panther Tracks New Employee Orientation, which is held by the GSU Human Resources Department. Check with your academic host department to determine whether you are required to attend.

If you are not being paid by Georgia State University, you are not required to attend the employee orientation, but you must still attend the mandatory J-1 scholar orientation at ISSS.

GSU PANTHERCARD

The PantherCard is the official Georgia State University identification document. It is also provides access to the library and other facilities, and can be used as a debit card at dining areas and vending machines.

Your academic department at Georgia State University can help you obtain a PantherCard after you have arrived.

PantherCards are issued by the Auxiliary and Support Services office in the University Center (66 Courtland Street, Suite 200). You can also visit their website at http://www.gsu.edu/auxiliary/panthercard.html for more information.
MAINTAINING J-1 SCHOLAR STATUS

All J-1 scholars are personally responsible for maintaining legal J-1 status in the United States. Listed below are key points to remember about how to maintain your status.

Remember, ANYTIME you are unsure about an immigration issue, contact the Scholar Advisor in ISSS. Do not ask friends or colleagues! Inappropriate advice, even if well-meaning, may lead to termination of your legal status in the United States.

Upon Arrival to the U.S.:

✓ Report to your mandatory J-1 scholar orientation at ISSS.

While you are in the U.S.:

✓ Maintain valid health insurance for the entire duration of your program (defined by the dates listed in section 3 of your DS-2019 form).
✓ Report any changes of address to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS within ten (10) days
✓ Do not engage in unauthorized employment.
✓ Make sure your passport is always valid at least six (6) months into the future.
✓ Make sure your DS-2019 form is always valid. If it is close to expiring and you need more time for your program, request an extension at least one month before it expires.
✓ Make sure you only engage in activities related to your program, as described on your DS-2019 form. If your DS-2019 form states that you are conducting research in Biology, but you are actually conducting research in Economics, you are violating your status.
✓ Do not become admitted into a degree program at GSU or enroll in classes on a full-time basis.
✓ Obtain a travel validation signature from ISSS before any trips you make outside the United States during your program.
✓ If you plan to transfer to another institution in the U.S., start and complete this process BEFORE your DS-2019 expires.

At the end of your program:

✓ Depart the U.S. no later than 30 days after your DS-2019 end date (30-day “grace period”)
✓ Do not engage in program activities (research/lecturing) during your 30-day grace period
✓ Report your departure to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS.

EXTENSIONS

Duration of J-1 Status
To determine that amount of time that you can remain in the United States, look at your I-94 Departure Record card (a small white card given to you upon entry into the United States, usually stapled into your passport) and your Form DS-2019:

• If your I-94 Departure Record card is marked "J-1 D/S", your J-1 status in the United States expires on the program end date shown in item #3 of your Form DS-2019.
• If your I-94 Departure Record card is marked with a specific date, your J-1 status in the United States expires on that date.

Eligibility for Extension
You are eligible to apply for an extension if:

✓ You are working toward the program objective described in section 4 of your most recent Form DS-2019,
✓ You are maintaining your current J-1 scholar status,
✓ You can demonstrate adequate funding for the period of the proposed extension (see “Procedures” below for requirements),
✓ You are currently maintaining and will continue to maintain health insurance coverage that meets J-1 requirements, and
✓ Your extension will not carry you beyond five years in total status as a J-1 Visiting Professor or Research Scholar, or beyond six months total status as a J-1 Short Term Scholar.

Procedures
At least one month prior to the end date on your current Form DS-2019, submit the following documents to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS:

✓ J-1 Exchange Visitor Request Form (available at http://www.gsu.edu/es/23651.html) Your GSU faculty host (not you) should complete this form.
✓ Letter from you requesting the extension and explaining why more time is needed to complete your original J-1 program objective.
✓ Letter from your Georgia State University host department supporting your extension request. This letter must be on university letterhead and include the following information:
  • description of the activities in which you will engage
  • dates of the requested extension period (MM/DD/YYYY – MM/DD/YYYY)
• reason more time is needed in order for you to complete your original program objective
• salary/funding to be offered by Georgia State (if any)

✓ Proof of funding
You must provide evidence of sufficient funding for yourself and any accompanying J-2 dependents. Please provide letter(s) from the funding source specifying the amount of support in U.S. dollars. If using personal funds, provide original bank statements. If Georgia State University will provide funding, your GSU host department must state the total amount of funding provided for the period of extension in the GSU support letter described above. The required minimum funding amounts are:
• J-1 scholar: $1513/month for the amount time requested in the extension
• J-2 dependent (spouse): $500/month for the amount of time requested in the J-1’s extension
• J-2 dependent (child): $300/month for the amount of time requested in the J-1’s extension

✓ Written statement confirming that you will maintain health insurance coverage, for yourself and any accompanying J-2 dependents, valid through the duration of your extension.

J-2 DEPENDENT STATUS
Your legal spouse and your unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible to apply for J-2 dependent status.

Obtaining J-2 Status
Your dependents will need to obtain their own DS-2019 forms from ISSS. They will use their DS-2019 forms to apply for J-2 visa stamps at the U.S. Consulate in their home country.

To request J-2 DS-2019 forms for your dependents, please submit the following to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS:
✓ Copy of each dependent’s unexpired passport biographical page
✓ Proof of funding. Minimum funding amounts are:
✓ Spouse: $500/month for the duration starting at the time the DS-2019 is requested, and ending when your J-1 program ends.
✓ Children: $300/month for the duration starting at the time the DS-2019 is requested, and ending when your J-1 program ends.

Once ISSS has issued your dependents’ J-2 DS-2019 forms, you are responsible for forwarding the forms to them in their home country.

J-2 Health Insurance Requirement
All J-2 dependents are required to maintain health insurance coverage for the entire period of time they are in the U.S. in J-2 status.

J-2 Work Authorization
J-2 visa holders may apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work in the United States. Employment will not be authorized if J-2 income is needed to support the J-1 scholar. Contact the Scholar Advisor in ISSS for more information about application procedures.
HEALTH INSURANCE

Required by Law
United States federal law (22 C.F.R. 62.14) requires all J-1 scholars and J-2 dependents to have accident and sickness health insurance coverage valid for the entire duration of the J-1 program. Your J-1 program duration is determined by the dates listed in section 3 of your DS-2019 form.

U.S. government regulations state that if you willfully fail to obtain and maintain health insurance for yourself and your dependents, your J-1 sponsor (Georgia State University) must terminate your legal J-1 status in the United States.

The U.S. Department of State currently requires all J-1 and J-2 health insurance to meet the following criteria:

✓ Coverage of at least $50,000 per accident or illness
✓ At least $7500 for coverage of repatriation of remains
✓ At least $10,000 for coverage of medical evacuation to your home country
✓ A deductible no greater than $500 per accident or illness
✓ Non-U.S. policies must be backed by the full faith and credit of your home country’s government, or the company providing insurance must be underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A.M. Best rating of “A–” or above; an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of “A-i” or above; a Standard & Poor’s Claims-paying Ability rating of “A–” or above; or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above.

Why is Health Insurance Required?
It is dangerous to be in the United States without health insurance. Unlike many other countries, the United States government does not provide public health care for its citizens. Individuals are responsible for paying for every doctor or hospital visit.

Health care in the United States is very expensive. A visit to the doctor’s office may cost $100-$500. A single trip to the hospital for a broken arm can cost $500-$1000. Medical problems can result in extensive financial debt if you do not have adequate insurance coverage.

Because of this, most people in the United States rely on health insurance. Insurance protects you against the enormous costs of health care and provides you with access to better and more timely medical care.

How Does Health Insurance Work?
When you buy health insurance coverage, your premium (the cost you pay) is combined with the premiums of many other people to form a large pool of money. The insurance company uses this pool of money to pay the medical bills for those participants who need health care. Because your health costs are spread across a large group of people, your individual financial liability is greatly reduced. Your health insurance remains valid as long as you continue to pay the premium.

When you buy insurance, the insurance company gives you an insurance identification card. You can show this card to medical providers as proof that you have insurance coverage. Your insurance company will provide a written, detailed policy explaining the expenses it will cover and the procedures you should follow to get medical care. Every insurance plan is different, so be sure to read your policy very carefully!

How do I get Health Insurance?
If Georgia State University is funding your program, you may be eligible for the GSU group employee health insurance. Talk to your GSU host department for details. NOTE: GSU employee insurance does not cover medical evacuation and repatriation. You will still be responsible for obtaining supplemental insurance to cover these expenses.

If Georgia State University is not funding your stay, and/or you are not eligible for the GSU employee insurance, you are responsible for obtaining your own coverage.

On the next page is a list of U.S. companies in who provide insurance for J-1 scholars. You are free to select from this list or elsewhere, as long as the coverage you choose meets J-1 requirements.
HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS FOR J-1 RESEARCH SCHOLARS, PROFESSORS AND SHORT-TERM SCHOLARS

DISCLAIMER: This list is provided for informational purposes only. International Student & Scholar Services neither endorses nor assumes responsibility for services provided by the companies listed below.

CMI Insurance – “Global Medical USA” plan
http://www.cmi-insurance.com
Click “Global Medical USA

Compass Benefits
www.compassbenefits.com
Under “Become A Client” (on the left), click “Individual Plan”, then click “International Student Studying in the U.S.”

Co-ordinated Benefit Plans, Inc.—“Global Health Envoy” plan
http://www.cbpinsure.com

Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)
http://www.culturalinsurance.com/international
Click “International Student/Scholar Individuals”

The Gateway Plans-Accident and medical insurance for international exchange participants
http://www.gatewayplans.com/gw_usa/features.cfm

The Harbour Group
http://hginsurance.com
Click “International Student & Scholar Medical Insurance Plan” on the left.

HTH Worldwide
https://www.hthstudents.com/insurance.cfm

International Student Insurance
http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/international_students

ISO—“Voyager” or “Compass” plans
www.isoa.org

NRIOL—J1 Scholar Visa Health Insurance
http://www.nriol.net/nriol/insurance/j1-scholar-visa-health-insurance.asp

United Healthcare (New York Service Center for Chinese Study Fellows-- for scholars from China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan)
https://www.uhcsr.com
Under “Find My School’s Plan/Buy Insurance, click “Find My School’s Plan”, then type “Chinese” in the “School/Association Name” search box
HOSPITALS

NOTE: For non-emergency medical care, check with your health insurance provider first for details on how to obtain routine services. If your situation is not a true emergency and you can wait to visit a regular doctor, you will avoid the large expense and wait associated with hospital emergency rooms.

If your situation is a true emergency, call 911 and/or go to the nearest hospital immediately:

Grady Memorial Hospital
80 Jesse Hill Dr. SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
(Right beside Georgia State)
404.616.1000
www.gradyhealthsystem.org

Emory Crawford Long Hospital
550 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
404.778.2000
www.emoryhealthcare.org

Piedmont Hospital
1968 Peachtree Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
404.605.5000
www.piedmonthospital.org

Northside Hospital
1000 Johnson Ferry Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
404.851.8000
www.northside.com

Saint Joseph’s Hospital
5665 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
404.851.7001
www.stjosephsatlanta.org

Dental Care

NOTE: Many J-1 health insurance plans do not pay for routine or preventative dental care. (Routine dental care commonly includes cleanings, examinations, and filling cavities.) Check directly with your insurance provider to see if your plan provides coverage. If it does not, you should be prepared to pay these expenses on your own.

The list below is just a small sample of the dentists available in the Atlanta area and is in no way a recommendation or endorsement of any provider. You can also search online or ask your colleagues for recommendations.

Drs. Solomon Cohen and Steve Drescher
1201 Peachtree Street
400 Colony Square, Suite 1515
Atlanta, GA 30061
404-892-3545
www.midtownatlantadentists.com

Dr. Robert B. Feil
107 West Paces Ferry Road N.W.
Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30305
404-233-6488

Drs. Elise Ashpole and Sheri Katz
1275 McConnell Drive, Suite H
Decatur, GA 30033
(404) 325-5440

Drs. Eberbaugh and Remaley
Roswell Dental Care
1570 Old Alabama Road, Suite 102
Roswell, GA 30076
770-998-6736
http://www.roswelldentalcare.com/

Dr. Mark Myong Lee - General Dentist (Bilingual Korean/English)
1733 Mt. Vernon Road
Dunwoody, GA
Phone: 770-351-0785

Clayton State Dental Hygiene Clinic
Approximately 30 minutes south of Atlanta
Cleaning and basic treatments only (at reduced cost)
(678) 466-4920
http://cps.clayton.edu/DH/DHclinic.htm
EMPLOYMENT

J-1 scholars are only authorized to work at Georgia State University.

Occasional lectures or short-term consultations off campus may be allowed if they are directly related and incidental to your primary program activity at GSU and will not delay completion of your program at GSU. Any wages, payment, or other remuneration for such activities will be fully taxed, and will require you to act as an independent contractor for tax purposes.

IMPORTANT: You must receive written authorization from the Scholar Advisor in ISSS before you accept or engage in any incidental employment. Engaging in unauthorized employment is illegal and will result in termination of your J-1 visa status.

To request incidental employment authorization, submit the following documents to the Scholar Advisor in ISSS before accepting the employment opportunity:

1. A letter from the institution that is offering you the employment opportunity. This letter must fully describe the terms and conditions of the offer, including:
   - description of the activity
   - dates of employment
   - number of hours
   - field or subject of employment
   - amount of payment
   - a statement confirming that you will be paid as an independent contractor for tax purposes

2. A letter from your GSU faculty host, recommending the activity and explaining how it enhances your program at GSU.

The Scholar Advisor in ISSS will review these two letters and provide you with a written determination whether incidental employment is authorized.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

What is a Social Security Number (SSN)?
A Social Security Number is a 9-digit number issued by the U.S. government for income and taxation purposes.

Who is eligible for an SSN?
All J-1 scholars are eligible for a Social Security Number.

Who is required to have an SSN?
If you are being paid as an employee of Georgia State University, you are required to have a Social Security Number.

NOTE: Service-providing businesses (such as cell phone companies) will ask for your SSN. You are not required to have an SSN for these services, but if you do not, you may be asked to pay additional fees or deposits for these services.

How do I apply for an SSN?
First, WAIT at least 7-10 days after your J-1 orientation before you apply. If you apply before your orientation, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not be able to verify with U.S. immigration that you have entered the U.S. and reported to GSU, and your SSN application will be automatically denied.

When 7-10 days after your orientation have passed, go to the SSA office to apply for the SSN in person at the SSA office. Bring the following documents with you:

- Passport and J-1 visa
- I-94 Card (“Departure Record”, a small white card stamped by U.S. Immigration upon your initial entry into the U.S)
- Completed Form SS-5 (available on the SSA website at [http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html](http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html))
- Form DS-2019 (“Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor” (J-1 Status”))
- Letter of invitation/appointment from your GSU host department

Where is the SSA office?
There are many SSA locations throughout Atlanta. The closest one to GSU is:

401 W. Peachtree Street, Suite 2860
Peachtree Summit Federal Building
Accessible via Civic Center MARTA Station
Hours 8:30am-3:30pm (closed holidays)
(404)331-4155 or (800)772-1213

After you successfully apply at the SSA office, SSA will mail your SSN card to you in approximately two to four weeks.
**TAXES**

Filing federal income tax forms is the personal responsibility of each scholar. All J-1 scholars and their J-2 dependants, regardless of whether or not they have earned U.S. money, are required to file an annual tax form. Tax forms must be postmarked no later than April 15 of each year.

If you were present in the U.S. for even one day as a J-1 scholar, you must complete a federal tax report called an 8843 form. If you were paid by Georgia State University, you must also file a federal tax form 1040NR-EZ. If you were paid by GSU, the university has software for you to use to meet these requirements. The software is web-based and you can access this software from any computer with access to the Internet.

If you have to file a federal form 1040NR-EZ, you must also file a Georgia state tax return. International Services offers workshops on campus to help with Georgia tax return information (after you have finished with your federal return). Check ISSS bulletin boards to find out when the workshops will be held.


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**GEORGIA DRIVER’S LICENSE**

You are required to have a valid driver’s license to drive in the United States. HOWEVER, if you already have a valid driver’s license from your home country, you do not have to get a Georgia driver’s license. You can use your international or home country license for up to one (1) year without having to obtain a Georgia driver’s license.

**HOW DO I GET A GEORGIA DRIVER’S LICENSE?**

You will be required to take both a written test and a driving test before you can apply for a license. In addition, all applicants are subject to a vision exam.

Note: You will be required to give up your foreign license in order to receive a Georgia driver’s license.

You must apply in person to the Georgia Department of Driver Services. The closest Driver’s License Customer Service Center to downtown is the South DeKalb Center located at 2801 Candler Road, Decatur, GA 30034. Visit [www.dds.ga.gov](http://www.dds.ga.gov) to find the most convenient location for you.

Take all of the following documents with you:

- Unexpired passport and J-1 visa
- I-94 Card
- DS-2019 form
- Proof of local residence (a signed lease agreement, a utility bill with your name and local address on it, or a U.S. bank statement—each must be issued within the past 45 days)
- $20 cash
- Social Security Number/Card

If you do not have a Social Security Number, you must obtain Form SSA-L676 (“SSN CARD DENIAL NOTICE”) from a local Social Security Administration (SSA) office before you visit the driver’s license office. Visit SSA’s website at [http://www.ssa.gov/onlineServices/](http://www.ssa.gov/onlineServices/) and select “Find a Social Security Office” to find the SSA office nearest you.
HOUSING

Atlanta has a wide variety of housing options. It can be overwhelming to find a new place to live, but we hope the following tips and information will assist you in your search.

When choosing an apartment, consider the following:
✓ Is it furnished or unfurnished?
✓ Will you have your own bathroom and kitchen, or will you share it with others?
✓ Are there laundry facilities on-site?
✓ How far is it from campus?
✓ Is it near public transportation?
✓ What is the parking availability (if you have a car)?
✓ How long is the lease? (Many leases are at least six months or one year.)
✓ How much is the deposit? (In addition to the first month of rent, a security deposit is usually required, which is returned to you if you leave the apartment in good condition.)
✓ Are utilities (gas, electricity, water) included with the rent, or are you responsible for paying for them?
✓ Is the neighborhood considered safe? (Talk with local residents or police to learn about safety.)
✓ Can you have roommates?

Some Off-Campus Housing Resources

- GSU’s off-campus housing Website: http://ochousing.gsu.edu/
- GSU PAWS- Intl’ Students & Scholars page: https://paws.gsu.edu
- Pro-move: http://atlanta.promove.com
- Craigslist: www.craigslist.org/atlanta
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: www.ajchomefinder.com/apartments
- Apartments.com: www.apartments.com
- Forrent.com: www.forrent.com

General requirements for renting:
- You will be required to fill out a rental application listing your rental and credit history.
- You will usually be required to show income of at least 2-3 times the amount of the rent. To show this, you can bring in proof of funding or find a guarantor (co-signer).
- If your rental application is approved, you will usually have to pay a security deposit, in addition to the first month’s rent, up front.

Tips and tricks:
✓ If possible, pay by check or money order, not cash.
✓ Always ask for a receipt in order to have proof that you have paid.
✓ In the U.S., a written contract is more important than what is said. A lease is a legal binding document; read it carefully before you sign, and ask for a copy!
✓ If possible, bring a friend with you to help ask questions.
✓ To find out how far an apartment or house is from GSU, look on Mapquest.com. The address for GSU is 33 Gilmer Street, Atlanta, GA 30303. Mapquest (or a similar site) will be able to give you an idea how long the commute to and from campus will be.
✓ To find out which MARTA routes are close to the apartment, visit www.itsmarta.com.

Housing Vocabulary
AC/H = Air-conditioning and Heat
BR = Bedroom
BA = Bathroom
½ BA = No shower or bathtub
Util. = Utilities: gas, electricity and water
Dep. = Deposit (usually one month’s rent or less)
D/W= Dishwasher
Pkg= Parking
SETTING UP UTILITIES

Electricity Service
Georgia Power is the most commonly-used electricity provider. To establish service, go to www.georgiapower.com or call 1-888-891-0938.

Telephone Service
For local service, contact AT&T at 1-800-660-1000, or visit www.att.com. For long-distance service, it is usually cheaper to purchase phone cards (available in grocery stores and drug stores).

Water Service
Visit the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management online at: http://www.atlantawatershed.org/Custsrv/newsrv.htm
You will need:
• Completed water service application
• Notarized lease agreement from owner
• Deposit (usually $80) and account establishment fee ($15)

Gas Service
You may want to find out what company the owner or previous tenants used. A few options for gas service in Atlanta are:
• Georgia Natural Gas: https://gngsenroll.alldata.net/gngpublicenroll/Welcome.aspx
• Scana Energy: http://www.scanaenergy.com/en/residential-service/sign-up-for-service/
• Gas South: https://cc.gas-south.com/roe/serviceRequestGas.module

Mobile/Cellular Phone Service
There are many options for cellular phone service. Many companies offer service contracts for two years, with deals for free or discounted phones when the contract is signed. Another option is pay-as-you-go cards. These cards allow you to prepay for a certain number of minutes, with the option of buying more minutes when you need them. To use this kind of service, you will need to purchase a phone.

Frequently-Used Cellular Companies:
• AT&T/Cingular: www.wireless.att.com
• Boost Mobile: www.boostmobile.com
• MetroPCS: www.metropcs.com
• T-Mobile: www.t-mobile.com
• Verizon: www.verizonwireless.com
• Sprint: www.sprint.com
HOUSEHOLD MAINTENANCE

Although many appliances and physical features of your home may seem similar to those in your home country, beware of hidden differences! Plumbing, floor, ceiling and wall coverings, and ventilation and heating systems may be very different. Always read directions carefully before you use cleaning products and appliances.

Stoves and ovens
If you have a gas stove that must be hand lit, be sure to light the match first before you turn on the gas burner. If you turn on the gas first, escaped gas may cause an explosion when you strike the match.

Most gas stoves have a broiler. This is the bottom drawer that pulls out under the large oven door. If you want to cook meat or other foods with high grease content at a high temperature, you should use the broiler. Broil simply means cooking under a direct flame. On the oven temperature control knob you will find “broil.” Set your oven to this setting for broiling meat. Do not cook meats with high grease content in your oven. This could cause an oven fire.

Baking soda thrown on fires extinguishes them very quickly. Never leave your home when something is cooking on the stove or in the oven. If you suspect a gas leak, notify the gas company as soon as possible and allow proper ventilation.

Ventilation
American homes do not have adequate ventilation for cooking on an open fire inside the home. Although you can cook on your stove and use the exhaust fan in the hood above, never cook over an open fire in any other part of your house.

Garbage Collection and Recycling
Once a week the city of Atlanta (and most other cities in the Atlanta area) collects garbage from each neighborhood. Most apartment complexes have large garbage dumpsters that you can use to dispose of your trash. The city also picks up recyclable items in a separate container. All trash must be put in covered containers and placed in a designated location to be picked up.
EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES IN ATLANTA

In an attempt to connect you with the delegation from your country, we have included a directory of embassies and consulates in the Atlanta area. NOTE: Not all countries are represented in Atlanta, and the information below is subject to change. Always contact your home country’s government to determine the location of the embassy or consulate nearest to you. Visit http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm or http://www.embassy.org/embassies for more information.

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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Fax.</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Consulate General of Argentina</td>
<td>404.880.0805</td>
<td>404.880.0806</td>
<td><a href="mailto:catla@bellsouth.net">catla@bellsouth.net</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.consuladoargentinoatlanta.org/">http://www.consuladoargentinoatlanta.org/</a></td>
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<td>Australian Consulate-General</td>
<td>404.760.3400</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Consulate-General of Costa Rica</td>
<td>770.951.7073</td>
<td>770.951.7073</td>
<td><a href="mailto:consulate_GA@costarica-embassy.org">consulate_GA@costarica-embassy.org</a></td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic</td>
<td>678.587.9198</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Atlanta@honorary.mzv.cz">Atlanta@honorary.mzv.cz</a></td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>Honorary Consulate of Finland</td>
<td>404.815.3682</td>
<td>404.685.6982</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsaunders@sglaw.com">jsaunders@sglaw.com</a></td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Consulat General de France</td>
<td>404.495.1660</td>
<td>404.495.1661</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@consulfrance-atlanta.org">info@consulfrance-atlanta.org</a></td>
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<td>404.659.4760</td>
<td>404.659.1280</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:atlanta@germany.info">atlanta@germany.info</a></td>
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<td>Consulate of Greece</td>
<td>404.261.3391</td>
<td>404.262.2798</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:atlanta@greekembassy.org">atlanta@greekembassy.org</a></td>
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Guatemala
Consulate General of Guatemala
2750 Buford Highway NE
Atlanta, GA  30324
Tel: 404.320.8804
Fax: 404.320.8806
Website: http://www.consulado-guatemala.org/

Iceland
Honorary Consulate General of Iceland
191 Peachtree Street NE, 16th Floor
Atlanta, GA  30303
Tel: 404.572.6670
Fax: 404.572.6999

India
Honorary Consulate of India
1201 West Peachtree St. NE, Suite 2000
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.898.8172
Email: hc@indiaconsul.com
Website: http://www.indianembassy.org/

Israel
Consulate General of Israel
1100 Spring St., NW, Suite 440
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.487.6500
Fax: 404.487.6555

Italy
Honorary Consulate of Italy
133 Luckie Street NW
Atlanta, GA  30305
Tel: 404.239.0226
Fax: 404.262.0604
Website: http://www.consmiami.esteri.it
E-mail: italconsulmiami@gmail.com

Jamaica
Honorary Consulate of Jamaica
5405 Memorial Drive, Building H, Suite 1
Atlanta, GA 30083
Tel: 404.297.7696
Website: http://www.embassyofjamaica.org/

Japan
Consulate-General of Japan
One Alliance Center
3500 Lenox Rd, Suite 1600
Atlanta, GA 30326
Tel: 404.240.4300
Fax: 404.240.4311
Website: http://www.atlanta.us.emb-japan.go.jp/

Korea
Consulate-General of the Republic of Korea
229 Peachtree Street
International Tower, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404.522.1611
Fax: 404.521.3169
Email: atlanta@mofat.go.kr
Website: http://www.koreanconsul.org

Liberia
Honorary Consulate of Liberia
2265 Cascade Rd. SW
Atlanta, GA 30311
Tel: 404.753.4753
Website: http://www.liberianembassyus.org/

Luxembourg
Honorary Consulate of Luxembourg
1170 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 1750
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.892.2100
Fax: 404.875.0798
Website: http://washingont.mae.lu/

Mexico
Consulate-General of Mexico
2600 Apple Valley Road
Atlanta, GA 30319
Tel: 404.266.2233
Email: info@consulmexatlanta.org
Website: http://www.consulmexatlanta.org

The Netherlands
Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
1 Glenlake Parkway, Suite 1265
Atlanta, GA  30328
Tel: 770.390.3550
Fax: 770.390.3522
E-mail: info@nlatlantaconsulate.org
Website: www.nlatlantaconsulate.org
New Zealand
Honorary Consulate of New Zealand
513 Seminole Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30307
Tel: 404.525.2495
Fax: 404.888.5147
Website: http://www.nzembassy.com/

Nigeria
Consulate-General of Nigeria
8060 Roswell Road
Atlanta, GA 30350
Tel: 770.394.5245
Email: info@nigeria-consulate-atl.org
Website: http://nigeria-consulate-atl.org/

Norway
Royal Norwegian Consulate
3715 Northside Parkway
Building 200, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30327
Tel: 404.923.5079
Fax: 404.239.0877
Website: http://www.norway.org/

Peru
Consulate General of Peru
4360 Chamblee Road, Suite 580
Atlanta, GA 30341-1057
Tel: 678.336.7010
Fax: 678.990.1920
Website: www.consulperuatlanta.com

Philippines
Honorary Consulate of the Philippines
3340 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850
Atlanta, GA 30326
Tel: 404.239.5747
Fax: 404.233.4041

Senegal
Honorary Consulate of Senegal
830 Westview Drive SW
Atlanta, GA 30314
Tel: 404.614.6060

Slovenia
Honorary Consulate of Slovenia
400 Colony Square, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30361
Tel: 404.881.2812
Fax: 404.881.2813
Website: http://washington.embassy.si/

Sweden
Honorary Consulate of Sweden
945 East Paces Ferry Road
2600 Resurgance Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30326
Tel: 404.695.5212
Fax: 404.504.4401
E-mail: Atlanta@consulateofsweden.org
Website: http://www.swedenabroad.com/

Switzerland
Consulate-General of Switzerland
1349 West Peachtree Street NW
Two Midtown Plaza, Suite 1000
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.870.2000
Fax: 404.870.2011
Website: http://www.eda.admin.ch

Thailand
Royal Thai Consulate
303 Peachtree St., NE, Suite 4800
Atlanta, GA 30308
Tel: 404.527.6778

Turkey
Honorary Consulate General of Turkey
1266 West Paces Ferry Road NW, Suite 257
Atlanta, GA 30327-2306
Tel: 404.848.9600
Fax: 404.364.0777
E-mail: mdiamond@honturkishconsulga.org

United Kingdom
British Consulate-General
Georgia Pacific Center
133 Peachtree St. NE, Suite 3400
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404.954.7700
Fax: 404.954.7702
Website: http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/
SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations provide services and programs to the international community in metro Atlanta.

**AMIS (Atlanta Ministry for International Students, Inc.)**
AMIS offers international visitors and newcomers many opportunities to become involved including a city tour, a friendship program, holiday programs, and a speaker’s bureau.

3434 Roswell Rd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30305
Tel: 404.846.4396
Fax: 404.846.4397
www.amis-inc.org
Email: amis@peachtreepres.org

**Bridging the Gap**
The Bridging the Gap Project, Inc. strives to improve the quality of life in Georgia’s ethnically diverse communities by forming partnerships that overcome cultural barriers and promote understanding between residents, law enforcement, educators, and other service providers. Bridging the Gap offers immigration services, ESL programs, crime prevention education, translation/interpretation services, and refugee services.

2100 Parklake Drive NE, Suite H
Atlanta, GA 30345
Tel: 770.938.1122
Fax: 770.938.1007
www.btgonline.org

**Asian American Resource Center**
AARC provides community and cultural enrichment services and programs to the Asian-American community.

2855 Rolling Pin Lane
Suwanee, GA 30024
Tel: 770-270-0663
Fax: 770-270-0979
E-mail: aarc@aarc-atlanta.org
Website: http://www.aarc-atlanta.org/

**The Center for Pan-Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)**
CPACS’ mission is to create comprehensive and culturally competent social and health services to counter-act problems that immigrants, refugees, and minorities face.

3760 Park Avenue
Doraville, GA 30340
Tel: 770.936.0969
Fax: 770.458.9377
E-mail: cpacs@cpacs.org
Website: http://www.icpacs.org/

**Clarkston Community Center**
A gathering place with recreation, education, and community building programs for the residents of Clarkston, which is the most ethnically diverse part of metro Atlanta.

3701 College Avenue
Clarkston, GA 30021
Tel: 404.508.1050
Website: http://www.clarkstoncommunitycenter.org/

**Friends Among the Nations**
Friends Among the Nations (FAN) is a hospitality and friendship program for International Students, visiting scholars and their families living in Metro Atlanta and beyond. Special and regular events are part of FAN and include International Couple’s Club (ICC), Visiting International Students and Scholar Activities (VISSA), and Speaking Non-stop About Culture (SNAC)

Tel: 404.376.2249
E-mail: info@fanatlanta.org
Website: http://www.fanatlanta.org

**International Rescue Committee**
The IRC of Atlanta is a non-profit, non-sectarian refugee resettlement agency dedicated to working together with legally admitted refugees to assist them in rebuilding lives and reuniting families in the greater Atlanta area.

Kensington Office Park
4151 Memorial Drive
Suite 201C
Decatur, GA 30032
Tel: 404.292.7731
E-mail: Atlanta@theIRC.org
Website: http://www.theirc.org/us-program/us-atlanta-ga
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION (FREE)

These community organizations offer free English language instruction to the international community.

**Clayton County**

Clayton County Adult Education
Perry Learning Center
137 Spring Street
Jonesboro, GA 30236
Tel: 770.515.7610
http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/departments/instruction/adulteducation/

**Cobb County**

Cobb Literary Council
Website: http://www.cobbworks.org/gsipub/index.asp?docid=400
Call individual locations for details.

Cobb County School District- Adult Education Program
Cobb Center
240 Barber Road
Marietta, GA 30060-3925
Tel: 678-594-8011 ext 245
Contact: Paula Cohen-Tsanos
E-mail: paula.cohen-tsanos@cobbk12.org
http://www.cobbk12.org/Adulted/cobbadulteducation_006.htm

**DeKalb County**

DeKalb Technical Institute
Community Education Center
5745 Buford Highway Suite 200
Doraville, GA 30340
Tel: 404.297.9522 ext. 4000

DeKalb County Public Library
Literacy Services Office
Tel: 404.370.8450

International Rescue Committee
4151 Memorial Drive, Suite 201C
Decatur, GA 30032
Tel: 404.292.7731
E-mail: Atlanta@theIRC.org

**Fulton County**

Atlanta Board of Education
Adult Education Program
2250 Perry Blvd. N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318-3564
Tel: 404-792-5724
http://www.atlantapublicschools.us

Atlanta Ministry with International Students (AMIS)
First Presbyterian Church
1328 Peachtree Street, Room 309
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.227.7701
http://www.amis-inc.org/students_esl.asp

**Gwinnett County**

Gwinnett Technical College
5150 Sugarloaf Pkwy.
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Tel: 678.226.6401
http://www.gwinnetttech.edu/content.cfm?PageCode=esl

**Asian American Resource Center**

Classes offered in Gwinnett, Dekalb, and Cobb Counties. Call or e-mail for locations.

2855 Rolling Pin Lane
Suwanee, GA 30024
Tel: 770.270.0663
E-mail: education@aarc-atlanta.org
SCHOOLS

DAY CARE, PRE-K AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Listed below are some schooling options for young children (under the age of five) who are not yet old enough to enter the elementary education systems.

Georgia State University Child Development Program
(for children of GSU Faculty, Staff, and State of Georgia employees only)
Website: http://education.gsu.edu/cdc/

The Child Development Program, a part of the College of Education, is comprised of two locations, the Lanette L. Suttles Child Development Center and the Capitol Hill Child Enrichment Center.

Childcare is available on a first come, first serve basis. If spaces at the Center are filled, children will be placed on a waiting list. The minimum time it takes for children to be accepted is 12-18 months. Being placed on the waiting list does not guarantee placement in the Center.

Lanette L. Suttles Child Development Center
Tel: 404.413.8460

Capitol Hill Child Enrichment Center
Tel: 404.413.8454

The Goddard Schools
Tel: 800.GODDARD
www.goddardschool.com

A year round program that offers either a half or full day schedule for children ages six weeks to six years old.

Primrose Schools
Tel: 800.PRIMROSE
www.primroseschools.com

Primrose offers accredited programs for infants, young toddlers, early preschool, private kindergarten, and after-school and summer camp programs.

Questions you should ask when searching for childcare:

For Infants:
- Are there individual cribs for each infant?
- Are toys sanitized daily?
- Are the care, meals and nap times personalized for your infant’s needs?
- Are play and daily routines used as opportunities for nurturing and learning?

For Preschool Children:
- Does the curriculum prepare your child for school?
- Are there activities to do at home that connect parents with what is happening at school?
- Is there high-quality children's literature available?
- Are children read to at least twice a day?
- Are writing materials available to children?
- Are a wide range of instructional methods used, such as small-group learning, whole-group learning and individual learning?

For ALL childcare, ask if the program is accredited, if background checks are run on all employees, and what the ratio is for students to care givers. The safety of your child must be the highest priority for any childcare center.

GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New families moving to Georgia who plan to enroll children in public school should contact the office of the school superintendent in the county or city school system where they will be living. New student registration is usually held in the spring, and registration procedures vary from system to system. Contact your local school district for specific registration information.

STEPS TO TAKE IN ORDER TO REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL:

1. Determine if your child is eligible to enroll in the public school system in Georgia.

   - According to Georgia law, a child must be five years old on or before September 1 in order to enter a public Kindergarten. The child must be six years old on or before September 1 in order to enter first grade.

   - In general, the student’s parent or legal guardian must be a resident of the county or city of the school.

2. Determine the school location for your child.

   - The majority of students and faculty at Georgia State University live in one of the following counties or cities within the metropolitan Atlanta area: DeKalb County, City of Decatur, Fulton County, City of Atlanta, Clayton County, Gwinnett County, Henry County, and Cobb County. Each county has its own school system.

For information on school locations within each county, visit the website of the county or city government.
(3) Read the specific requirements for the county/city of residence where your child will attend school.

✓ Each county / city has its own specific requirements and process for registration. Please be aware that schools revise registration information on a yearly basis. For updated information, please contact the county or city government or school board.

(4) Obtain necessary identification documents, immunizations, and health certificates

All schools require students to show proof of age, (certified birth certificate), Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231), and Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Exam (Form 3300):

✓ Birth certificates
  o Must be government-issued with an official seal

✓ Form 3231 (Certificate of Immunization)
  o Must be obtained from the Georgia Department of Public Health or from a physician licensed in the state of Georgia. Take your child’s personal immunization records to a GDPH office or Georgia physician, and they can complete the form and administer any required vaccines. To locate the GDPH office near you, visit http://health.state.ga.us/searchregional/countysearch.aspx
  o The following vaccines are required:
    ▪ PPV (Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine)
    ▪ DTP, DTaP, DT (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough)—for children younger than 7 years)
    ▪ Td or Tdap (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis—for older children and adults)
    ▪ Hepatitis B
    ▪ OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine)
    ▪ IPV (Inactivated Polio Vaccine)
    ▪ Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b—for children under Age 5)
    ▪ Measles
    ▪ Mumps
    ▪ Rubella
    ▪ Varicella (chickenpox)
    ▪ Hepatitis A (if born on or after 01/01/2006)

  o The following vaccines are recommended:
    ▪ MCV/MPSV (Meningococcal Disease Vaccine)
    ▪ Rotavirus
    ▪ HPV (Human Papillomavirus Vaccine)
    ▪ Influenza
    ▪ Td or Tdap (Booster Dose)

✓ Form 3300 (Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Exam)
  o Must be signed by a private practitioner or representative of the local Department of Health

(4) Visit the school that your child will attend in order to register him/her. Take all necessary documents with you.

A list of Websites of some metropolitan Atlanta-area school systems is provided below.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Website: www.atlanta.k12.ga.us
School Locations: http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/186110111144426170/site/default.asp

CITY OF DECATUR SCHOOLS
Website: http://www.csdecatur.net
(For school locations, click “Schools” in the green bar at the top of page)

CLAYTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website: http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/
School Locations: http://edulog.clayton.k12.ga.us/edulog/webquery/ (Enter your street address and child’s grade level to find the school your child is eligible to attend.)

COBB COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website: http://www.cobb.k12.ga.us/
School Locations: Position your cursor over “Our Schools” in the top menu bar, or click http://busroute.cobbk12.org/edulog/servlet/WebQueryRequestController
(Enter your street address and child’s grade level to find the school your child is eligible to attend.)

Cobb County also has two International Welcome Centers that provide support services specific to the needs of non-immigrant families. Click on “International Welcome Ctr.” under the “Our Schools” button in the top menu bar.
The centers are at the following locations:

International Welcome Center
50 Veterans Memorial Highway
Mableton, GA 30126
Tel: 770.819.2383
Fax: 770.819.2373

International Welcome Center East
380 Holt Road
Marietta, GA 30068
Tel: 770.973.2955
Fax: 770.578.2742

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website: www.DeKalb.k12.ga.us
School Locations:
http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/~transportation/schools.asp

FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website: www.fultonschools.org
School Locations:
www.fultonschools.org/directory_school.asp

GWINNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website: http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/
School Locations:
http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcps-mainweb01.nsf/SchoolAlphaView?OpenView&Count=200&1~QuickLinks

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS
Website:
http://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/henry/site/default.asp
School Locations:
http://edulog.henry.k12.ga.us/edulog/webquery/ (Enter your street address and child’s grade level to find the school your child is eligible to attend.

LIBRARIES
Libraries in the Greater Atlanta region offer a variety of free and inexpensive services, some of which include:

✓ Book Clubs
✓ Computer Classes for Adults
✓ English as a Second Language
✓ Exhibits
✓ FAX machine access
✓ Internet Access
✓ Photocopies
✓ Story Time for Children
✓ Volunteer Opportunities

Listed below are Websites for public library systems in the Metro Atlanta area.

Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library
Website: http://www.afpls.org/

Clayton County Library System
Website: http://www.claytonpl.org/branches/index.html

Cobb County Public Library
http://www.cobbcat.org/about_the_library1.htm#library_locations

DeKalb County Public Library
Website: http://www.DeKalblibrary.org/branches/

Gwinnett County Public Library
Website:
http://www.gwinnettpl.org/AboutYourLibrary/HoursAndLocations/index.html
SHOPPING

In most stores prices are fixed, which means that you cannot bargain for a lower price. The exception to this is buying very expensive items such as a house or car. The posted price generally does NOT include sales tax, which must be calculated in when you make your purchase. The sales tax varies by county, but is usually 6-7% of the purchase price.

Whenever you buy something, ask for a receipt. The receipt proves that you have purchased an item on a particular day in a particular store. If the item is damaged or unsatisfactory, you can usually return the item and receive your money back if you have the receipt.

General purpose:
- Wal-mart
- K-mart
- Target
- Walgreen’s
- RiteAid
- CVS

Office/School Supplies:
- Office Max
- Office Depot
- Staples

Electronics:
- Comp USA
- Best Buy
- Brandsmart (discount store)
- Fry’s
- Circuit City

Furniture:
- Ikea
- Rooms-to-go

Bargain shopping:
To find very low prices, you can look for advertisements around campus posted by other students selling something. It is common to find furniture, books, household supplies, and other items this way. Other good sources for used items are www.craigslist.com (choose the Atlanta tab), the classified ads in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution print edition, and online classifieds at www.ajc.com. Thrift stores around Atlanta sell used and donated items at very low prices. In the summer and during warm months, those who live in suburban areas may come across yard sales and garage sales. In the U.S. many families sell their used furniture, clothes, and many other things in front of their homes for one or two days. This may be the cheapest way to buy items, so don’t be afraid to stop and look! While it is not normal to negotiate with sellers in most stores, at yard sales you are free to negotiate prices.
FOOD AND GROCERIES

GSU has on-campus dining in the student center for breakfast and lunch. There are also many restaurants in the area to choose from during the day.

Common grocery stores around Atlanta include Publix (www.publix.com), Kroger (www.kroger.com), Super Walmart (www.walmart.com), and the Dekalb Farmer’s Market (www.dekalbfarmersmarket.com).

The closest grocery store Georgia State University is the Publix at 595 Piedmont Avenue (one mile away).

There are several international farmer’s markets around Atlanta. A list follows:

75 Farmers Market
230 Cleveland Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30315
Tel: 404.766.9575

Buford Highway Farmer’s Market
5600 Buford Hwy.
Doraville, GA 30340
Tel: 770.455.6701

Hoa Binh Seafood Market
4897 Buford Hwy #116
Chamblee, GA 30341
Tel: 770.457.3383

Sweet Auburn Curb Market
209 Edgewood Ave SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404.659.1665
www.sweetauburncurbmarket.com

Atlanta Farmers Market
4166 Buford Hwy NE Ste 1115
Atlanta, GA 30345-1081
Tel: 404.325.3999

Harry’s Farmers Market Incorporated
70 Powers Ferry Rd SE
Marietta, GA 30067
Tel: 770.578.4400
www.wholefoodsmarket.com

Your Dekalb Farmers Market
3000 E Ponce de Leon Ave
Decatur, GA 30030
Tel: 404.377.6400
www.dekalbfarmersmarket.com
TRANSPORTATION

MARTA (ATLANTA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION)
Georgia State has its own MARTA bus and subway stops.

Bus:
Georgia State Univ. Library/Decatur St.
Georgia State Univ. Concert Hall/ Gilmer St.
Georgia State Univ./Courtland St.
Georgia State Univ./Decatur St. & Collins St.
Georgia State Univ./Decatur St.
Georgia State Univ./Gilmer St.
Georgia State Univ./Piedmont Ave. & Gilmer St.

Subway:
Georgia State Station
Five Points Station

To find out how to use MARTA and arrive at GSU, go to www.itsmarta.com. The website gives you information on prices, bus and train routes, and schedules. You can also type in a starting address and find out how to get to GSU from anywhere in Atlanta.

The easiest and least expensive way to buy MARTA tickets and passes is through Georgia State. You can buy discounted monthly passes at the Rialto Center, the University Bookstore, Auxiliary and Support Services (in the University Center), or the Student Accounts Cashier’s Office. For more information, see http://www.gsu.edu/auxiliary/29354.html

Inter-county Buses
If you will be living farther away from downtown Atlanta, you may still be able to take the bus to GSU. Several metro counties have express bus lines that go downtown on weekdays:

Buckhead Uptown Connection (BUC)
www.bucride.com

Clayton County (C-Tran)
http://web.co.clayton.ga.us/ctran/index.htm

Cobb Community Transit (CCT)
http://dot.cobbcountyga.gov/

Gwinnett County Transit (GCT)
www.gcctransit.com

Xpress services (Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dekalb, Douglas, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Paulding, and Rockdale counties)
www.xpressga.com

DRIVING
If you plan to drive a car while you are in Atlanta, first make sure you have a valid driver’s license. (See the section above on driver’s licenses.) You can park at GSU by purchasing a monthly or semester parking pass. Visit the Parking Services webpage at http://www.gsu.edu/auxiliary/parking.html to learn how to buy passes and how much they cost.

Remember that you are required by law to wear a seatbelt while driving or riding in a car. You are also required to buy automobile insurance, which can cost between $500 and $2000 per year, so be sure to factor that into your budget.

Buying Automobile Insurance
Before you buy, compare prices at different insurance companies. You can visit www.bankrate.com/brm/rate/insurance_home.asp to compare many companies at once. Some popular choices are Geico (www.geico.com), Traveler’s (www.travelers.com), and Allstate (www.allstate.com). You may also choose an independent insurance agent who can recommend the best offer for your situation.

Automobile Insurance Vocabulary

Liability-- The amount that your insurance will pay to another person if you are at fault in an accident (that is, if you hit them.) It covers damage to their vehicle as well as treatment for any injuries. The numbers a company will quote you will be something like 100/300, meaning in case of an accident, your insurance company will pay a maximum of $100,000 for car damage or injury per person for people injured in the other car, with a maximum of $300,000 for three people. If there were more people in the other vehicle, the $300,000 will be split among them.

Collision-- This category covers damage to your vehicle if you are at fault in an accident (for example, running your car into another car, a tree, etc.)
Deductible-- The amount you (the insured) must pay in a loss before the insurance company will pay. Collision comes with a deductible which you specify. If you have a deductible of $500, for example, you pay the first $500 towards repairs of your vehicle in case of an accident. The higher your deductible, the cheaper your insurance rates will be.

Comprehensive-- This category covers events other than accidents. This includes theft of your vehicle, theft of your car stereo etc., or incidents such as if you were to hit an animal, if a tree falls on your car, if your windshield is shattered by a rock etc. As with collision, this category also comes with a deductible.

TRAVEL WITHIN THE UNITED STATES
If you are planning to visit friends or family further away or would like to explore the U.S. during your summer or winter break, you can, of course, fly. But you can also take the train or bus. This will not only save you money; you will also get to see more of the countryside.

Amtrak (www.amtrak.com) provides service to all major cities, and Greyhound (www.greyhound.com) is the major bus carrier. These two services can even take you into Canada. If you’re adventurous, look into their explorer tickets. These allow you to travel anywhere in North America at one flat rate.

TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES DURING YOUR PROGRAM

IMPORTANT: If you must travel outside the United States during your program, you must obtain a travel validation signature on your DS-2019 form from the Scholar Advisor in ISSS before you depart.

Bring your DS-2019 form to ISSS at least one week before your trip to obtain a travel signature.

Also, please note the following important points:

- If your J-2 dependents are traveling with you, they will also need travel validation signatures on their DS-2019 forms.

- It is your responsibility to find out if the country you intend to visit or travel through requires an entry or transit visa. Contact that country’s embassy for further information well ahead of the date of your intended visit. See www.embassy.org for information on embassies in the United States.

- To re-enter the United States you must have:
  - Your valid passport. Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the period of your authorized stay in the United States. If your passport needs to be renewed, it is your responsibility to contact your country’s embassy or consulate in the United States to renew your passport.
  - Your DS-2019 form, signed for travel. If dependents are traveling with you, each J-2 dependent’s DS-2019 must be signed for travel.
  - Your multiple-entry J visa. Make sure that your visa is valid on the date you will re-enter the United States, and that “M” (for multiple) or “2” (for dual) is listed under “Entries” on your J-1 and dependents’ J-2 visas.

- For visits of less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent Caribbean islands other than Cuba, you will be readmitted to the United States with an expired J visa if you have a valid DS-2019 and I-94. Contact ISSS for more information.
MONEY AND BANKING

Opening a Bank Account
Make it a priority upon your arrival to open a U.S. checking and/or savings account with a bank or with the GSU Federal Credit Union.

Some larger banks with many branches around Atlanta include:
Bank of America (www.bankofamerica.com)
Chase (www.chase.com)
SunTrust (www.suntrust.com)
Wachovia (www.wachovia.com)

The Georgia State Federal Credit Union provides almost all the services of a bank at lower rates. It is located on campus at 34 Peachtree Street, with an ATM available for 24-hour banking. For more information, see the credit union website at www.gsufcu.org.

When you open an account, the bank will likely ask you for your passport, DS-2019 form, I-94 card, and Social Security Number (SSN).

It is not safe to carry large amounts of cash with you. When first coming to the U.S., it is safest to bring your money in the form of traveler’s checks. If you deposit checks or traveler’s checks into your account, the money can take up to three weeks to be cleared for withdrawal. Once you have opened a U.S. bank account, you can have money deposited into your account from overseas by wire transfer. When opening your account, be sure to ask the bank official to give you the necessary information you would need in order to make such a transfer.

If you have a spouse or other dependents, you may wish to open a joint account so multiple family members can use the same account.

Using an ATM
Automated Teller Machines (or ATMs for short) allow you to make cash withdrawals, deposits, and transfers between accounts. You can also view your account balance. This is free at your own bank and its branches, but when you use another bank’s ATM, both your bank and the other bank could charge you a bank fee of between $1.50 and $2.50. You will need an ATM card or a debit card to use the ATM machine. There is a limit on how much money you can withdraw from an ATM at one time or on one day. Check with your bank to find out what the limit is.

Using a Debit Card
A debit card—also called a check card—is connected to your checking account and is used almost like a regular credit card (such as MasterCard or VISA), except that the charges made are deducted from your checking account upon purchase. You do not get a separate bill at the end of the month as with a credit card. Be sure to keep track of your spending, though. If you spend more money than is in your account, you do not only risk ruining your credit record, but the bank also charges you with a fee of around $25 every time you overdraw your account.

How to Write a Check
Americans usually write checks rather than paying cash for big purchases. When opening your bank account, you’ll be given a check book. Using a check book for paying rent, your phone bill etc. helps you to keep track of payments.

Here are steps to follow when writing a check. An example is provided below:

- Write the date on which you are “issuing” or writing the check.
- Write the name of the person or business to whom you are making the payment, and draw a line after the name so no one can add to the name.
- Write the dollar amount in numerals (e.g. $20.53). Put the first number directly after the dollar sign so that there is no room for someone to add another number between the dollar sign and the first number.
- Write out the dollar amount (e.g. “Twenty and 53/100”) and draw a line to fill the space.
- Sign your name as it is printed on the check (don’t sign in Chinese, Japanese etc.).
- Write down the purpose of the check in the lower left hand corner, e.g. Groceries, or if it is for payment of an account, write the account number in that space.
WEATHER

Weather in Atlanta is generally warm in the spring and fall, hot in the summer, and mildly cold in winter.

Summer: June through September is generally hot and humid during the day, with pleasant temperatures at night. Highs are in the 80s-90s Fahrenheit. However, even when it is very hot outside, air conditioned buildings can be very cold, so you may need to bring a jacket with you even in summer. Also beware of mosquitos in the summer, especially in areas with lots of plants and trees. You can buy insect repellent at the drugstore or grocery store to help keep them from biting.

Fall: October is variable and can be either very hot or very cold, while November begins to get cold. Expect to start wearing winter clothes in November with temperatures dropping into the 40s Fahrenheit.

Winter: December through February can be very cold, with temperatures in the 30s and even 20s. Snow is rare but does come every few years. Winter highs are generally in the 40s Fahrenheit.

Spring: In March, April, and May, mornings and evenings are usually 50-60 degrees Fahrenheit and the daylight hours are 65-75 degrees. Nights are cooler. Expect a lot of rain during this period.

WHAT TO PACK

Students usually dress casually for class, so you will see men and women wearing jeans, sweatshirts, etc. Dresses and suits are appropriate for more formal occasions. It is usually better to bring clothes that are easy to care for than those that need frequent cleaning and ironing. Feel free to wear your national dress if you prefer.

If you bring appliances and electronics from your own country (hair dryer, phone charger, laptop computer, etc.), you should bring an adapter plug. U.S. electrical current is 110-115, 60-cycle AC.
CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Newspaper, Radio, and Television
The Signal and Urbanite are free, student-run newspapers that contain news and helpful information. The Signal (www.gsusignal.com) is published each Tuesday during academic semesters and can be found in more than 50 locations on campus. The Urbanite, released each Thursday, publishes arts and entertainment news including up-and-coming local bands and artists of national and international fame.

WRAS-FM Radio (FM 88.5) is GSU’s radio station offering diverse new music, music from local bands, news, sports, coverage of GSU Panthers games, and a wide variety of other programming. WRAS has repeatedly received national recognition for excellence in college radio. Visit www.wras.org for more information.

Georgia State University Television (GSTV) is run by students and allows students from many backgrounds to volunteer. Programming consists of Georgia State productions, music videos, documentaries and movies from college networks, as well as local, national and international syndicates. Visit http://www.gsu.edu/studentmedia/gstv.html for more information.

Georgia State Sports Teams
GSU has 16 men’s and women’s sports teams, including:

- American football (men)—coming Fall 2010!
- Baseball (men)
- Basketball (men and women)
- Cross-country (men and women)
- Golf (men and women)
- Soccer (men and women)
- Softball (women)
- Tennis (men and women)
- Track (men and women)
- Volleyball (women)
- American football (men)—coming Fall 2010!

Visit www.georgiastatesports.com for more information.

Georgia State University Student Recreation Center - Touch the Earth Program
The Touch the Earth outdoor recreation program is designed to be a non-credit instructional program providing beginners the opportunity to learn the skills and safety concerns for a wide variety of outdoor activities in a supervised, hands-on environment. A Panther Card is required.

Student Recreation Center, Room 30 (lower level)
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404.413.1772
www.gsu.edu/~wwwrec/touch
Email: TouchtheEarth@gsu.edu

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

We encourage you to take advantage of the wide variety of recreational and leisure opportunities available on the Georgia State campus and beyond! Below is a small list of Atlanta’s more popular leisure attractions.

Atlanta Botanical Garden
1345 Piedmont Avenue, NE
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.876.5859
E-mail: info@atlantabotanicalgarden.org
www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org/home.do

Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30305
Tel: 404.814.4000
www.atlantahistorycenter.com

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
1280 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30309-3552
Tel: 404.733.4900
www.atlantasymphony.org

The Carter Center
One Copenhill
453 Freedom Pkwy.
Atlanta, GA 30307
Tel: 404.420.5100
www.cartercenter.org

Visit www.georgiastatesports.com for more information.
Fernbank Science Center
767 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30307
Tel: 404.929.6300
www.fernbank.edu

Fox Theatre
660 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Tel: 404.881.2100
www.foxtheatre.org

Georgia Aquarium
225 Baker Street
Atlanta, GA 30313
Tel: 404.581.4000
www.georgiaaquarium.org

Georgia State Parks
Tel: 1-800-864-7275
www.gastateparks.org

High Museum of Art
1280 Peachtree St., N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Tel: 404.733.HIGH
www.high.org

The King Center
449 Auburn Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30312
Tel: 404.526.8900
www.thekingcenter.com

Margaret Mitchell House & Museum
990 Peachtree St.
Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404.249.7015
www.gwtw.org

Six Flags Over Georgia (amusement park with thrill rides)
275 Riverside Parkway
Austell, GA 30168
Tel: 770.739.3400
www.sixflags.com

Six Flags White Water (water park)
250 Cobb Parkway N #100
Marietta, GA 30062
Tel: 770.739.3400
www.sixflags.com

Underground Atlanta (shopping and dining)
50 Upper Alabama St.
Suite 007
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Tel: 404.523.2311
www.underground-atlanta.com

Stone Mountain Park
U.S. Hwy. 78 East
Exit 8
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
Tel: 770.469.3311
www.stonemountainpark.com

Zoo Atlanta
800 Cherokee Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30315
Tel: 404.624.5600
http://www.zooatlanta.org
RELIgIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Following is a small sample of religious organizations in the Atlanta area. There are many more excellent groups not included on this list because of space constraints. Visit The Pluralism Project (http://pluralism.org/directory/search) to locate more religious centers of interest.

Al-Farooq Masjid of Atlanta
442 14th Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
Tel: 404.874.7521
www.alfarooqmasjid.org

All Saints Episcopal Church
634 W Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308-1981
Tel: 404.881.0835
www.allsaintsatlanta.org

Atlanta First United Methodist Church
360 Peachtree Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
Tel: 404.524.6614
www.atlantafumc.net

Atlanta Hare Krishna Temple
1287 South Ponce de Leon Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30306
Tel: 404.377.8680
www.atlantaharekrishnas.org

Atlanta Baha’i Center
379 Edgewood Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30312
Tel: 404.688.0208
www.atlantabahai.org

Baptist Student Union
125 Edgewood Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303
E-mail: Teresa@student.org
Tel: 404.659.8726

Buddhism: see
http://www.dharmaweb.org/index.php/Georgia

Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
48 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3599
Tel: 404.521.1866
www.catholicshrineatlanta.org

Congregation Shearith Isreal (Traditional)
1180 University Drive NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
Tel: 404.873.1743
Website: www.shearithisrael.com

Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Inc.
5851 Highway 85
Riverdale, GA 30274-1403
Tel: 770.907.7102
www.hindutempleofatlanta.org

International Church Inc
2375 Shallowford Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30345
404.321.3392
www.internationalchurch.cc
AMERICAN CULTURE

NAMES
First (given) names are used in the U.S. more frequently than anywhere else. The last name is the family name. If they are about the same age or status people may call each other by their first names immediately after they meet.

When you meet someone who has a title like "Professor," "Doctor," "Ambassador," "President," or "Dean," it is correct to use that title and the person’s last or family name. "Ms." is an appropriate way to address both married and unmarried women. If invited to address someone by their first name, you may do so.

If you don’t know how to address a person you can follow these general rules:
• Address people of your own approximate age and status by their first name.
• If the person is older use Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. and the last name. Ask them "What shall I call you?" or "How shall I address you?"
• If someone appears uncertain about how to address you say, "You can call me..." 

Be patient with people in terms of helping them pronounce your name. Just like some sounds are new to you, there will be sounds that are new to others.

Get in the habit of using your official name when you write your signature. Signing abbreviations of your name can be confusing. It is also helpful for other people who come in contact with you to know your full name and your nickname. Some international students and scholars may use nicknames because others have trouble pronouncing their birth names. Being called by a nickname can indicate you are viewed with respect and affection.

JUST SAY NO
The freedom of speech to which Americans have become accustomed has established a way of communicating that is sometimes seen as very direct. Directness while communicating with others is very acceptable and sometimes expected. DON’T FEEL BAD ABOUT SAYING NO!

In some countries, open rejection or disagreement may be considered rude. This is not the case in the United States. Here it is quite normal to disagree openly. Therefore, the following scenarios have been provided in order to give you a better idea of how to say “No” when you find yourself in one of these situations.

TELEMARKETING
You may get phone calls from people wanting to sell you things or wanting you to give money to a charity. Credit card companies may try to give you credit cards, marketing companies may ask you to participate in surveys, and telemarketers may try to sell you various products.

The people who call may ask for your personal information without telling you why they are asking. They may also keep talking without giving you the chance to talk and explain things that you don’t understand. They will also do their best to keep you on the phone as long as possible. This is their job.

What you can do is, say, “No, thank you!” and hang-up the telephone. Don’t stay on the phone any longer once you have said it. If these people come to your door, just say, “No thanks!” and close your door. Don’t worry about being rude—they are used to it. It is possible to have your phone number removed from most of the telemarketers’ lists by registering your number on the National Do Not Call List at www.donotcall.gov.

RELIGION
People may try to get you to visit or join their church. They may invite you to one of their organization’s events or give you books and magazines about their religion. If you do not want to attend their meetings or church services, simply say, “No, thank you.” It is not rude and they should not get angry. Even if the person has been a good friend or helped you in some way, you have the right not to attend a church service or meeting if you don’t want to.
PANHANDLERS
Panhandlers (or beggars) are very common in Atlanta, especially around the Five Points area. If your host department is near Five Points, you will probably see panhandlers every day. They may be standing or walking around asking people for money. If they approach you, DO NOT GIVE THEM MONEY. Panhandling is illegal and should not be encouraged, and charities provide shelter and food for those who need it.

If you are approached, you can say, “Sorry, I don’t have any money,” or “No, thanks.” If the person becomes aggressive or insists, just walk away. If possible, try to avoid coming near panhandlers at night.

DRUGS
Recreational drugs are illegal but common in the United States. Many drugs are made in people’s homes and cut, or mixed, with deadly substances.

Never set your drink down at a party or bar! People can slip drugs into your drink this way. If you happen to set your cup down, get a new cup and drink. Remember that you always have the right to say no to anything you encounter that makes you feel uncomfortable.

ALCOHOL
In Georgia the legal age to purchase and/or drink alcohol is 21, and you must show your identification before buying any kind of alcohol. It is illegal to carry open containers of alcohol in public places like the street, or even transport them in your car. In addition, the laws against drunk driving are very strict. DO NOT DRINK BEFORE YOU DRIVE. Not only is this dangerous to you and others, but you could also lose your license and go to jail.

SAFETY
There are some dangerous areas in Atlanta, so before you go to a new area (especially at night!) be sure to ask how safe it is. Georgia State has its own police force, in addition to the City of Atlanta police. On the GSU campus there are 55 emergency callboxes with blue flashing lights. If you feel that you are in danger on campus, find the nearest callbox to automatically dial campus police.

The police are expected to both enforce the law and assist the public. It is always appropriate to ask the police to help with all kinds of matters such as lost or stolen property, noisy neighbors, and emergency situations. Police are legally prohibited from taking “gifts” or money. They may arrest people who attempt to offer such payment.

Here are some tips about how to stay safe on and off campus:

- Do not leave bags unattended anywhere.
- Do not leave valuables or bags in plain view inside your car at any time. If necessary, put them in the trunk.
- Lock your car doors at all times.
- If a police officer stops your car, do not get out of the car unless instructed to do so. Roll down your window to speak to the officer.
- Do not walk by yourself at night.
- Keep your books, handbags, and backpacks with you. Do not leave them unattended in classrooms, libraries, or other public places.
- When walking, keep your head up and look directly ahead. Look confident, pay attention, and be aware of your surroundings.
- Never get into a stranger’s car. If someone in a car asks for directions, stand away from the car when talking to him or her.
- Get to know your neighbors at home. If you will be away from home for an extended period of time, ask one of your neighbors to collect your mail and newspapers.

Contact numbers:
Always dial 911 for true emergencies
GSU campus police: 404.651.3333

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Physical assault on another family member is a crime. Police have the authority to arrest anyone who hits or seriously threatens another family member.

IDENTITY THEFT
Some thieves do not steal your physical possessions but instead try to take your private information. If they manage to “steal your identity”, they can use your credit card numbers, Social Security Number, birthday, address, and other personal information to spend thousands of dollars. If you believe that someone has stolen your personal information, immediately call all your credit card companies and alert them. To prevent your identity from being stolen, do not give your Social Security Number or credit card information to anyone unless absolutely necessary.

Typically, international students and scholars arrive in the United States with concerns about safety. Movies and television, particularly news reports, make the United States appear to be even more violent than it is. If you are careful and take some necessary precautions, your stay should be crime free.
FRIENDSHIP
A U.S. colleague may consider you a friend, but he or she may invite you to do something only once or twice a semester. This is not because he or she does not like you. It simply means that life in the United States is very busy. Americans tend to have many commitments (work and family, for instance, in addition to their studies) and not much free time.

Sometimes internationals think Americans are superficial because they act very friendly but do not wish to build a friendship. Acting friendly is a U.S. custom. It is intended to create positive feelings. You may feel confused when someone you do not know says hello to you in the street. This casual greeting is not intended to encourage a conversation or to express a romantic interest. It is just another form of American friendliness.

“Hi, how are you?” is a common greeting in the United States, but very often the person who asks the question does not wait for a response. This may seem very rude, but it is not intended to be. It is not customary for the person asking this question to wait for a deep answer. It is customary to reply, “Fine” or “Okay.” You may also want to ask how the other person is. She or he will most likely answer with the same brief response.

CULTURAL VALUES

Independence
The United States was founded by people who valued independence. An independent spirit is still evident in this culture. Many people from the U.S. believe that they are responsible for their own destinies. Being self-reliant is considered more important than relying on family and friends. Many people from the United States believe that individuals reach maturity at age 18 and should be ready to make independent decisions. Privacy is valued for many of the same reasons. Even among members of a family, issues such as money, marriage, and career decisions may not be discussed out of respect for a person’s privacy.

Work Ethic
People from the United States tend to value being busy, and we often make lists of what we hope to accomplish in a day! You may notice that people in the U.S. walk quickly, talk quickly and pay little attention to manners and politeness. We want to “get down to business” rather than make polite conversation. We don’t mean to be rude! We just have a lot to do (or think we do).

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender
Many people in the United States like to think that all people are equal—race, color, religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation are unimportant to our value as human beings. Words like “tolerance” and “appreciation” are words that we may use to describe our relationship with people different from ourselves. For this reason, racist and sexist jokes and comments are not tolerated in many social and business settings. In fact, people who make such comments could lose their jobs.

However, despite these principles, many inequalities still exist in the United States. You may hear people make negative comments about other groups. You may even experience discrimination because you are an international scholar. If this happens to you and you wish to talk about it, talk to an advisor in the International Services office. An advisor or counselor who is familiar with these issues will try to understand the situation and make some suggestions for dealing with it.

Some international scholars are surprised to hear men and women say they are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. There is a growing community of Americans who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and do not believe that it is necessary to keep this a secret. This community has become more visible and accepted, and people who are part of this population form a respected part of U.S. society. You will most likely have a professor, classmate, roommate, or friend who is gay. Remember to treat the people you meet with the same respect and openness that you would want to be treated with.
U.S. HOLIDAYS

• January 1 – New Year’s Day
• Third Monday in January – Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This holiday celebrates the life of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a leader of the U.S. civil rights movement.
• Third Monday of February – Presidents’ Day. This is a day to remember past U.S. presidents George Washington, the first U.S. president, and Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president who led the country during the Civil War and is credited with abolishing slavery. Both were born in this month.
• February 14 – Valentine’s Day. This holiday is a celebration of love and romance. Valentine cards, candy, or gifts are exchanged.
• March 17—St. Patrick’s Day. Named for the patron saint of Ireland, this day is often celebrated with parades and parties. Many people wear green clothing and put up decorations—even if they’re not of Irish decent! If you do not wear green on this day, others may pinch you.
• Springtime (date varies)—Easter. This is a traditional Christian holiday, when people decorate Easter eggs and children are visited by the Easter Bunny.
• Last Monday in May – Memorial Day. This holiday is a time that Americans remember all of those who died in war for the United States.
• July 4 – Independence Day. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, a document the United States used to declare its independence from England, was signed. Americans celebrate this holiday with picnics and fireworks.
• First Monday in September – Labor Day. This holiday recognizes the efforts of American workers.
• October 31—Halloween. People often celebrate this holiday by wearing costumes and carving scary faces on pumpkins. Children dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating to get candy.
• Last Thursday in November – Thanksgiving. According to legend, the first European settlers of the United States gave thanks for their first harvest season by eating a feast with Native Americans. This is a traditional time for families and friends to eat a big turkey dinner together.
• December 25 – Christmas Day.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Everyone who moves to a new country experiences a period of adjustment and adaptation to the new culture. This is sometimes referred to as “culture shock” because of the difficulty of leaving your home culture and living in a new culture. It includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people, and learning the ways of a different country. It also includes being separated from the important people in your life, such as family, friends, colleagues, or teachers.

Culture shock is entirely normal, usually unavoidable, and it does not mean anything bad about you or your new home. Actually, it can be a very significant learning experience, because it makes you more aware of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you in many ways in the future—it’s part of the benefit of international education.

Some typical symptoms of culture shock are:

• Extreme homesickness
• Loneliness
• Avoiding contact with other people, especially Americans
• Negative feelings and hostility toward American culture and people
• Anger, frustration, confusion
• Tiredness or need for excessive amounts of sleep
• Boredom
• Inability to concentrate or work
• Loss of appetite
• Loss of enjoyment in daily activities
• Lack of confidence
• Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
• Depression and feelings of helplessness

Although you can’t stop culture shock, there are some things you can do to make yourself feel better. Here are some ideas:

• Understand that your reactions are normal
• Be open-minded and curious about your new environment
• Talk with others about your feelings
• Make friends with Americans and other international students and scholars
• Stay busy with academics, hobbies, and friends
• Exercise or participate in sports
• Try a new activity that you can’t do in your home country
• Don’t forget the reasons you came to America
• Be patient with yourself and your new culture
When culture shock hits you, just remember that it is normal. You will pass through periods of ups and downs, but in the end it will all be worth it. Try to focus on all the positive and rewarding aspects of your experience!

**LINKS**

**American Culture**
- www.leaderu.com/isr
- www.internationalstudent.com
- http://www.educationusa.state.gov/home/educationusa/global-left-nav/living-in-the-u.s

**Immigration**
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection: www.cbp.gov
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: www.ice.gov
- Department of State: www.state.gov

**U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad:**
- www.travel.state.gov

**Foreign Embassies/Consulates in the U.S.**
- www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco
- http://www.embassy.org/embassies

**MEASUREMENT EQUIVALENTS**

**Weight**
- 1 Kilogram = 2.2 U.S. pounds = 4 3/8 cups = 1000 grams
- 454 grams = 1 U.S. pounds = 16 ounces = 1 cup
- 100 grams = 3.5 ounces
- 28.3 grams = 1 ounce = 2 tablespoons

**Capacity**
- 1 liter = 4 cups + 3 1/2 tablespoons = 1.06 quarts (liquid)
- 1 cup (liquid) = 2.4 deciliters
- 1 deciliter = 7 tablespoons
- 1 cuillere a cafe ou the (coffee spoon) = 1 teaspoon = 2 grams
- 1 cuillere a dessert (dessert spoon) = 2 teaspoons
- 1 cuillere a soupe (soup spoon) = 1 tablespoon

**Length**
- 1 meter = 1.0936 yd. = 3.3 feet = 39.37 inches
- 100 centimeters = 1 meter
- 91.5 centimeters = 1 yard
- 30.5 centimeters = 1 foot
- 2.54 centimeters = 1 inch
- 1 centimeter = .3937 inch (approx. 3/8 inch)
- 1 kilometer = .62137 mile (approx. 5/8 mile)
- 1.6093 kilometers = 1 mile
- 1 hectare = 2.47 acres
- 1.4 hectares = 1 acre