J-1 Scholar Handbook

Version 2.5

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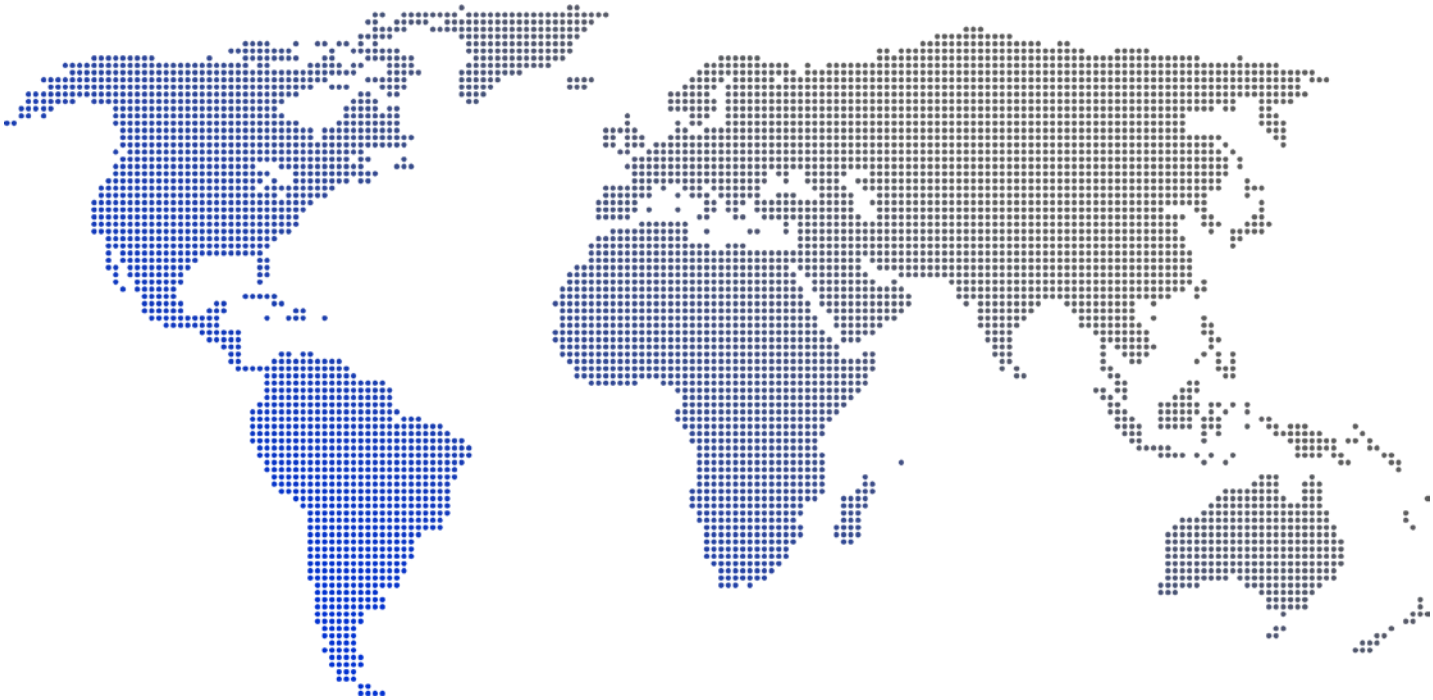

Georgia State University | INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

http://isss.gsu.edu/

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WELCOME

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 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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
33 Gilmer St. SE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: 404-413-2070
Fax: 404-413-2072
E-mail: isss@gsu.edu
Web: http://isss.gsu.edu

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

In-Person Advising:
It is always best to make an appointment.
Please call our front desk at 404-413-2070 to make an appointment with your advisor.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Always dial 911 for true emergencies
(911: Police, firefighters, and ambulances)

GSU Campus Police:
404-413-3333

GSU Police Safety Escorts (& Non-Emergencies):
404-413-2100

J-1 SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

United States federal law (Section 501(c)(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 for yourself and any dependents (including spouses):

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ DS-2019 form
- ✓ I-94 card
- ✓ Proof of health insurance
- ✓ 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 & E-MAIL

The PantherCard is the official Georgia State University identification (ID) 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 arrive.

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/panthercard/ for more information.

After you arrive, your host department should also help you get set up with a GSU e-mail address, which will be the primary means of communication while at GSU.

Please inform ISSS once you have a GSU e-mail address. Also, please provide your local telephone and address once you have them, and keep ISSS informed of any changes to this 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, ANY TIME 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. For example, 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 Extensions should be made through the iStart system (Georgia State University's web portal to immigration services). Your GSU faculty host (not you) should initiate this request through iStart.

- ✓ 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 activities you will engage in
  - 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 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work in the United States. If approved, they will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. Please note that income earned by a J-2 may *not* be used to support the J-1 scholar's expenses, per USCIS policy.

For more information and detailed instructions on how to apply, including sample documents, please see the **J-2 Work Authorization** page on the ISSS website.

If you have questions, please contact the J-1 Scholar Advisor in ISSS for more information. We would also be happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you to look over your application before you submit it.

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 $100,000 per accident or illness
- ✓ At least $25,000 for coverage of repatriation of remains
- ✓ At least $50,000 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.

If you are unable to provide coverage from your home country, you need to enroll in PGH Global. The enrollment page for J1 scholars is:
http://www.intlinsure.com/georgiacare/gsu-j1vfs

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.

The list below is just a small sample of the area hospitals 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.

In some cases, multiple locations may be available. Please check the websites below for more information.

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

Grady Memorial Hospital
(Right beside Georgia State)
80 Jesse Hill Dr. SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-616-1000
http://www.gradyhealth.org

Emory University Hospital Midtown
550 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-686-4411
http://www.emoryhealthcare.org

Piedmont Hospital
1968 Peachtree Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-605-5000
http://www.piedmonthospital.org

Northside Hospital
1000 Johnson Ferry Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
404-851-8000
http://www.northside.com

Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital
5665 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
404-851-7001
https://www.emoryhealthcare.org/locations/hospitals/emory-saint-josephs-hospital/

DeKalb Medical Center
2701 North Decatur Rd.
Decatur, GA 30033
404-501-1000
http://www.dekalbmedical.org

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
1001 Johnson Ferry Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
404-785-5437
http://www.choa.org

Other locations available:
https://www.choa.org/locations

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.

You can also search online for local dentist offices or ask your colleagues for recommendations.

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

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 5 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 5 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" printed from CBP website at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)
- Completed Form SS-5 (available on the SSA website at 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 accessible from Civic Center MARTA station:

401 W. Peachtree Street, Suite 2860
Peachtree Summit Federal Building
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 dependents, 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. For more information on Federal taxes, visit http://www.irs.gov/. For information on Georgia taxes, see http://www.dor.ga.gov/.

GEORGIA DRIVER'S LICENSE

All J-1 scholars who plan on driving in the U.S. should plan to apply for a Georgia driver's license as soon as possible. If you have a valid license from your home country (either with an International Driving Permit, or it is in English), you may use this for the first 30 days only.

However, once you have been present in Georgia for more than 30 days or have begun employment, you are considered a resident of Georgia and must obtain a Georgia driver's license within 30 days to continue driving legally. See DDS website for more information.

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. 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 http://www.dds.ga.gov/ to find the most convenient location for you.

Take all of the following documents with you:

- ✓ Previous License or Instructional Permits
- ✓ 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

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:

- ✓ 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?

For some information about on-campus and off-campus housing options, please see the following:
http://isss.gsu.edu/future-students/pre-arrival/housing/

Additional Off-Campus Housing Resources:

- **GSU's off-campus housing Web:** http://ochousing.gsu.edu
- **Pro-Move:** http://atlanta.promove.com
- **A&A Apartment Locators:** http://www.freeapartmentlocators.com
- **Craigslist:** http://atlanta.craigslist.org/hhh
- **The Atlanta Journal-Constitution:** http://ajchomefinder.com/apartments
- **Apartments.com**: http://apartments.com
- **Forrent.com**: http://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 to help you ask questions.
- ✓ To find out how far an apartment or house is from GSU, look on Google Maps. The address for GSU is 33 Gilmer Street, Atlanta, GA 30303. Google Maps (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 http://www.itsmarta.com/.

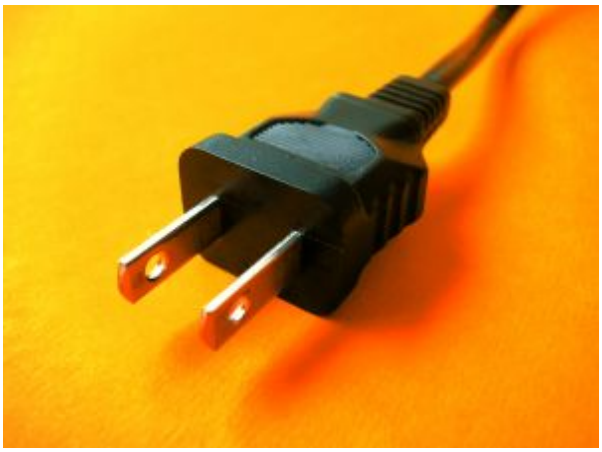
Housing Vocabulary

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 http://www.georgiapower.com/ or call 1-888-891-0938.

You will be generally be asked for your Social Security Number (SSN) in order to sign up for power service. If you do not have a SSN, you may still sign up for service by going in person to a Georgia Power office with your passport and a copy of your lease. As of the time of writing this guide, a deposit of $150 is also required.



Telephone Service Options
For local landline service, contact AT&T at 1-800-660-1000, or visit http://www.att.com/.

You may opt to just purchase a mobile phone plan only, instead of landline telephone service. Generally, mobile phones can be used to call any number in the U.S., without extra charges for long-distance calls.

For international calls, it is probably cheapest to use Skype or another Internet-based calling platform to make calls. Other options include using phone cards (available in grocery stores and drug stores.)

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: http://www.att.com/wireless/
- Verizon: http://www.verizonwireless.com/
- Sprint: http://www.sprint.com/
- T-Mobile: http://www.t-mobile.com/
- Boost Mobile: http://www.boostmobile.com/
- MetroPCS: http://www.metropcs.com/

Water Service
Visit the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management online at:
http://www.atlantawatershed.org/

You will need:

- Completed water service application
- Notarized lease agreement from owner
- Deposit (usually $80, but may vary) and account establishment fee ($15, but may vary)

Gas Service
Some accommodation will be all-electric, using electric appliances for heating and cooking. Others may use gas, requiring you to sign up for a gas service provider. 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:
  http://gng.com/

- Scana Energy:
  https://www.scanaenergy.com/

- Gas South:
  http://www.gas-south.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 lit by hand, 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.

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.

Is it highly recommended that you make sure that you have a fire extinguisher on hand in case of a fire. You should check with your leasing office or landlord to find one if one is provided for not. If not, you should consider purchasing one for safety reasons.

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.

Check with your leasing office or landlord to find out what recycling service is available in your local area.

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN ATLANTA

Below is a list of some of the many diplomatic missions in the Atlanta area. 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 embassy/consulate closest to you.

<u>If you do not see your country below, please see:</u>

Department of State – Foreign Consular Offices in the United States:
https://www.state.gov/s/cpr/fco/c71392.htm

State of Georgia – List of Consular Offices:
http://www.georgia.org/business-resources/international-relations/consular-offices/

City of Atlanta – Consular and Trade Offices:
http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=1157

Argentina
Consulate General of Argentina
245 Peachtree Center Avenue, Suite 2101
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-880-0805
Fax: 404-880-0806
Email: catla@mrecic.gov.at

Bahamas
Consulate General of the Bahamas
2970 Clairmont Road, Suite 290
Atlanta, GA 30329
Phone: 404-214-0492
Fax: 404-214-0497
Email: bahamasconsulatega@bahconga.com

Belgium
Consulate General of the Kingdom of Belgium
230 Peachtree Street NW, Suite 2250
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-659-2150
Fax: 404-659-8474
Email: atlanta@diplobel.fed.be

Brazil
Consulate General of the Federative Republic of Brazil
3500 Lenox Road, Suite 800
Atlanta, Georgia 30326
Phone: 770-885-9035
Fax: 404-949-2402
Email: cg.atlanta@itamaraty.gov.br

Canada
Consulate General of Canada
1175 Peachtree Street, Suite 1700
Atlanta, GA 30361-6205
Phone: 404-532-2000
Fax: 404-532-2050
Email: atnta@international.gc.ca

Colombia
Consulate General of the Republic of Colombia
270 Carpenter Drive, NE, Suite 110
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
Phone: 404-254-3206
Fax: 404-343-4906
Email: catlanta@cancilleria.gov.co

Costa Rica
Consulate General of the Republic of Costa Rica
1870 The Exchange, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339
Phone: 770-951-7025
Fax: 770-797-7073
Email: concr-us-ga@rree.go.cr

Ecuador
Consulate General of the Republic of Ecuador
3495 Piedmont Road, Building 12, Suite 105
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone: 404-841-2276
Fax: 404-841-2285
Email: cecuatlanta@cancilleria.gob.ec

El Salvador
Consulate General of the Republic of El Salvador
6735 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30360
Phone: 770-591-4140
Fax: 770-591-4160
Email: consuladoatlanta@rree.gob.sv

France
Consulate General of the French Republic
3399 Piedmont Rd. NE, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30326
Phone: 404-495-1660
Fax: 404-495-1661
Email: info.atlanta-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Germany
Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany
Marquis Two Tower, Suite 901
285 Peachtree Center Ave. NE
Atlanta, GA 30303-1221
Phone: 404-659-4760
Fax: 404-659-1280
Email: info@atlanta.diplo.de

Greece
Consulate of the Hellenic Republic
Tower Place, Suite 1670
3340 Peachtree Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30326
Phone: 404-261-3313
Fax: 404-262-2798
Email: atlanta@greekembassy.org

Guatemala
Consulate General of the Republic of Guatemala
2750 Buford Highway NE
Atlanta, GA 30324
Phone: 404-320-8804
Fax: 404-320-8806
Email: consatlanta@minex.gob.gt

Haiti
Consulate General of the Republic of Haiti
2911 Piedmont Street, Suite A
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone: 404-228-5373
Fax: 404-748-1513
Email: cg.atlanta@diplomatie.ht

Honduras
6755 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Suite 120
Atlanta, GA 30360
Phone: 770-645-8881
Fax: 470-375-6138
Email: info@consuladohnatl.com

India
Consulate General of the Republic of India
5549 Glenridge Drive
Atlanta, GA 30342
Phone: 404-963-5902
Fax: 678-935-7054
Email: cg.atlanta@mea.gov.in

Ireland
Consulate General of Ireland
3414 Peachtree Road, NE, Suite 260
Atlanta, GA 30326
Phone: 404-554-4890
Fax: 678-235-2201
Email: shane.stephens@dfa.ie

Israel
Consulate General of the State of Israel
1100 Spring Street NW, Suite 440
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Phone: 404-487-6500
Fax: 404-487-6555
Email: consul.sec@atlanta.mfa.gov.il

Japan
Consulate-General of Japan
3438 Peachtree Road, Suite 850
Atlanta, GA 30326
Phone: 404-240-4300
Fax: 404-240-4311
Email: ryoji@aa.mofa.go.jp

Korea
Consulate-General of the Republic of Korea
229 Peachtree Street NE
International Tower, Suite 2100
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-522-1611
Fax: 404-521-4040
Email: atlanta@mofa.go.kr

Mexico
Consulate General of Mexico
1700 Chantilly Drive
Atlanta, GA 30324
Phone: 404-266-2233
Fax: 404-266-2302
Email: conatlanta@sre.gob.mx

Nigeria
Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
8060 Roswell Road
Atlanta, GA 30350
Phone: 770-394-6261
Fax: 770-394-4671
Email: info@nigeria-consulate-atl.org

Peru
Consulate General of Peru
4360 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Suite 580
Atlanta, GA 30341
Phone: 678-755-1354
Fax: 678-990-1920
Email: info@consulperuatlanta.com

Switzerland
Consulate General of Switzerland
1349 West Peachtree Street NE, Suite 1000
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: 404-870-2000
Fax: 404-870-2011
Email: vertretung@atl.rep.admin.ch

United Kingdom
Consulate General of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Georgia Pacific Center, Suite 3400
133 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-954-7700
Fax: 404-954-7702
Email: BritishConsulateGeneral.Atlanta@fco.gov.uk

SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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

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. NE
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone: 404-846-4396
Fax: 404-846-4397
Web: http://www.amis-inc.org/
Email: office@amis-inc.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
Phone: 770-938-1122
Fax: 770-938-1007
Web: http://btg-online.org/
Email: sdoeung@btg-online.org

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

3635 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Suite 450
Duluth, GA 30096
Phone: 770-270-0663
Fax: 770-270-0979
E-mail: aarc@aarc-atlanta.org
Web: http://www.aarc-atlanta.org/

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

3510 Shallowford Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30341
Phone: 770-936-0969
Fax: 770-458-9377
E-mail: cpacs@cpacs.org
Web: 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
Phone: 404-508-1050
Email: info@clarkstoncommunitycenter.org
Web: 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)**

Web: http://www.fanatlanta.org

International Rescue Committee
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
2305 Parklake Drive, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30345
Phone: 404-292-7731
E-mail: Atlanta@Rescue.org
Web: https://www.rescue.org/united-states/atlanta-ga

ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOURCES AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Georgia State University has a variety of programs available for scholars who speak English as a second or foreign language.

Intensive English Program

The IEP is an accredited, intensive, non-credit program designed for non-native speakers who want to develop the language and cultural competence necessary to make success at an American university an achievable goal.

http://iep.gsu.edu/

Tutoring for IEP and ESL Students/Scholars

Tutoring is available to IEP students and all Georgia State students whose first language is not English. An appointment is required. These services are provided by graduate students in the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL.

http://iep.gsu.edu/current-students/iep-esl-tutoring-services/

For more information, you may also contact
John Reiter: jreiter1@gsu.edu

Intercultural Conversation Exchange (ICE)

The Intensive English Program (IEP) also holds a conversation program called ICE (Intercultural Conversation Exchange) once a week. The purpose of this activity is to practice conversational English and explore various cultural topics.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Wendi Doughty for more information about the current semester's program.

wdoughty@gsu.edu

OUTSIDE ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOURCES

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
Phone: 770-515-7610
http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/departments/division_of_teaching_and_learning/adult_education

Cobb County

Cobb Literary Council
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
Phone: 678-594-8011 ext. 256
E-mail: margaret.halstead@cobbk12.org
http://www.cobbk12.org/adulted/esl.aspx

DeKalb County

Georgia Piedmont Technical College
Community Education Center
5745 Buford Highway Suite 200
Doraville, GA 30340
Phone: 404-297-9522 ext. 4004
http://www.gptc.edu/content.cfm?PageCode=adult_esl

Dekalb County Public Library
Literacy Services Office
Phone: 404-508-7190, ext. 2240
http://dekalblibrary.org/services/literacy/english-as-a-second-language

International Rescue Committee
Phone: 404-292-7731
E-mail: Atlanta@Rescue.org

Fulton County

Atlanta Board of Education
Adult Education Program
130 Trinity Ave
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-802-3500
http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/adulteducation

Gwinnett County

Gwinnett Technical College
5150 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Building 400
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Phone: 678-226-6401
http://www.gwinnetttech.edu/esl

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. Please note that GSU does not endorse any of the schools listed.

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

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
Phone: 404-413-8460

Capitol Hill Child Enrichment Center
Phone: 404-413-8454

The Goddard Schools
Phone: 1-800-GODDARD
http://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
Phone: 770-529-4100
http://www.primroseschools.com/

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

You may find listings of other daycare facilities here:
https://www.care.com/day-care/atlanta-ga

Questions you should ask when finding 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 and well-being 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.

<u>All</u> 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: Must be government-issued with 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. For more information, please visit: https://dph.georgia.gov/
  - o Immunizations are required for:
    - Diphtheria
    - Pertussis
    - Tetanus
    - Hepatitis B
    - Polio
    - Measles
    - Mumps
    - Rubella
    - Varicella (chicken pox)
  - o All currently enrolled children entering 6th grade must have:
    - 2 doses of Measles vaccine, 2 doses of Mumps vaccine, 1 dose of Rubella vaccine, or laboratory proof of immunity against each.
    - 2 doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or documentation of disease or laboratory proof of immunity.
- ✓ 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. Please be advised that Georgia State University, ISSS does not endorse the schools listed below.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/

CITY OF DECATUR SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.csdecatur.net/schools/

CLAYTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/

COBB COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.cobb.k12.ga.us/
School Locations:
http://www.cobbk12.org/schools/feeder_patterns.aspx

Cobb County also has two International Welcome Centers that provide support services specific to the needs of non-immigrant families.
http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/esol/iwc/

International Welcome Center
1560 Joyner Ave.
Marietta, GA 30060
Phone: 678-331-3086
FAX: 678-331-3964

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/

FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.fultonschools.org/

GWINNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS
Web: http://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/

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.

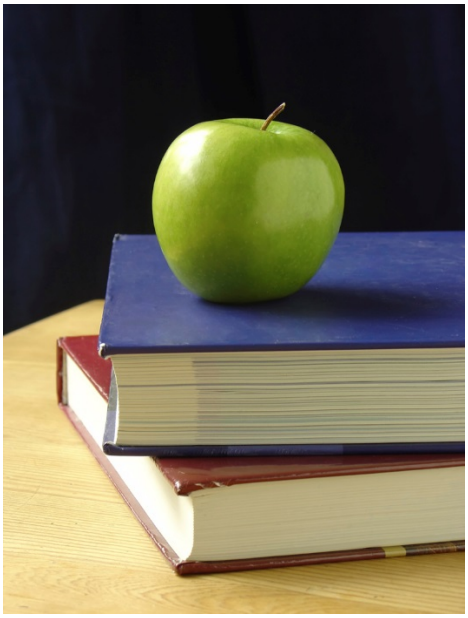
Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library
Web: http://www.afpls.org/

Clayton County Library System
Web: http://www.claytonpl.org/

Cobb County Public Library
Web: http://www.cobbcat.org/

DeKalb County Public Library
Web: http://dekalblibrary.org/

Gwinnett County Public Library
Web: http://www.gwinnettpl.org/



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:

- Target
- Walmart

Drug Stores/Pharmacies:

- Walgreen's
- RiteAid
- CVS

Office/School Supplies:

- Office Max
- Office Depot
- Staples

Electronics:

- Best Buy
- Fry's
- Brandsmart (discount store)

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:

Craiglist Atlanta:
https://atlanta.craigslist.org/

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Classifieds):
http://www.ajc.com/classifieds/

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 (http://www.publix.com/)
- Kroger (http://www.kroger.com/)
- Trader Joe's (http://www.traderjoes.com/)
- Walmart (http://www.walmart.com/)

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

There are several international farmer's markets around Atlanta, including:

75 Farmers Market
230 Cleveland Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30315
Phone: 404-766-9575

Buford Highway Farmer's Market
5600 Buford Hwy
Doraville, GA 30340
Phone: 770-455-0770
http://aofwc.com

Hoa Binh Seafood Market
4897 Buford Hwy #116
Chamblee, GA 30341
Phone: 770-457-3383
http://hoabinhatlanta.com/

Sweet Auburn Curb Market
209 Edgewood Ave SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-659-1665
http://www.sweetauburncurbmarket.com/

Mercado Fresco
4166 Buford Hwy NE, Suite 1115
Atlanta, GA 30345-1081
Phone: 404-633-3066
http://mercadofrescoga.com/

Dekalb Farmers Market
3000 E Ponce de Leon Ave
Decatur, GA 30030
Phone: 404-377-6400
http://www.dekalbfarmersmarket.com/

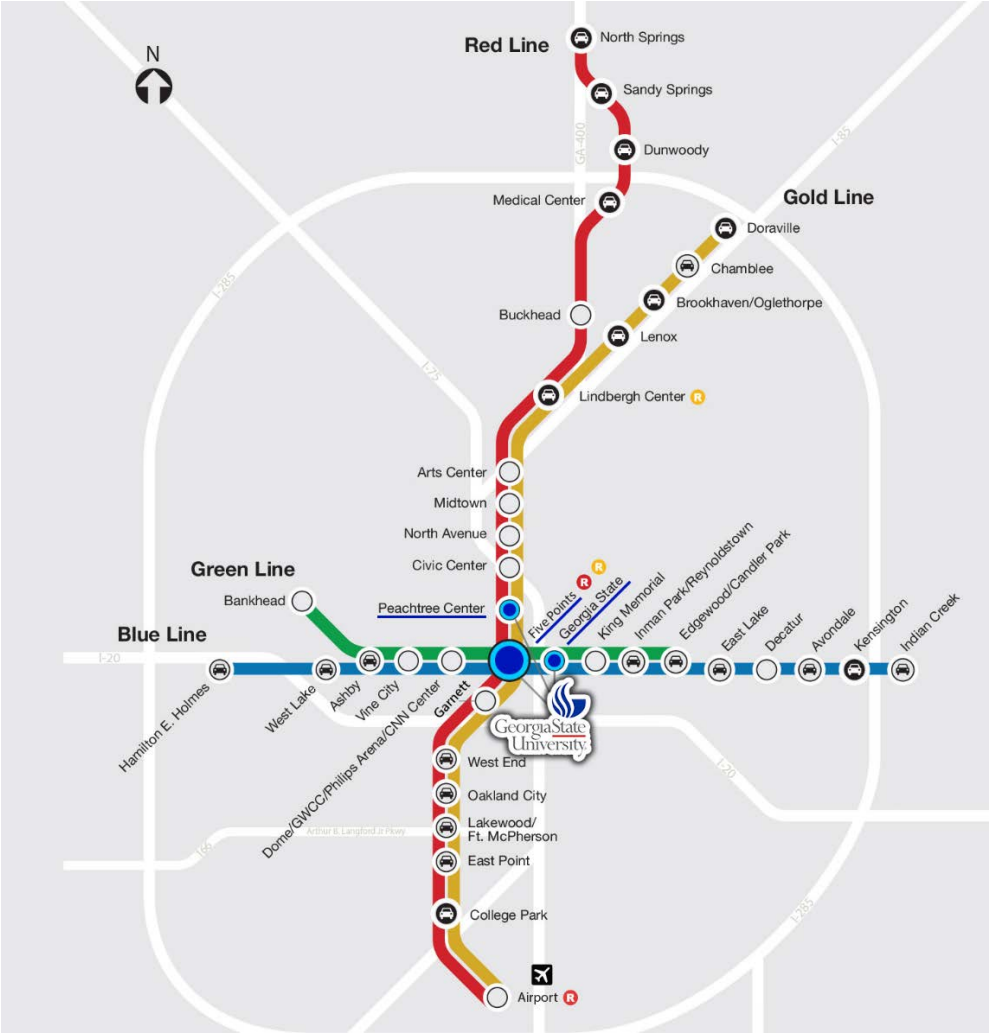
First Oriental Market
2774 E Ponce De Leon Ave
Decatur, GA
Phone: 404-377-6950

Cherian's International Groceries
751 Dekalb Industrial Way
Decatur, GA 30033
Phone: 404-299-0842
http://www.cherians.com/

TRANSPORTATION

MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority)

MARTA is Atlanta's public transportation system. Georgia State has its own MARTA train and bus stops, listed below.



Train:

Georgia State Station

Five Points Station

Peachtree Center Station

Bus:

GSU Library/Decatur St.

GSU Concert Hall/Gilmer St.

GSU/Courtland St.

GSU/Decatur St. & Collins St.

GSU/Decatur St.

GSU/Gilmer St.

To find out how to use MARTA and arrive at GSU, go to http://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, or the Student Accounts Cashier's Office. For more information, see http://transit.gsu.edu/

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)
http://www.bucride.com/

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

Gwinnett County Transit (GCT)
http://www.gctransit.com/

Xpress Services
(Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dekalb, Douglas, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Paulding, and Rockdale counties)
http://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://parking.gsu.edu/ 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 https://www.nerdwallet.com/insurance/compare-car-insurance-rates to compare many companies at once.

Some popular choices are:

- Geico: http://www.geico.com/
- Traveler's: http://www.travelers.com/
- Allstate (http://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.

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 <u>before</u> you depart.

Bring your DS-2019 form to ISSS <u>at least two weeks</u> before your trip to obtain a travel signature.

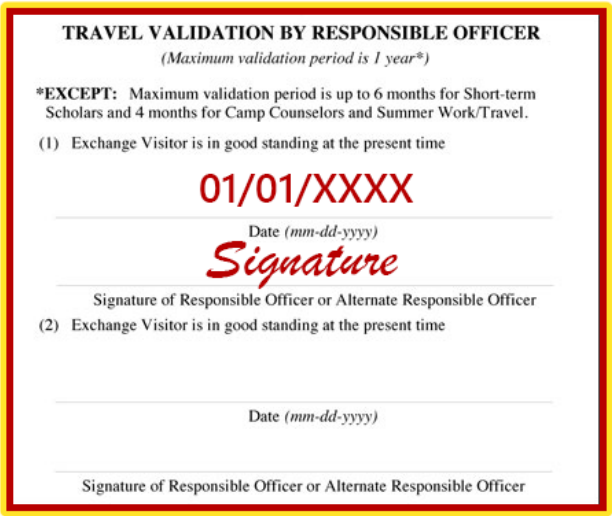
Also, please note the following important points:

- 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 https://www.usembassy.gov/ 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.



TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

(Maximum validation period is 1 year)*

***EXCEPT:** Maximum validation period is up to 6 months for Short-term Scholars and 4 months for Camp Counselors and Summer Work/Travel.

(1) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time

01/01/XXXX

Date *(mm-dd-yyyy)*

Signature

Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer

(2) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time

Date *(mm-dd-yyyy)*

Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer

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 Atlanta locations include:

- Bank of America (http://www.bankofamerica.com/)
- Wells Fargo (http://www.wellsfargo.com)
- Chase (http://www.chase.com)
- SunTrust (http://www.suntrust.com/)

In order to open a bank account, please bring all of the following documents with you to the bank:

- Your unexpired passport and visa
- DS-2019
- I-94 card
- Home country ID card (if available)

The bank may ask you for your Social Security Number (SSN), a government-issued number that is used for tax purposes. However, it should be possible to open an account using the above documents, even if you do not have a SSN. All scholars who wish to apply for an SSN are eligible to do so. However, you may wish to open a bank account when you arrive for your daily use, before you would have time to obtain a Social Security Number.

Cash & Transferring Money
It is not safe to carry large amounts of cash with you, so please avoid doing so when you arrive. You may be able to use a U.S. ATM to withdrawal money, from your home bank account. This depends on the banking system in the country, however, so please research beforehand. You may also want to bring traveler's checks with you to deposit to your U.S. bank account. However, these can take up to three weeks to deposit to your account.

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 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.

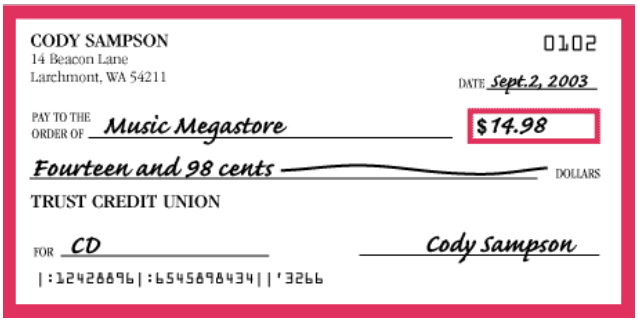
Using an ATM
Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) allow you to make cash withdrawals, deposits, transfers between accounts, and view your account balance. This is free at your own bank and its branches, but other banks' ATMs may subject you to additional fees (around $2-5). You will need an ATM card or a 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 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, as most bank will charge around $25 every time you overdraw your account.

How to Write a Check
Americans sometimes write checks rather than paying with cash or a debit card for big purchases. When opening your bank account, you'll be given a check book. You may use checks, for example, when paying rent or bills. Note it may be easier and faster to pay online, when possible.

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). Do not leave any space in between the dollar sign and the first number.
- ✓ Write out the dollar amount (e.g. "Twenty-five 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.


CODY SAMPSON
14 Beacon Lane
Larchmont, WA 54211
0102
DATE Sept.2, 2003
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Music Megastore
$14.98
Fourteen and 98 cents
DOLLARS
TRUST CREDIT UNION
FOR CD
Cody Sampson
|:12428896|:654589434||'3266

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 mosquitoes 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. Check your existing chargers to see which are compatible with U.S. standards and which require an adapter.

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

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 http://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.gstvonline.org/ for more information.

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

- American football (men)
- 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)

Visit http://www.georgiastatesports.com/ for more information.

Georgia State University Rialto Center for the Arts
Georgia State University's Rialto Center for the Arts is an 833-seat performing-arts venue located in downtown Atlanta.

80 Forsyth Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-413-9800
E-mail: info@rialtocenter.org
http://www.rialtocenter.org

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 PantherCard is required.

Student Recreation Center, Room 30 (lower level)
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-413-1772
http://www.gsu.edu/recreation/

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
Phone: 404-876-5859
http://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org/

Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone: 404-814-4000
http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
1280 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30309 -3552
Phone: 404-733-4900
http://www.atlantasymphony.org/

The Carter Center
One Copenhill
453 Freedom Pkwy.
Atlanta, GA 30307
Phone: 404-420-5100
http://www.cartercenter.org/

Fernbank Science Center
156 Heaton Park Dr.
Atlanta, GA 30307
Phone: 678-874-7102
http://www.fernbank.edu/

Fox Theatre
660 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Phone: 404-881-2100
http://www.foxtheatre.org/

Georgia Aquarium
225 Baker Street
Atlanta, GA 30313
Phone: 404-581-4000
http://www.georgiaaquarium.org/

Georgia State Parks
Phone: 1-800-864-7275
http://www.gastateparks.org

High Museum of Art
1280 Peachtree St. NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Phone: 404-733-4400
http://www.high.org/

The King Center
449 Auburn Ave. NE
Atlanta, GA 30312
Phone: 404-526-8900
http://www.thekingcenter.org/

Margaret Mitchell House & Museum
979 Crescent Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: 404-249-7015
http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/explore/destinations/margaret-mitchell-house

Six Flags Over Georgia (amusement park)
275 Riverside Parkway
Austell, GA 30168
Phone: 770-948-9290
http://www.sixflags.com/

Six Flags White Water (water park)
250 N. Cobb Parkway #100
Marietta, Georgia 30062
Phone: 770-948-9290
http://www.sixflags.com/

Stone Mountain Park
U.S. Hwy. 78 East
Exit 8
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
Phone: 800-401-2407
http://www.stonemountainpark.com/

Zoo Atlanta
800 Cherokee Ave. SE
Atlanta, GA 30315
Phone: 404-624-9453
http://www.zooatlanta.org

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

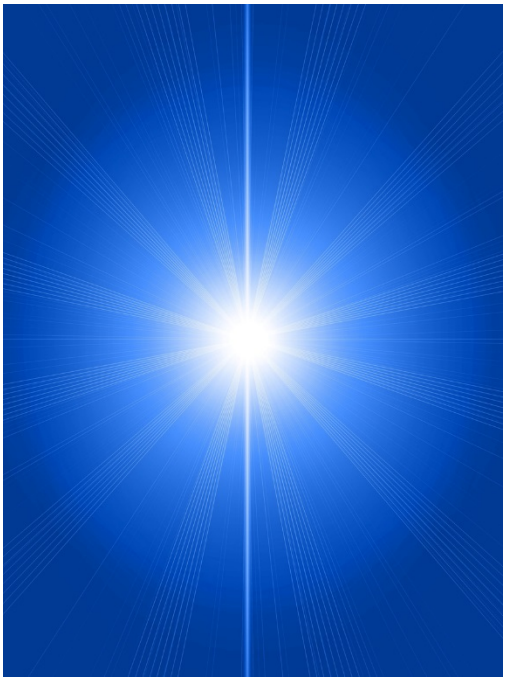
Following is a small sample of religious organizations in the Atlanta area. There are many more excellent groups not included on this list because of space constraints.

Visit The Pluralism Project (http://pluralism.org/profiles/) to locate more religious centers of interest.

Al-Farooq Masjid of Atlanta
442 14th Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: 404-874-7521
http://www.alfarooqmasjid.org/

All Saints Episcopal Church
634 W Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308-1981
Phone: 404-881-0835
http://www.allsaintsatlanta.org/

Atlanta First United Methodist Church
360 Peachtree Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: 404-524-6614
http://www.atlantafumc.net/



Atlanta Hare Krishna Temple
1287 South Ponce de Leon Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30306
Phone: 404-377-8680
http://www.atlantaharekrishnas.org/

Atlanta Baha'i Center
379 Edgewood Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30312
Phone: 404-688-0208
http://www.atlantabahai.org/

Baptist Collegiate Ministries @ GSU
125 Edgewood Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-659-8726
http://www.bcmgsu.org/

Atlanta Buddhism Directory:
http://atlantabuddhism.mm.st/

Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
48 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3599
Phone: 404-521-1866
http://www.catholicshrineatlanta.org/

Congregation Shearith Isreal (Traditional)
1180 University Drive NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
Phone: 404-873-1743
Web: http://www.shearithisrael.com/

Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Inc.
5851 Highway 85
Riverdale, GA 30274-1403
Phone: 770-907-7102
http://www.hindutempleofatlanta.org/

International Church, Inc.
2375 Shallowford Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30345
404-321-3392
http://www.internationalchurch.cc/

AMERICAN CULTURE

NAMES

First (given) names are used in the U.S. more frequently than in many countries. The last name is the family name. If two people are of about the same age or status, they may commonly 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. You may ask them "What shall I call you?" or "How shall I address you?"
- If someone appears uncertain about how to address you, say to them "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 or an alias can be confusing. It is also helpful for other people who meet 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.

FRIENDSHIP

A U.S. colleague might consider you a friend, but only invite you to do something once or twice a semester. This should be seen to mean that he or she does not like you. It is perhaps a sign that life in the United States tends to be very busy and people have many commitments such as work and family, in addition to their studies. Alternatively, someone may suggest that you “get lunch sometime” or “grab coffee” and then not actually follow up with a specific date. In many cases, this is simply meant as a friendly gesture and means that they would like to get to know you better.

Sometimes international scholars think Americans are superficial because they act very friendly but do not necessarily wish to build a close friendship. Acting friendly is a U.S. custom and style of communication. 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.

“How are you?” is commonly used as a greeting in the United States. In some senses, it is similar to simply saying “hello” and the person who asks the question often does not really 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 a similarly brief response.

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Freedom of speech is a cherished American value and right. For international scholars from some countries, the way of communicating to which Americans have become accustomed is sometimes seen as very direct. Saying what you mean directly and openly is often seen as correct and proper. For those coming from other places, Americans could be perceived as superficial or not honest about their real feelings, despite this supposed directness. Communicating across cultural backgrounds can be tricky and fraught with misunderstandings. However, over time, you will become accustomed to the American style of communicating and doing things. Patience, a sense of humor, and openness to new experiences can make this transition easier.

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 and even argue with each other, while still being friendly. Don’t be afraid to say no!

RELIGION

Depending on where you are from, Americans may be significantly more or less religious than you are accustomed to seeing in your home country. Some people may try to get you to visit or join their church or other religious gatherings. They may invite you to 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 should not feel pressured to attend a religious service or meeting if you don't want to.

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 who are 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 even 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. As in most countries, there is a 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.

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. 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
- Anxiety
- 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, 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!

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!
- **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.**

SAFETY ON GSU CAMPUS

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Always dial 911 for true emergencies
(911: Police, firefighters, and ambulances)

GSU Campus Police:
404-651-3333

GSU Police Safety Escorts (& Non-Emergencies):
404-413-2100

Please see the official GSU Safety & Security page for detailed information about how to stay safe on campus and in Atlanta: http://safety.gsu.edu/

On-Campus Safety Services

Safety Escorts
https://safety.gsu.edu/police/safety-escort/

A security guard is assigned to an Escort Van, which is available during the evenings when class is in session. If for any reason you feel unsafe, you may call 404-413-2100 to request a free escort to your location. Escorts are made from GSU buildings, nearby MARTA stations (Georgia State, Peachtree Center, and Five Points), and parking lots near campus. Hours may be subject to change during weekends and school breaks.

Emergency Call Boxes
https://safety.gsu.edu/safety-you/emergency-call-boxes/

Located in parking lots, parking decks and plaza areas, emergency call boxes are an integral part of the safety and security services provided by the Georgia State University Police Department. The boxes are activated by opening the door on the box and pushing a call button on the inside. The caller is connected directly to the police radio network and may speak to the police dispatcher. The University currently has more than 58 call boxes, which can be identified by emergency signs and flashing blue lights.

Please see the following link for a map of Call Boxes:
https://safety.gsu.edu/files/2015/10/Call-Box-Map.pdf

Additional personal safety tips from GSU
https://safety.gsu.edu/safety-you/personal-safety/

SAFETY IN ATLANTA

Like many U.S. cities, there are some areas in Atlanta that can be more dangerous than others, especially at night. Before you go to a new area, especially by yourself or at night, be sure to ask about how safe it is. Generally, following basic precautions such as travelling in groups, keeping a close watch on your belongings, and avoiding walking alone can go a long way towards avoiding potential safety issues.

Interacting with 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, so do not do anything that could appear to be a bribe.

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

- Do not walk by yourself at night.
- Keep your books, handbags, and backpacks with you. Do not leave them unattended in classrooms, libraries, or anywhere else.
- 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, and lock your home door whenever you are not at home.
- 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.
- 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. Do not allow someone, especially in a vehicle, to borrow your cell phone to make a call.
- 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.
- Use your ATM card during the day. If you must use the machine at night, go to an indoor or otherwise well-lit machine.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY INFORMATION

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, you should not give them money. Panhandling is illegal and should not be encouraged, and there are charities that provide shelter and food for those in need.

If you are approached, you can say, "Sorry, I don't have any cash," 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. Some types of drugs are manufactured in people's homes and cut, or mixed, with potentially very dangerous substances. You should avoid possessing or being around any illegal substances, for both your own health and safety and because of legal risks.

If you are drinking at a bar or a party, never leave your drink unattended! It is possible that someone could slip drugs into your drink if you set it down and walk away. If you happen to forget and leave your drink somewhere, get a new cup and drink. And remember, you always have the right to say no to anything you encounter that makes you feel uncomfortable. You should also be very careful accepting a drink given to you by someone you do not know.

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 get arrested and lose your license.

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, may make the United States appear to be more violent than it is. As long as you are careful and take some necessary precautions, you should have a safe and pleasant stay.

LINKS

American Culture

- http://www.leaderu.com/isr
- http://www.internationalstudent.com/
- http://educationusa.state.gov/

U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad:

- http://www.travel.state.gov/

Foreign Embassies/Consulates in the U.S.:

- http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco
- http://www.embassy.org/embassies

Immigration

- Department of Homeland Security: http://www.dhs.gov/
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: http://www.uscis.gov/

  U.S. Customs and Border Protection: http://www.cbp.gov/
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: http://www.ice.gov/
- Department of State: http://www.state.gov/

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