PORT OF ENTRY: DOCUMENTS TO HAVE WITH YOU
You may be refused entry into the U.S. if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the program start date listed on your Form I-20 or DS-2019. Always hand-carry your documents. You will not have access to your luggage on international flights until after going through customs. If you cannot present these documents at your port of entry, you will be denied entry to the U.S. DO NOT put the following documents in your checked baggage:
• Passport and visa valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
• Immigration documents (original SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019).
• Evidence of financial resources.
• Acceptance letter from Georgia State University.
• Printed receipt for the SEVIS fee (form I-901 fee payment).
• Name and contact information for your Designated School Official (DSO) as listed on your I-20 or your Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) as listed on your DS-2019. If you experience problems at the port of entry outside regular business hours, contact the Georgia State Police at 404-413-3333.

PORT OF ENTRY: FORMS TO COMPLETE
• By air: Flight attendants will distribute customs declaration forms (CF-6059) for you to complete before landing.
• By land or sea: The Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Officer at the port of entry will provide the necessary customs declaration forms (CF-6059) for you to fill out upon arrival. Be prepared to provide the name and address of the Georgia State University campus you will attend.

PORT OF ENTRY: WHAT TO DO
• Proceed into the airport terminal with other arriving passengers. You may visit the restroom if needed.
• Get in the line for non-U.S. citizens at the border inspection area. You will need to state your reason for wishing to enter the country and your final destination. Tell the border officer you will be a student at Georgia State University. Be prepared to provide the name and address of the campus you will attend.
• Once your inspection is successfully completed, the officer will stamp your passport for F1 or J1 visa status and “D/S,” which means “Duration of Status.”
• Thank the officer, and move forward. You have now entered the U.S. Welcome!

- If there is a problem with your initial border inspection, such as forgetting your I-20 or DS-2019, you may be asked to wait in a room apart from the other passengers for “Secondary Inspection.” This process could take several hours. The agent may try to contact ISSS, or you may be granted temporary U.S. entry with additional steps to complete.
- If you forget your passport, if your passport is damaged or illegible, or if you don’t have a visa, you will likely be denied entry to the U.S. and directed to the next return flight home at your own expense.

• Follow signs to baggage claim. Collect your bags, and proceed to customs. You may need to present your passport again. Once you get through customs, you will enter the public area of the terminal.
• Follow signs to “Ground Transportation.”

See you at International Check-In and Orientation. Welcome to Georgia State University!
THREE STEPS TO YOUR VISA
Obtaining your VISA to enter the U.S. can be time-consuming, expensive and complicated. Please follow these three steps. See you soon.

STEP 1. RECEIVE YOUR IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS
ISSS will provide you with immigration documents so you can apply for a visa.
- For the F-1 visa, you will need form I-20.
- For the J-1 visa, you will need form DS-2019.

How to Receive Your Immigration Documents
After your official academic admission to the university, the U.S. government requires you to provide financial documentation of your ability to pay tuition, fees, health insurance and living expenses for one year. You will submit your financial documentation via an online system called “iStart.” ISSS will email you instructions for using iStart. Once ISSS reviews your finances, ISSS will process your form I-20 or DS-2019 and mail it to you.

STEP 2. PAY YOUR SEVIS FEE
About the Fee
The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) require F-1 and J-1 nonimmigrant visa applicants to pay a processing fee of $200 for the F-1 visa and $180 for the J-1 visa. Known as the “I-901 Processing Fee,” the amount is subject to increase. This fee, not U.S. taxes, funds the cost of administering and maintaining the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database.

When to Pay
You must pay the fee at least three (3) business days (Monday – Friday) before going to the U.S. embassy to apply for a visa. This delay allows time for the fee to be processed and reflected in SEVIS.

Proof of Payment
DHS no longer mails receipts for payment. However, you can print your receipt online after payment is processed at sfmfee.com/i901fee.

How to pay
There are three ways to pay your SEVIS fee as indicated on the next page. Students from Kenya may not pay the fee by credit card at this time. For help, call the I-901 Helpline at 314-425-1809.

1. Online (most common)
   - Visit sfmfee.com, and click “Pay I-901 Fee.”
   - Input your personal information and provide your SEVIS ID, which has 10 digits and begins with the letter N. Look for it in the upper right corner of Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.
   - The next page is called “Form Selection.” Scroll to the bottom, and select Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.
   - Input your personal information again. You’ll also need to provide the school code on your I-20 or the program code on your DS-2019. The Georgia State University school code is ATL214F00107000, and the program code is P-I-03559.
   - On the next page, verify the information is correct.

2. Western Union Quick Pay Service (wire transfer)
   - Visit ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu-instructions.
   - Follow the instructions for Western Union payments.

3. Mail (slower, less reliable)
   - Visit ice.gov/sevis/i901.
   - Find “Paper Form I-901” under the “Related Information” column on the right.
   - Instructions appear on p. 2 of the form under the heading “Payment by mail.”
   - Print and complete Form I-901.
   - Attach a certified check from a U.S. Bank or a U.S. money order payable to “I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee.” DO NOT mail cash.
   - Write your full name and SEVIS ID on your check.

STEP 3. SCHEDULE YOUR VISA INTERVIEW
To find the U.S. embassy closest to your home, visit usembassy.gov.

- Review your I-20 or DS-2019 for accuracy. If any of the information listed on the form is incorrect, please contact ISSS immediately so a new form can be processed if necessary.
- Your I-20 or DS-2019 makes you eligible to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa but does not guarantee issuance of the visa. Therefore, DO NOT purchase your airplane ticket before receiving your visa.
- Wait times for visa appointments vary by location, so you are strongly advised to apply early.
- Search for “visa appointment wait times” in the search box at travel.state.gov.

WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR VISA INTERVIEW
- Confirmation page from your Form DS-2019. (J-1 visas only) You can find and print this at ceac.state.gov/genniv.
- Receipt for your I-901 Processing Fee, which you can print at sfmfee.com/i901fee.
- Your original I-20 or DS-2019 signed by an ISSS adviser at Georgia State University.
- Official acceptance letter from Georgia State University.
- Passport valid for at least six months.
- Original proof of financial support that you submitted to obtain your I-20 or DS-2019.
  - F-1 students: These documents should match the information in section 8 of your I-20, should not be older than 60 days and should not be longer than one page each.
  - A simple one-page statement of your educational plan and goals for the consular officer.
- Evidence of ties to your home country. Regulations require applicants for nonimmigrant visas to prove they have no intentions, current or future, to abandon their home country. Failure to adequately demonstrate permanent home country ties is the main reason for visa denials. As applicable, prepare the following documentation. Also, bring it with you to the U.S. in case of need.
  - Family: List names, addresses and places of employment of family members in your country.
  - Residence Abroad: Document where you intend to live outside the U.S. after completion of your degree.
  - Property: Any property or businesses you and your family may own.
  - Finances: List bank accounts, bank addresses or business investments in your home country.
  - Other Documentation: You may be asked for things like telephone or utility bills, mortgage statements, rental agreements or automobile registration.

Arrive on time in professional or traditional attire with a positive attitude. Be prepared for a three to five minute formal interview in English with a representative of the U.S. federal government. If you are denied a visa, politely ask why. Try to confirm that an official notification of the reason will be mailed to your home address within two weeks, and let ISSS know as soon as possible.