Click here! International Student Orientation

WELCOME TO GEORGIA TECH!

Important Contacts

Georgia Tech Police Department
police.gatech.edu

Office of International Education
oie.gatech.edu

Registrar’s Office
registrar.gatech.edu

Housing Department
housing.gatech.edu

Buzzcard Center
buzzcard.gatech.edu

Bursar’s Office
bursar.gatech.edu

Stamps Health Services
health.gatech.edu
ABOUT GEORGIA TECH

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, the Georgia Institute of Technology is a leading research university committed to improving the human condition through advanced science and technology.

Ranked as the #7 best public university, Georgia Tech provides a focused, technologically-based education to more than 32,700 undergraduate and graduate students, 24% of them are international students.

Georgia Tech has many nationally recognized programs, all top-ranked by peers and publications alike, and is ranked in the nation’s top 10 public universities by U.S. News and World Report.

The strong academic work ethic at Tech is balanced by a collegiate atmosphere incorporating both intercollegiate and intramural sports, campus traditions, and some 400 student organizations.

There is no doubt that Georgia Tech stands out as a distinctively different kind of university, one that is eagerly encouraging and developing the revolutionary technologies of the 21st century.

Equipped with the extremely rich resources of an outstanding student body and faculty, strong partnerships with business, industry, and government, and support from alumni and friends, Georgia Tech is designing a future of global preeminence, leadership, and service.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES
oie.gatech.edu/isss

WHO WE ARE:
International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is a workgroup within the Office of International Education (OIE). Our mission is to serve as a resource and advocate for the large and diverse population of international students and scholars at GT.

WHAT WE DO:
ISSS is a resource to which you can turn to receive support to solve problems, obtain information to maintain your immigration status, and connect you to Georgia Tech and external resources.

VIRTUAL ADVISING:
OIE offers virtual advising. Students may sign up for a group advising session or schedule an individual appointment with an adviser at oie.gatech.edu/isss_advising.

iSTART:
iStart is the software used by OIE to manage student records. Students use iStart to request changes and updates to their I-20 or DS-2019. The normal processing time for requests made through iStart is 5 business days (1 week). You can log into iStart at istart.gatech.edu using your GT username and password.

iBUZZ:
iBuzz is an electronic newsletter sent to all enrolled F/J students. ISSS encourages international students to read this regularly as it contains important announcements, updates, and deadlines.

OIE HELPS YOU WITH
- Questions about your visa status
- Changes or updates to your I-20 or DS-2019
- Travel and visa renewal guidance
- Understanding benefits associated with your visa status
YOUR FIRST WEEK: SETTLING-IN

REMOVE HOLDS FOR REGISTRATION
Check your Buzzport record to see if you have any holds preventing your registration for classes. The name of the hold and office to contact will be listed in Buzzport. Review the information on the website for the appropriate office and follow the instructions to remove the hold. Holds may include “Immigration file missing”, “Immunization records missing”, and “Final transcript and degree certificate missing” (for grad students). An OIE Check-In Hold will be added after Phase II Registration for any student who has not completed the OIE Check-In process in iStart.

REGISTER FOR CLASSES:
As an F or J visa holder you are required to enroll in at minimum 12 credit hours of study to meet the requirements of your student visa status. New graduate students will register during Phase II registration. New undergraduate students will register during FASET orientation. You can make changes to your registration during the Phase II registration period and no later than the first Friday after classes begin.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION
OIE holds an International Student Orientation which includes various sessions and social events to help new international students adjust to life at Georgia Tech and in the U.S. For more information, visit: oie.gatech.edu/isss/welcome-series.

BUZZCARD (GT IDENTIFICATION):
The BuzzCard is the Georgia Tech identification card that provides access to a variety of campus-wide services. The first card is issued free of charge. You will need your passport and GT ID number handy to get your BuzzCard. Visit buzzcard.gatech.edu for more information.

COVID-19 RESOURCES:
For guidance on campus resources and plans regarding COVID-19, visit Tech Moving Forward and OIE’s FAQs.
Maintaining Your F-1/J-1 Status

It is important to understand and comply with the F or J regulations during your time in the U.S. Failure to abide by these laws can greatly impact your ability to meet your education and personal goals. Please remember that your immigration status and academic success are connected so you must be successful at both.

All international students must do the following to maintain status:

- Be enrolled full-time (12+ hours) each semester unless a vacation semester has been earned or you have been approved for an authorized reduced course load.
- Keep a valid, unexpired I-20/DS-2019 and passport (passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future).
- Update OIE within 10 days of any change to your physical addresses in the US or your home country via iStart.
- Update OIE within 10 days of any changes to your program including change of major, pursuit of a new degree, Leave of Absence, etc.
- Work no more than 20 hours/week while enrolled full-time.
- Have a valid travel signature before leaving and re-entering the U.S.
- Complete an Income Tax Return as per IRS regulation by April 15th of each year.
- Notify ISSS of any change to or addition of your F-2/J-2 dependents.
EMPLOYMENT

Employment eligibility varies by visa type. Visit oie.gatech.edu/isss for more details regarding employment in your visa status.

ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT:
F-1 and J-1 students in good standing are eligible to work on-campus part-time (up to 20 hours/week) while school is in session and may be eligible to work more than part-time over school breaks and summer vacation. On-campus employment is subject to GT policies so please always work with the Human Resources Administrator in your hiring department to determine eligibility.

- F-1 students: There is no formal authorization required from OIE.
- J-1 students: On-campus employment requires approval in writing from OIE. To request on-campus employment, submit the “J on-campus Work Authorization Request” e-form in iStart.

Any job on campus that is paid by Georgia Tech or a firm providing service to GT students is considered to be on-campus employment. Examples are Barnes & Noble @Georgia Tech Bookstore, the Student Center, or an academic department. If you have questions about whether your employment will be considered on-campus, check with OIE.

OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT:
Off-campus employment is available ONLY with permission from OIE and sometimes USCIS. You are not eligible for these off-campus work options until you have completed one academic year of full-time enrollment in the U.S. Please see the OIE website for more detailed information.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN):
A Social Security Number (SSN) is a permanent identification number administered by the Social Security Administration. All individuals working in the U.S. are required to have a Social Security Number. Students working on campus need to request a support letter from OIE for the SSN application. Students can request this letter and assistance with scheduling an appointment with the Social Security Administration via the iStart portal under the SSN and Taxes tab. For more information, please visit oie.gatech.edu/content/social-security-numbers
FINANCES AT GEORGIA TECH

Costs Involved in Attending GT:
There are several fee payment options for Georgia Tech students: Travelex or Flywire for international payments, Webchecks, check, wire transfer, and all major credit cards. Please see the bursar’s website at bursar.gatech.edu for additional information on payment types and how to pay your bill. Please be sure to comply with all payment deadlines to prevent GT from dropping courses for failure to pay. If your courses are dropped you are not enrolled full time in study which is considered a violation of status.

Open a U.S. Bank Account:
You are not required to have an SSN to open an account in a local bank. Some banks offer special accounts for students, so bring your BuzzCard with you when opening a bank account. You can find more information on OIE’s website at oie.gatech.edu/content/opening-us-bank-account.

Cellphones:
Some of the major cell phone service providers in Atlanta include AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, and T-Mobile. Some cell phone companies may require a Social Security Number (for credit check purposes) in order to establish a contract. Many companies offer other alternatives for students without an SSN. For details on the different plans that each cell phone company offers and their requirements, visit: oie.gatech.edu/content/cell-phones

In order to maintain your immigration status, international students' account balances should be paid before the deadline set by Bursar's office
## GROCERIES AND SUPPLIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IKEA</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 10am - 9pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>441 16th St NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target (Atlantic Station)</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 8am - 11pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375 18th St NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmart (Howell Mill)</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 6am - 12am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801 Howell Mill Rd NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publix (Midtown)</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 6:45am - 11pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950 Sprint St NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publix (Atlantic Station)</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 7am - 10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1380 Atlantic Dr. NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroger (Howell Mill)</td>
<td>Mon - Sun 6am - 1am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715 Howell Mill Rd NW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Weekend Grocery Shuttle:** Stinger bus transports students to Atlantic Station’s Publix store on weekends from 10am to 6am. For maps, arrival times, and tracking visit [http://pts.gatech.edu/stinger-bus-routes](http://pts.gatech.edu/stinger-bus-routes)

### ONLINE SHOPPING:

Many students prefer shopping online with Amazon.com, WayFair.com, and Walmart.com. Amazon@GeorgiaTech is a store for easy pickup and returns for Amazon, located at Tech Square (86 5th St NW, Atlanta, GA).
SAFETY AT GEORGIA TECH

CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS:
The Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) has provided the following safety tips:

- Be aware of your surroundings and use the Stingerette (stingerette.com) for after-hours transportation.
- Never leave valuables unattended and do not walk while talking on the phone or while wearing headphones as you will not be able to hear people approaching.
- Never prop doors open, even for a short time.
- Sign up for GTENS emergency notification system at passport.gatech.edu.
- Don’t drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs! International students who receive a DUI will have their visa revoked!

For on-campus emergencies, dial the GTPD emergency number (404-894-2500). Make sure to save this number in your phone. For off-campus emergencies, dial 911. Please visit police.gatech.edu to learn more about safety tips and information from GTPD.

Important Georgia Tech Policies:
There are important policies the Georgia Tech community is expected to follow to ensure fairness, orderly conduct, and harmony. These policies allow the large student body to live and work together harmoniously with minimum friction and misunderstanding. These policies cover a wide range of important topics and rules and you should become familiar with them upon arrival. Students are expected to thoroughly understand and respect these policies. For more information on important Georgia Tech policies, visit: https://oie.gatech.edu/isss/important-gt-policies
JOIN THE YELLOW JACKET COMMUNITY!
The GT campus is a dynamic and vibrant place, with an array of activities for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors. From athletics and concerts to lectures and social gatherings, great things are always happening at Tech. Music, dance, and comedy productions are offered at the renowned Ferst Center for the Arts and the student-run DramaTech Theater. Tech offers exciting sporting events including football, basketball, baseball, swimming and diving, and golf. The Campus Compass is only a starting point for you to learn about the fun activities Tech has to offer. The best way to learn is to get out and explore your new campus!

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:
There are hundreds of student organizations at Georgia Tech giving students many opportunities to get involved on campus. At the beginning of each semester, tables are set up near or in the Student Center by members of different student organizations looking to recruit new members. For a full listing of these groups and contact information, visit:
gatech.campuslabs.com/engage
GT’s campus has a number of useful resources that students use on a daily basis. Here you will find a vast network of supportive and caring people to help you smoothly transition to Georgia Tech, succeed in your classes, and create an unforgettable experience.

**CENTER FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS:**
success.gatech.edu
The Center for Academic Success provides exemplary academic support programs and services. They conduct 1-to-1 tutoring sessions, peer led study sessions, and various workshops to help students achieve their academic best.

**CAMPUS RECREATION CENTER (CRC):**
crc.gatech.edu
The CRC fitness center has been recognized as one of the best campus recreation facilities in the country. This full-service fitness center offers cardio and weight training equipment, pools, basketball/volleyball courts, wall-climbing, an indoor track, and more.

**STAMPS HEALTH SERVICES:**
health.gatech.edu
Stamps Health Services provides medical care and health education for students, along with pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology services. Specialty clinics include gynecology, psychiatry, dentistry, and nutrition.

**CLOUGH COMMONS:**
clough.gatech.edu
Located near the library, Clough Commons offers state-of-art meeting spaces which can be reserved through an online reservation system and is the hub for many student led organization meetings.

**FERST CENTER FOR THE ARTS:**
ferstcenter.gatech.edu
The Ferst Center for the Arts hosts a number of concerts, recitals, lectures, dance, film, and theater performances throughout the semester. See Ferst Center Box Office for calendar and tickets. Tickets are generally available online (arts.gatech.edu/ferstcenter) and by phone at 404-894-9600.
LIBRARY:
library.gatech.edu
GT Library is re-defining the research library of the 21st Century, creating an environment where scholars can access the vast digital cloud of humanity’s recorded knowledge.

POST OFFICE:
studentcenter.gatech.edu/georgia-tech-post-office
The post office is located on the 1st floor of the Student Center. Through the Post Office, students can send and receive packages and mail. Students living on campus are automatically assigned a P.O box, and students living off-campus must apply and pay an annual fee if they would like to have one.
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY
VISIT OIT.GATECH.EDU FOR MORE INFO

The Office of Information and Technolog takes care of all internet, network, cyber-security, and other IT-related support for students on campus.

EMAIL:
mail.gatech.edu
Email is the primary method of communication between students and the University. Students are responsible for checking their emails regularly. All students have a default email address of username@gatech.edu which can be customized through the Passport website.

BUZZPORT:
buzzport.gatech.edu
On Buzzport you can register for classes, make payments, update personal information, view class schedules, student account information, and academic records. Your GT account username & password are needed to access BuzzPort.

CANVAS:
canvas.gatech.edu
Canvas is an online teaching, learning, and collaboration software. You can submit assignments, view grades, and access course material/resources through Canvas, using your GT username & password.

TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION:
twofactor.oit.gatech.edu
Georgia Tech considers the security and privacy of employee and student information to be of utmost importance. To keep our information safe, the Institute requires that all students, faculty, and staff to use two-factor authentication when accessing campus services and systems.

WIFI:
http://lawn.gatech.edu
Eduroam is the default LAWN Wi-Fi service. It is a secure world-wide roaming authentication service which allows users to connect to WiFi networks when visiting GT campus.
TRANSPORTATION

For more info, visit pts.gatech.edu/bus

To track GT busses, visit: bus.gatech.edu

ATLANTA TRANSPORTATION AND DRIVING:

Georgia Tech’s campus is accessible by Atlanta’s public transportation system, MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority). MARTA offers rail and bus service throughout metropolitan Atlanta. Trains stop throughout the city, with two stops convenient to the Georgia Tech campus: North Avenue Station and Midtown Station. Visit https://www.itsmarta.com for more information.

UBER AND LYFT:

Uber and Lyft provide affordable transportation. Always, make sure you ride on the correct vehicle by checking plate numbers, drivers photo, and always have your driver to confirm your name.
GA DRIVER'S LICENSE

OBTAINING A GA DRIVER’S LICENSE:
You may apply for a license or a Georgia State identification card at any Department of Driver Services (DDS) office if you are older than 18. DDS offices in Atlanta are more familiar with F/J students. Applicants must pass Vision, Knowledge, and Road Skills exams. For the most convenient locations for knowledge & driving exams, visit:

Requirements for a Driver’s License: You must apply in person to the DDS for Georgia “Class C” Driver’s license for regular non-commercial motor vehicles. When applying, bring the following to the DDS center:

- Passport valid for at least six months
- I-94: either paper or printed electronic copy
- 2 documents showing Georgia residence:
  This can include a signed lease agreement, utility bill with applicant’s name and local address, bank statement, etc.
- Current I-20 or DS-2019
- SSN or Form SSA-L676 (Social Security Card Denial Notice)

RECOMMENDATIONS:
- Wait until your SEVIS record is active before you apply. You will receive an email when OIE activates your SEVIS record. You can confirm that your SEVIS record is Active by reviewing the "SEVIS Status Information" section of your record in the iStart portal.
- Before purchasing a car, you must obtain GA Driver’s license to register the car. The state requires that all cars be registered within 30 days of the date of purchase.
- You are not required to have a Social Security Number (SSN) to obtain a GA Driver’s License. Students without SSNs are required to obtain Form SSA-L676 (Social Security Card Denial Notice) from the Social Security Administration before applying for a license.
ON-CAMPUS HOUSING:

housing.gatech.edu

GT offers a variety of on-campus housing options for undergraduate and graduate students. Signing a residence hall contract with GT housing requires you to live in the residence hall system for the entire academic year.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING:

https://oie.gatech.edu/content/housing-campus-and-around-gt

Students are responsible for securing their own housing off-campus. There are many residential apartments within the GT area with varied amenities.

HEALTH SERVICES:

health.gatech.edu

All F and J students are required to have health insurance for the duration of their time at GT. All international students will be automatically enrolled in the BlueCross/Blue Shield (BCBS) student health insurance plan mandated by the University System of Georgia. If you wish to purchase an alternative plan and apply for an insurance waiver, you may do so. The student health fee is not the health insurance fee; the health insurance is a separate, mandatory expense.

HEALTH INSURANCE:

health.gatech.edu/finance/insurance

All F and J students are required to have health insurance for the duration of their time at GT. All international students will be automatically enrolled in the UnitedHealthcare student health insurance plan mandated by the University System of Georgia. If you wish to purchase an alternative plan and apply for an insurance waiver, you may do so.
EXPLORE ATLANTA!

Atlanta—Your New Home Away From Home:
Atlanta is the capital of the state of Georgia, site of the 1996 Olympic Games, and one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. It is home to approximately 5.9 million people and has the busiest airport in the country. Atlanta, the undisputed business and cultural center of the southeast US, is consistently ranked as one of the top 10 places for high-tech and international career opportunities. There are more than 1,600 international businesses in Atlanta and Fortune 500 companies such as BlueLink Holdings, CNN, Coca Cola Enterprises, Delta Air Lines, Home Depot, SunTrust Bank and UPS are headquartered in the area. The city combines classic small-town southern hospitality with all the amenities of a cosmopolitan city. The moderate cost of living, which is below the national average, and the pleasant climate, which permits year-round outdoor activities, makes Atlanta appealing to many. The city has four distinct seasons, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy a range of comfortable climates. During the fall and spring, Atlanta is quite comfortable with temperatures of 70-80° F (21-26° C). Summers can be quite hot and humid, and winters are normally mild with a few colder spells. The annual rainfall is about 48 in (122 cm).
Atlanta Attractions & Restaurants

The city of Atlanta features a wide variety of popular attractions, restaurants and events that will make your stay filled with fun and new experiences!

Some of the attractions:
- Atlanta Botanical Garden: atlantabg.org
- High Museum of Art: high.org
- Fox Theatre: foxtheatre.org
- Atlanta History Center: www.atlantahistorycenter.com
- Chattahoochee Nature Center: chattnaturecenter.org
- CNN Center: cnn.com/tour
- Georgia Aquarium: georgiaaquarium.org
- Martin Luther King, Jr National Historical Site: nps.gov/malu
- Stone Mountain Park: stonemountainpark.com
- World of Coca-Cola: worldofcoca-cola.com
- National Center for Civil and Human Rights: www.civilandhumanrights.org

For more information, go to https://oie.gatech.edu/content/atlanta-attractions-restaurants.
Please visit oie.gatech.edu/ISSS_campus_compass for more information.