Dear Georgia Tech Student,

On behalf of the Office of International Education (OIE) and the International Student and Scholar Advisors, I am excited to welcome you to Georgia Institute of Technology! As you begin your educational career at this great university I encourage you to make the most of the diverse campus which includes 6500 international students and scholars. I hope you take advantage of all that being a Georgia Tech student has to offer you. The “Campus Compass” new student guide is a useful resource as you adjust to your new surroundings.

The International Student Advisors are committed to support your adjustment to campus, challenge you to get engaged and integrate into Georgia Tech community and encourage you to become leaders on campus and beyond. The International Student Advisors assist broadly with immigration and visa matters and will connect you to expert resources in order to support other needs. We partner with departments across campus to offer programs to provide opportunities to engage with U.S. students, to learn more about yourself, Atlanta and U.S. culture and to develop professional skills while you earn your academic degree.

I look forward to seeing you in person during the welcome series events the ISSS team has coordinated including workshops and student panels that address immigration, visas and work authorization, promoting academic success, managing transitions and cultural adjustment, health and safety as well as activities that allow you to build social networks and ensure you start the semester with a strong sense of what it means to be a Georgia Tech student.

Best wishes and good luck with your first semester at Georgia Tech!

Marisa Atencio
Director, International Student & Scholar Services
Notes and Important Information

Important Numbers

Georgia Tech Police Department
404.894.2500

Office of International Education
404.894.7475

Registrar’s Office
404.894.4150

Housing Department
404.894.2470

Buzzcard Center
404.894.2899

Bursar’s Office
404.894.4618

Communication Center
404.385.3612

Stamps Health Services
404.894.1420
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Welcome to 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 21,500 undergraduate and graduate students. In academic year 2014/15 Georgia Tech hosted over 4800 international students holding F or J visas and 850 J scholars and interns.

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.
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 Georgia Tech. We strive to create an environment where international students and scholars are able to make a well-integrated transition to Georgia Tech through diverse cultural, educational and leadership opportunities. Our goal is to be the model in building and maintaining an international community in a campus environment with the aim to create lifelong global leaders.

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. If you have questions, please look on our website (oie.gatech.edu/isss). If you cannot find the answer or need additional details, send us an email or visit during walk-in hours.

HOW TO CONTACT US:
OIE is open Monday-Friday: 8:30am-4:30pm. You may contact the office by phone at 404-894-7475 8:00 am-5:00 pm or send an email to info@oie.gatech.edu. The office is closed for all official Georgia Tech holidays.

Walk-In Advising Hours: Monday through Friday 1:00-4:30 (no appointment needed). Students may schedule morning appointments Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at oie.gatech.edu/isss.

Suitable topics for walk-in advising include:
- Employment authorization
- Travel and visa renewal
- Changes or updates to I-20 or DS-2019
- Instructions for transferring to another school
- Replace lost forms

iStart:
iStart is 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 a bi-weekly electronic newsletter sent to all enrolled F/J students. Every international student should be sure to read this regularly as it contains important announcements, updates, and deadlines.
Your First Week: Settling-in!

Remove Your Registration Holds
Students cannot register until all holds have been removed. After completing International Student check-in, check your Buzzport record for any additional registration holds and contact the appropriate office to get it removed. Additional holds may include "Immigration file missing", "Immunization records missing", "Final transcript and degree certificate missing" (for grad students).

Register For Classes
After completing international student check-in and all holds are removed from your account, you may register for classes. The course registration deadline is 4 pm on the first Friday of classes.

You must register for at least 12 credit hours by the course registration deadline to maintain your immigration status!

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.

- **Undergraduate Students**: You will obtain your BuzzCard during FASET orientation.
- **Graduate Students**: Visit the BuzzCard Center (48 5th St NW, Atlanta, 30332, located on the 2nd floor of Barnes & Noble in Tech Square) to get your BuzzCard.

International Welcome Series (Orientation)
OIE holds several informational sessions and social events as part of the International Welcome Series.

- **Mandatory Session**: How to Succeed as an F-1/J-1 Student. All students are required to attend one “How to Succeed” session.
- **Additional Sessions**: OIE provides both online and in-person sessions to assist new international students adjust to life at GA Tech and in the U.S. The series includes Academic Transitions, Cultural Transitions, Staying Safe and Healthy in the U.S., USA/Georgia Tech 101, and International Spouse Orientation.
- **Events**: Meet OIE advisors and new friends from around the world at OIE’s Welcome Party and the first International Coffee Hour of the semester.

For full a full list of these sessions, events, and campus-wide orientation programs, visit: oie.gatech.edu/isss/international-welcome-series.
Costs Involved in Attending GT

There are several fee payment options for Georgia Tech students:
- Travelex or Flywire for international payments
- Webchecks, Check or wire transfer
- 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. There is a strict tuition payment deadline within the first 2 weeks, typically the 2nd Monday of classes.

Students who do not pay by the deadline will be dropped from their courses, which will seriously impact immigration status!!!

Open a U.S. Bank Account
You are not required to have a 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.

Banks near GT campus include (all have ATMs in the student center):

**Wells Fargo**
- 645 State St NW
- Atlanta, GA
- 30313-2493
- 404.853.1960
- 1.800.869.3557
- www.wellsfargo.com

**SunTrust**
- 523 Luckie St NW
- Atlanta, GA
- 30313-2401
- 404.253.3509
- 1.800.786.8787
- www.suntrust.com

**Bank of America**
- 231 Peachtree St. SW
- Atlanta, GA 30303-1603
- 404.332.2700
- 1.800.432.1000
- www.bankofamerica.com

*Wells Fargo requires a $50 minimum deposit or a qualified GA Tech direct deposit. GA Tech GRAs/GTAs who have set up direct deposit with Human Resources may use a direct deposit in place of the $50 deposit.*

**Cellphones**
Some of the major wireless/cell phone service providers in Atlanta include AT&T, MetroPCS, Sprint, Verizon Wireless 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.
Supplies
If you wish to purchase supplies, visit one of these shops that are near GT campus:

**Furniture & Basic Supplies**
- **IKEA** 441 16th St NW, Atlanta, GA 30363
  - open 10am-9pm Mon-Sun
- **Target** (Atlantic Station) – 375 18th St, Atlanta, GA, 30363
  - open Mon - Sat 8am-11pm
- **Walmart** (Howell Mill) - 1801 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30318
  - open Mon - Sun 6am – 12am, except Fri 12am-12am
- **Salvation Army Thrift Store** (next to campus) - 746 Marietta St NW, Atlanta, GA 30318: open 10am- 6pm Mon-Sat
- **GT Thrift Shop** - [www.gtthriftshop.com](http://www.gtthriftshop.com)
- **GT Book Swap** - [www.facebook.com/groups/39404523099](http://www.facebook.com/groups/39404523099)

**Groceries**
- **Publix** (Midtown) – 950 Spring St NW, Atlanta, GA, 30309: open 6:45am-11pm Mon- Sun
- **Publix** (Atlantic Station) - 1380 Atlantic Dr. NW 14135, Atlanta, GA 30363: open 7am-10pm Mon-Sun
- **Walmart** (Howell Mill) - 1801 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30318:
  - open Mon - Sun 6am – 12am, except Fri 12am-12am
- **Kroger** (Howell Mill) - 1715 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30318:
  - open 24/7

**The Weekend Grocery Shuttle:** Stinger bus transports student to Atlantic Station's Publix grocery store on weekends from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For Maps and arrival times for the Shuttle visit: [https://pts.gatech.edu/subsite2/Pages/Weekend-Grocery-Shuttle.aspx](https://pts.gatech.edu/subsite2/Pages/Weekend-Grocery-Shuttle.aspx)

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**First Week Checklist**
- [ ] Remove registration holds
- [ ] Check into housing/apartment
- [ ] GT Orientation
- [ ] Register for classes
- [ ] Get Buzzcard
- [ ] Pay GT tuition and fees bill
- [ ] Open bank account
- [ ] Get cellphone number
- [ ] Mandatory immigration session
The GT campus is a dynamic & 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 such as football, basketball, baseball, swimming & diving, golf, and many others. 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: [https://orgsync.com/126323/chapter](https://orgsync.com/126323/chapter). You will have to sign in with your GT Username.

**Global Jackets** is a multi-cultural student organization that is dedicated to celebrating Georgia Tech’s diverse student population. Students interested in learning more are advised to email the student organization leaders listed on orgsync.com.
Campus Safety Tips from the Georgia Tech Police Department

The Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) has provided the following tips to help students minimize their chances of becoming a victim of crime:

- 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.

**Jacket Guardian:** This is an opt-in system that allows cell phone users to make an emergency call directly to the GTPD, allowing them to respond more quickly. Jacket guardian is free to students, faculty, and staff.

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.

To learn more about safety tips and information from GTPD, please visit police.gatech.edu.

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/content/important-gt-policies.
Campus Resources
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 (campus map #166)
www.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 (campus map #160)
www.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.

Student Center (campus map #104,114) www.studentcenter.gatech.edu
The Student Center offers a wide variety of services like the campus box office, food, bowling & billiards facilities, a movie theater, post office, music listening room, ballroom, computer lab, ATMs, and several lounge & study areas.

Stamps Health Services (campus map #177) www.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 (campus map #166) www.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.

Barnes&Noble @GT (campus map #172a) / Engineer’s bookstore www.bookstore.gatech.edu
These bookstores sell textbooks, popular books, office supplies, Georgia Tech merchandise, and also take care of student technology needs.

Ferst Center for the Arts (campus map #124) www.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.

Dining Facilities (campus map #12, #104, #116, #191a) www.gatechdining.com
GT Dining offers more than twenty restaurants on campus including popular national food chains. Meal plans combine the best of both worlds with resident and retail dining combined.

For a list of additional on-campus resources, visit: https://oie.gatech.edu/content/additional-support-services-and-resources.
Computers and Technology

Email
mail.gatech.edu
The My GaTech e-mail system is the official campus email service operated by OIT. All students have a default email address of username@gatech.edu which can be customized through the PASSPORT website. All official Georgia Tech emails will be sent to your My Gatech email address.

GT Wi-Fi (LAWN)
lawn.gatech.edu
The Georgia Tech LAWN (Local Area Wireless/Walkup Network) is GT’s Wi-Fi network. LAWN access is available from nearly every building on campus. GT Account username and password are needed to access LAWN.

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.

T-Square
tsquare.gatech.edu
T-Square is an online teaching, learning, and collaboration software. You can submit assignments, view grades, and access course material/resources through T-Square. GT username & password are needed to access T-Square. You can access T-Square through Buzzport.

GT Library
www.library.gatech.edu
The Library's two information commons, West and East, provide computer hardware and software geared to the needs of students, including a multimedia center and "collaborative computing" desks, institutional repository-SMARTech and ePage@Tech.

For more information or technical support, visit: oit.gatech.edu, e-mail support@oit.gatech.edu or visit OIT Technology Support Center, Clough Building, Room 215.

ResNet & OIT: ResNet & OIT takes care of all internet, cable, anti-virus installation procedures and also offers technical support for students on campus.
On Campus Transportation
The Stinger, Tech Trolley, and the Stingerette are the primary transportation services on campus that are free to use.

For more information about On-Campus Transportation, visit: parking.gatech.edu.

Additional Useful Transportation Information

**Next Bus App**: Found in App Store www.nextbus.com  
This app allows smartphone users to find the closest bus-stop and bus arrival times at a specific stop.

**Paratransit Service**: Call the ADAPTS office for more information at 404.894.2561. pts.gatech.edu  
The Stingerette offers a Paratransit Service for members of the GT community with permanent or temporary mobility impairments.

**Midnight Rambler**: pts.gatech.edu for specific stop information  
Provides nighttime transportation connecting the west and east sides of campus.

**Emory Shuttle**: pts.gatech.edu/subsite2/Pages/Emory-Shuttle.aspx  
The Emory Shuttle provides convenient transportation on weekdays (with the exception of school holidays) from GT to Emory University’s Andrews Circle/Health Sciences Research Building (HSRB).

**Weekend Grocery Shuttle**: pts.gatech.edu/subsite2/Pages/Weekend-Grocery-Shuttle.aspx  
The Weekend Grocery Shuttle transports students to Atlantic Station’s Publix grocery store on Sat and Sun from 10am-6pm (except for school holidays and football games).

**Note**: Unfortunately, the GLC/Clough Shuttle is no longer in service as of August 2015. Please use the Green Stinger Route to access campus from the GLC/10th & Home.
Housing on Campus and Around GT

**On-Campus Housing:** 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. For more information on On-Campus housing, visit: [housing.gatech.edu/Pages/default.aspx](http://housing.gatech.edu/Pages/default.aspx).

**Off-Campus Housing:** Students are responsible for securing their own housing off-campus. There are many residential apartments within the GT area with varied amenities. For more information on neighborhoods around Georgia Tech, please visit: [oie.gatech.edu/content/housing-campus-and-around-gt](http://oie.gatech.edu/content/housing-campus-and-around-gt).

For a full list of Off-Campus housing options, see the Off-Campus Housing Directory available on the GA Tech Housing website: [housing.gatech.edu/techlife/Off%20Campus%20Housing/Pages/default.aspx](http://housing.gatech.edu/techlife/Off%20Campus%20Housing/Pages/default.aspx).

Health Insurance & Health Services at GT

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.

For more information on BCBS and the insurance waiver, visit: [health.gatech.edu/studenthealthinsurance](http://health.gatech.edu/studenthealthinsurance).

**Health Services:** A variety of health services are available on campus. Your health fee allows you to access many services at the Stamps Health Center. These services include: Stamps Health Services Tech Dentistry, Tech Optical express and mental health services (Counseling Center and Stamps Psychiatry Services). All students are required to complete Alcohol.edu. Grad students must also complete Haven (anti-sexual assault program).

Note: The student health fee is not the health insurance fee; the health insurance is provided by BCBS and is a separate, mandatory expense.

Receiving Mail and Packages

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.

Please visit [oie.gatech.edu/content/receiving-mail-packages](http://oie.gatech.edu/content/receiving-mail-packages) for more information about the post office services as well as where to find your mailbox combination, etc.
Surviving GT! – Becoming Ramblin’ Wrecks from Georgia Tech

What is Ramblin' Wreck? The Ramblin' Wreck, a 1930 Ford Model A Sport coupe serves as the official mascot of the student body at Georgia Tech. The Wreck is present at all major sporting events and student body functions.

Introducing George P Burdell: A fictitious student who was created at Georgia Tech in 1927 as a practical joke and received all undergraduate degrees that were offered at GT during that time. He lives on!

What is RATs week? RATS (Recently Acquired Tech Students) Week is Tech’s orientation week for new students, when freshmen learn all about Tech campus traditions.

Who is Buzz? Buzz—who made his first campus appearance in 1980—is the world-famous and beloved mascot of the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. Buzz gets Tech fans cheering at nearly all the Institute’s intercollegiate sporting events.

DID YOU KNOW ?

- 10.5% of undergraduate & 38% of graduate students at Georgia Tech hold an F or J visa!
- There are over 4,000 F and J students enrolled at Georgia Tech hailing from hundreds of countries!
- The Charles A. Smithgall Jr. Student Services Building is nicknamed the “Flag Building” because the country flags hanging represent all GT students’ home countries. Stop by and find yours!

Tips From Old Pros!

- Pay attention to the emails sent by OIE, your department and school as these are not advertisement and may contain important information.
- Call your family often!
- Get your BuzzCard ASAP!
- Spend some time getting to know your roommates! Life-long friendships often start here!
- Maintain a strong relationship with your advisor; he or she is the key to your study and success.
- Make use of the communication center if your first language is not English: writing is just as important as speaking!
- Don’t forget to update your travel signature at least once a year. Use iStart to submit travel signature request
- Try to get a mobile phone connection as part of a family plan. It’s typically cheaper that way.
- The lines for food at the student center will be especially long at 11 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you bring your own thermos to Dunkin’ Donuts, they will only charge you 99 cents (plus tax) for your coffee.
- Eat healthy and well! Don’t always fill yourself up with fast food.
- Printing tip: central ps printer - you get 1200 pages free every year!
- The Tech Rec has a special Midnight Madness special during which students get a 50% off discount on bowling equipment and other supplies!
Maintaining Your F-1/J-1 Status

It is important to understand and comply 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 your physical addresses in iStart when there is a change to your U.S. or home country address.
- 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 F-2/J-2 dependents.

OIE’s mandatory sessions “How to succeed as an F-1/J-1 Student” will cover immigration regulations in greater detail.

For more information, please visit oie.gatech.edu/isss.
Employment

Employment eligibility varies by visa type. Please see OIE’s website at oie.gatech.edu/isss for more detail 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, 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 Numbers

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a permanent identification number administered by the Social Security Administration. SSNs are required for anyone employed in the U.S. but is not required for anything else.

Who is eligible?

- F-1 students with work eligibility and authorization are eligible for a SSN. F-2s are not eligible.
- J-1 visa holders are eligible for a SSN whether employed or not. If a J visa holder is not employed, OIE encourages you to think carefully about whether you would like to apply for an SSN because of some risks of having one.

When should you apply?

- Please wait 2 or 3 weeks after the start of classes to apply for a SSN. OIE must complete reporting requirements before you are eligible to apply.
- You may begin working on campus before getting a SSN

For more information about SSN, please visit oie.gatech.edu/content/social-security-numbers.
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 5.5 million people and has the busiest airport in the country. Atlanta, the undisputed business and cultural center of the southeast U.S., 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. 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 Transportation & Driving
MARTA - 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.

For more information on MARTA, visit www.itsmarta.com
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: [www.dds.ga.gov](http://www.dds.ga.gov).

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 proofs of 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)

**Payment:** DDS accepts cash, check, money order, or debit card with a Master Card or Visa logo

**Recommendations**

- Wait until your SEVIS record is active before you apply. The SEVIS record will activate within the first few weeks of the semester
- 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 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.

For more information regarding the requirements for a GA’s driver license, visit: [oie.gatech.edu/content/atlanta-transportation-driving](http://oie.gatech.edu/content/atlanta-transportation-driving).

Driving on an International License

Please see the Georgia Department of Driver Services website entitled ‘Information for Non-U.S. Citizens’ for information about driving on an international or foreign license.

Campus Parking Areas

If you choose to purchase a car and drive to campus, you must purchase a parking pass. For more info visit [https://pts.gatech.edu/subsite1/Pages/Parking%20Options.aspx](https://pts.gatech.edu/subsite1/Pages/Parking%20Options.aspx)
Buying a Car
Buying a car is a serious financial matter and there are costs involved beside the cost of the car: insurance, parking fees, maintenance, etc. You are advised to be careful when purchasing any car, especially a used car. While most car dealers are reputable, some try to deceive customers by selling defective cars. It is wise to test-drive the car and have a mechanic inspect it before you buy.

See OIE’s Atlanta Transportation & Driving website for more information about buying a car: oie.gatech.edu/content/atlanta-transportation-driving.

Alternative Transportation Options

- **Bicycling:** As a bike-friendly university, many students at Tech use bicycles to get around campus and Atlanta.
- **Zipcar & Car Rentals:** There are car rental options for students who may need access to a car occasionally, but not on a daily basis. Zipcar provides cars parked on campus for short-term use. There are several rental car companies in the area as well.

For more information on bike sharing programs and car rentals, visit oie.gatech.edu/content/transportation.
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.