How to Succeed as an International Student

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Office of International Education
Topics we will cover

- Who is ISSS?
- Immigration Documents
- Enrollment
- Updates to Status
- Practical Training/On-Campus Employment
- Social Security Number
- International Travel
- Transfers & Grace Period
- Other Things to Consider
Meet the ISSS Team

We are International Student & Scholar Services!

@gt_isss
What we do

• Share information on available resources and advocate on behalf of international students
• Provide guidance and support with visa and immigration questions
• Support practical training opportunities including options before and after graduation
• Organize events for networking, making new friends, and enhancing professional skills
Expectations

• ADVISOR’S ROLE
  • Knowledgeable about immigration regulations and GT policy
  • Communicate effectively and in a timely manner
  • Process immigration benefit requests and updates

• STUDENT’S ROLE
  • Take responsibility for your academic and immigration status
  • Research and utilize OIE and GT resources (website, e-forms, handouts) to prepare before seeing an advisor
  • Communicate effectively and in a timely manner (major changes to your academic or immigration status)
Know Your Immigration Documents
Passport: Proof of Identity

- Passport should be renewed 6 months prior to expiration
- Can be renewed in the United States
- Passport related questions (lost passport, incorrect passport information, passport renewal, etc.) should be asked to your home country’s embassy or consulate
Form I-20: Certificate of Eligibility For F-1 Visa

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<th>Class of Admission</th>
<th>Description of Other Costs, School Funding, and Funds from Other Sources, if specified</th>
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DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility J-1 Visa

Program Dates

212 (e) Two Year Home Residency Decision

SEVIS ID

ARO Travel Authorization
F-1 Visa: Entry Permit

• Analogy: Key to enter the U.S.

• Can Expire while Inside the U.S.

• Renewal required for re-entry after international travel

• Must apply for renewal outside the U.S.

• Transfer Students: Initial school will be listed – This is okay
I-94 Form - Arrival/Departure Record

Access I-94 at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov

- The following information is required to retrieve your Admission (I-94) number. Enter the information as it appears on the travel documents you used to enter the United States.
  - Name
  - Date of Birth
  - Passport Number
  - Country

- You will need to print your I-94 form in order to show it at the Social Security Office, Department of Driver Services, or apply for certain immigration benefits, etc.
iStart is a software application used to:

- Maintain an electronic file for each student
- Update student records in SEVIS, the database that manages all international students in the United States
- Efficiently manage requests by international students, GT faculty, and GT administration
Updates

Address in iStart

- Personal information update e-form
- Within 10 days of change

I-20 changes

- Program Extension
- Change of Major
- Change of Degree Level
- Financial Updates
- Adding dependents
Enrollment

• F-1 student visa holders are required by federal regulations to enroll full-time each term.

• Full-time enrollment at Georgia Tech is 12 credit hours.
  • F-1 and J-1 student visa holders inside the U.S. should plan to engage in primarily residential instruction counting no more than 3 credit hours of fully at a distance coursework towards the full-time requirement.
  • Undergraduate students are not able to utilize audit hours to count towards their full-time enrollment of 12 credits. Graduate students can register for up to 3 audit hours as part of their 12 hour required minimum.

• "Normal Progress" Towards Completion of Studies

• Unless the Summer semester is your first or last term inside the U.S., F-1 student visa holders are not required to enroll full-time during the Summer as it is considered a vacation period.
Reduced Course Load

• Must be Authorized by OIE – Do not drop below 12 credits until approved

Reasons for RCL:
• Graduation Semester
• Medical Reasons
• Academic Difficulties in 1st semester – case by case basis
Academic success requires...

- Engagement in class
- Frequent study
- Time management
- Maintaining student visa status
- Complying with the student code of conduct
- Wellness and self-care: Resources at https://oie.gatech.edu/isss/fillyourcup
Year 1 Employment

• On-Campus Employment is Permitted
  • Eligible for 20 hours or less of on-campus work during required academic terms (fall and spring).
  • May work additional hours during summer and winter break periods. Please verify with HR the limit during breaks.
  • Not eligible to continue on-campus employment after graduation without OPT.

• Off-Campus Employment is Not Permitted

• After 1 academic year of Active F-1 status, you may be eligible for CPT or OPT
  • Fall + Spring = 1 Academic Year/Summer does not count
Practical Training/Academic Training

F-1 Student Visa Holders

• Practical Training is a benefit of the F-1 student visa status.

• Two types exist:
  • CPT - Curricular Practical Training
  • OPT - Optional Practical Training

• Eligible after one year of full-time academic study at GT

J-1 Student Visa Holders

• Academic Training is a benefit of the J-1 student visa status.

• Two types exist:
  • Academic Training during degree program
  • Academic Training after degree program

• Eligible immediately after joining GT

F-1 and J-1 student visa holders must receive authorization from OIE before engaging in any activities in a paid or non-paid status for practical training benefits or Academic Training.
Social Security Number

- Anyone employed in the United States must have a Social Security Number
- iStart E-form request
  - Found under SSN and Taxes - **SSA Assistance Request** for appointments in the Atlanta area
  - OIE will liaison with the SSA and reach out once your appointment has been scheduled
- Submit application in person to local Social Security Administration (SSA) Office
- Documents to take to your appointment:
  - Passport
  - I-94 print out
  - Current I-20/DS-2019
  - Letter of employment on letterhead

Processing time for a Social Security Number can be anywhere from 4-6 weeks, be sure to request your application receipt
International Travel

• Required Documents for Reentry into the U.S.
  • Travel Signature on I-20/DS-2019 (valid for 1 year)
  • Valid F-1 or J-1 Visa
  • Passport - valid at least 6 months into the future

*Some international travel may be eligible for Automatic Visa Revalidation, see Department of State for more info.

• Request Travel Signature at least 2 weeks prior to travel: istart.gatech.edu
• For more information, visit:
  • https://isss.oie.gatech.edu/content/travel-outside-us-0
Grace Period F-1 Student Visa Holders

• Options for F-1 Student Visa Holders after program completion in their 60 Day Grace Period

1. Transfer
2. Change Degree Level
3. Apply for Work Authorization (OPT, if eligible)
4. Change Status
5. Depart the U.S.
Grace Period J-1 Exchange Visitors

Before program completion:

- You must request Academic Training prior to the program end date (graduation date) on your DS-2019.
- A Job offer in your field of study is required to request Academic Training.
- The Academic Training must begin within 30 days of your program end date.

After program completion:

- J-1 Visa Holders are eligible to remain inside the U.S. for a 30 day grace period after the program end date on the DS-2019.
- During this time, J-1 visa holders are ineligible to work or study, but are free to travel domestically within the U.S.
- If you depart the U.S. during the grace period, you will need a different visa or ESTA approval to re-enter the U.S.
Other Things to Consider

- **Taxes**
- **Health Insurance**
- **Federal and State Laws**
- **Scams/Identity Theft**
- **Tobacco & Smoke Free Campus**
- **Academic Integrity Policy**
Important Reminders

• Enroll in at least 12 credit hours by Friday, January 14, 2021 – 4:00PM

• Choose classes carefully. F-1 and J-1 student visa holders inside the U.S. should plan to engage in primarily residential instruction counting no more than 3 credit hours of fully at a distance coursework towards the full-time requirement.

• GT Email: Check it! It is the official method of communication.

• Bursar’s bill must be settled by Tuesday, January 18, 2021- 4:00PM: http://bursar.gatech.edu/.
Office of International Education

- **Website:** [https://oie.gatech.edu/](https://oie.gatech.edu/)

- **Virtual Advising:** [isss.oie.gatech.edu/content/isss-advising](isss.oie.gatech.edu/content/isss-advising)
  - Appointments
  - Drop-in Advising
  - ISSS Virtual Assistant

- **Email:** [info@oie.gatech.edu](mailto:info@oie.gatech.edu)
Upcoming OIE & Georgia Tech Events!

• Check out our Instagram and use the link in our bio to introduce yourself by answering a few quick questions! @gt_isss

• Welcome Party for International Students and Scholars
  • January 27th: 4:00 – 5:00 PM ET
Stay Connected, Get Involved

• **Get Involved**
  - OIE Programs
  - GT International Ambassadors
  - Center for Student Engagement (student orgs)
  - AMIS (amis-inc.org)

• **Stay Connected**
  - iBuzz Newsletter
  - @ gt_isss
  - oie.gatech.edu
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

We hope you have an enjoyable and successful experience at the Georgia Institute of Technology!

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