



Office of International Education  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Incoming Exchange Student Handbook

# Exchange

## EXCHANGE STUDENT PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

- Post-Acceptance Checklist
- Required Documents
- Preparation for Arrival at UGA



**Incoming Exchange Students Pre-Arrival  
Guide**

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## welcome!

The Office of International Education is happy to have you as an incoming exchange student at the University of Georgia. UGA highly values our partnership with your home university and are looking forward to having you on campus. This guide will lead you through the steps required to prepare you for arrival on campus.

Exchange students whose questions are not addressed in this handbook can contact Education Abroad advisors at the Office of International Education at [exchange@uga.edu](mailto:exchange@uga.edu). The Education Abroad team looks forward to welcoming you as you study abroad at the University of Georgia.

Dr. Yana A. Cornish  
Director of Education Abroad  
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# Pre-Arrival Timeline

## Course Registration

### Undergraduates

Fall Semester: Late April

Spring Semester: Late November

### Graduate Students

Upon Arrival

## Housing Registration Deadline

Spring Semester: Late November

Fall Semester: Late April

# Additional Application Components

Once you have been officially accepted as a UGA incoming exchange student, additional required items will appear within your application. It is important to complete them in a timely manner to ensure there is enough time to work on your course registration.

## Questionnaires

- UGA Incoming Exchange Student Arrival Questionnaire

## Materials

- International Student Orientation
- UGA Health Immunization History & TB Screening Form
- UGA Housing Registration

## Signature Documents

- Additional Course Requests
- Clearing Holds in Athena
- Housing Registration Instructions
- Incoming Exchange Course Registration



# Summary and Checklist

## Post-Acceptance / Pre-Arrival

This is the checklist that incoming exchange students accepted for an exchange program at the University of Georgia must complete prior to their arrival on campus.

- ☐ Request DS-2019 in [istart.uga.edu](http://istart.uga.edu)
- ☐ Complete health immunization documents
- ☐ Enroll in on-campus housing
- ☐ Clear holds in Athena
- ☐ Register for classes
- ☐ Register for the mandatory International Student Orientation
- ☐ Enroll in meal plan
- ☐ Monitor your UGA email
- ☐ Review student account
- ☐ Finalize arrival plans



U.S. Olympian and UGA student-athlete Jay Litherland is pictured from below during a swimming practice in July 2016. Photo: UGA Photographic Services/Andrew Davis Tucker





Photo: UGA Photographic Services/Peter Frey

## Complete the DS-2019 Request in iStart



Once accepted by Undergraduate Admissions, you will receive an email to your UGA email account inviting you to apply for a DS-2019, which is the certificate of eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) status.

Upon completion of the DS-2019 request, you will be notified via email to upload the following documents to the J-1 Exchange Student Intake Form:

1. Copy of valid passport ID page and/or renewal page if applicable.
2. Copy of evidence of funding (\$8,710 USD/semester). Evidence of funding can be in the form of a letter, translated to English, from the funding agency verifying the amount and duration of the funding. Another option is to submit a copy of a personal bank statement in your name, translated to English, and no older than two months. If the bank statement is in a parent or guardian's name, you must include a letter from the parent confirming that he or she is giving you the funds to sponsor your exchange program.



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Peter Frey

## Complete Health Immunization Documents

The [Certificate of Immunization](#) and the [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Screening Forms](#) must be printed, completed, signed by a doctor, and uploaded to your GoAbroad application at your earliest convenience.

An OIE staff will review your documents and submit them to the University Health Center. Additional revisions may be necessary if the documents are not completely or correctly filled out. **Please make sure you read the instructions for each vaccine on the right column.**

For detailed information about the health immunization documents and vaccines, please refer to the [How to fill out health forms instructional video](#) or the [University Health Center website](#). You may wish to bring the printed health forms with you to UGA.





All ECV photos courtesy UGA Housing

## Enroll in On-campus Housing

International exchange students are assigned to one of UGA's newest residence hall communities, [the East Campus Village \(ECV\)](#). Apartments in ECV each have 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, with each student having her/his own bedroom. International students typically share apartments with one other exchange student and two other degree-seeking students.

Each apartment has a common living area and a kitchen with a full-size refrigerator and a microwave. A stove and oven are not available. ECV is a gender-specific facility, with male and female students assigned to different floors. Note: ECV is a non-smoking facility.

ECV is conveniently located near [a campus bus stop](#), the [Village Summit Dining Commons](#), the [University Health Center](#), the [Ramsey Student \(fitness\) Center](#), the [Performing Arts Center](#), the [Georgia Museum of Art](#), and [the intramural fields](#). The community has plenty of study spaces, several computers, washers/dryers, and common social areas.

## Housing, continued

### On-campus Housing Application

Instructions to register for on-campus housing are located in your Incoming Exchange Application in the GoAbroad Portal. The following step-by-step contains general guidelines on how to complete the online for on-campus housing:

1. [Click on this link to start your application.](#)
2. Click on "The Dawg House" from the menu on the right.
3. Sign in using your UGA MyID and the password (if you have trouble logging in, [visit the GoAbroad Portal for help](#)).
4. Select the term you will attend at UGA.
5. Fill out your personal information throughout the application.
6. At the payment page, enter your credit card information and agree to pay the \$35 non-refundable registration fee.
7. After paying the registration fee, **you should stop the application steps by closing the window.** Your application will be saved. The OIE will assign your specific room in one of the four ECV Buildings (Rooker, Vandiver, Busbee or McWhorter).
8. Monitor your UGA email account regularly for updates.



### ECV Contract

- Once housing registration is complete, UGA Housing will notify students to activate the housing contract online. Once signed, the housing contract is binding, i.e., there are financial penalties for students who decide to cancel the contract while enrolled at UGA.
- The contract is signed for the full 11.5 months covering Fall, Spring and Summer Terms. However, exchange students are offered a deadline to cancel the contract for term(s) they will not take classes at UGA. The deadline for contract cancellation will be provided during student orientation and via email reminders.





## Register for International Student Orientation

This mandatory orientation helps students familiarize themselves with the UGA campus as well as university policies and opportunities. It is also a time to meet staff, faculty, and other international students. In general, students who attend the mandatory International Student Orientation and the mandatory OIE Exchange Orientation feel much more confident about studying at UGA. Incoming graduate-level exchange students also attend the Graduate School Orientation and Information Fair offered by the UGA Graduate School.

### International Student Orientation

Hosted by International Student Life, this required orientation takes place in late July/early August for the Fall Term and in January for Spring Term. [Click here to view costs and to register for International Student Orientation.](#)

## OIE Exchange Student Orientation

All incoming exchange students must arrive on campus in time to attend this mandatory orientation session. During this meeting, Education Abroad advisors review important details that apply specifically to exchange students and address questions they may have before classes start.

Highlights from the Exchange Orientation include: class schedule adjustment and enrollment, international student health insurance enrollment and waivers, meal plans, University Health Center, and much more. Registration is not required for this specific orientation.



# Clearing Holds in Athena

Athena is the UGA student information and registration system. After students receive permission to take courses requested, they can login into Athena using the UGA MyID and password. However, before registration, holds must be cleared in the Athena account.

Students should follow the steps below to clear holds and prepare for registration:

1. **Log in to Athena** using your UGA MyID and password.
2. **Add/update your U.S. address** in Athena using your Athens or ECV address.
3. **Clear the “Emergency Contact” hold:** update your emergency contact information.
4. **Clear “Collections Acknowledgement” hold:** via the Student tab, select Student Records and select “Clear Acknowledgement Hold.” Read the acknowledgements and clear each by entering your initials and clicking “Submit.” Acknowledgement is needed for collections. Students will be required to clear this hold before registering for classes.
5. **Clear “Health Center” hold:** submit the required health immunizations forms.
6. **Clear the VLP or “Verification of Lawful Presence” hold** will be *temporarily* lifted once the DS-2019 form is issued. However, this hold will be placed on the Athena account again 30 days prior to the start of classes at UGA. An Education Abroad advisor will email exchange students to remind them of clearing the VLP hold by submitting copies of immigration documents to iStart, UGA's online immigration check-in portal.

Bradley Camacho, a freshman genetics major from Dacula (Georgia), reads while sitting on a bench under the arbor in the Founders's Garden. Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Peter Frey



## Register for Classes

Undergraduate and graduate students on a J-1 visa must comply with a minimum of credits per semester to maintain that visa status. Undergraduate exchange students must register for at least 12 credits. Graduate students need at least 9 credits (if they do not have an assistantship) or 12 credits (if they have an assistantship). The maximum for all students is 17 credits/semester.

**Registration Dates:** <http://www.reg.uga.edu/calendars>

All exchange students are eligible to register when open registration begins. **Students must have all holds cleared** in their Athena account in order to register.



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Andrew Davis Tucker



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Andrew Davis Tucker

### Registration Tips

- Exchange students can register for any entry-level subject that does not have restrictions of major, college, department, or pre-requisites.
- Students must provide proof of pre-requisites if they request upper-level subjects or subjects designated only for certain majors.
- Most exchange students will need Permission of Major (POM), Permission of Department (POD), or pre-requisite approvals before registering for upper-level subjects because they do not have prior academic history at UGA.
- Some classes are in high demand. EA advisors do their best to grant access to preferred classes. However, students should be flexible about taking alternate subjects recommended by EA advisors.
- Graduate students typically register for advanced subjects after meeting/discussing with the host department.
- Exchange students should not contact departments or colleges directly unless otherwise directed by OIE. If seeking permission for a course, please complete the Additional Course Request Form.

### Advice For Success: First Day Of Class

- Review the course syllabus immediately to understand courses' objectives, listed readings, assignments, and support system (e.g., eLearning Commons as the learning management system).
- Introduce yourself as a "visiting student" and ask the instructor if there is anything you should learn about course technology or standard classroom practices which may be unfamiliar to you.
- Plan to study at least 2 hours per credit hour outside of the class period (e.g., 3 credit hour class = 6 hours of reading/writing per week).
- Communicate directly with course instructor about any questions or comments that you have regarding course readings, assignments, tests, and grades.
- Notify the instructor immediately when problems arise that may affect your performance in the course.
- Do not hesitate to ask UGA faculty, staff, or student leaders for help when problems arise that may affect the overall success of your visit.

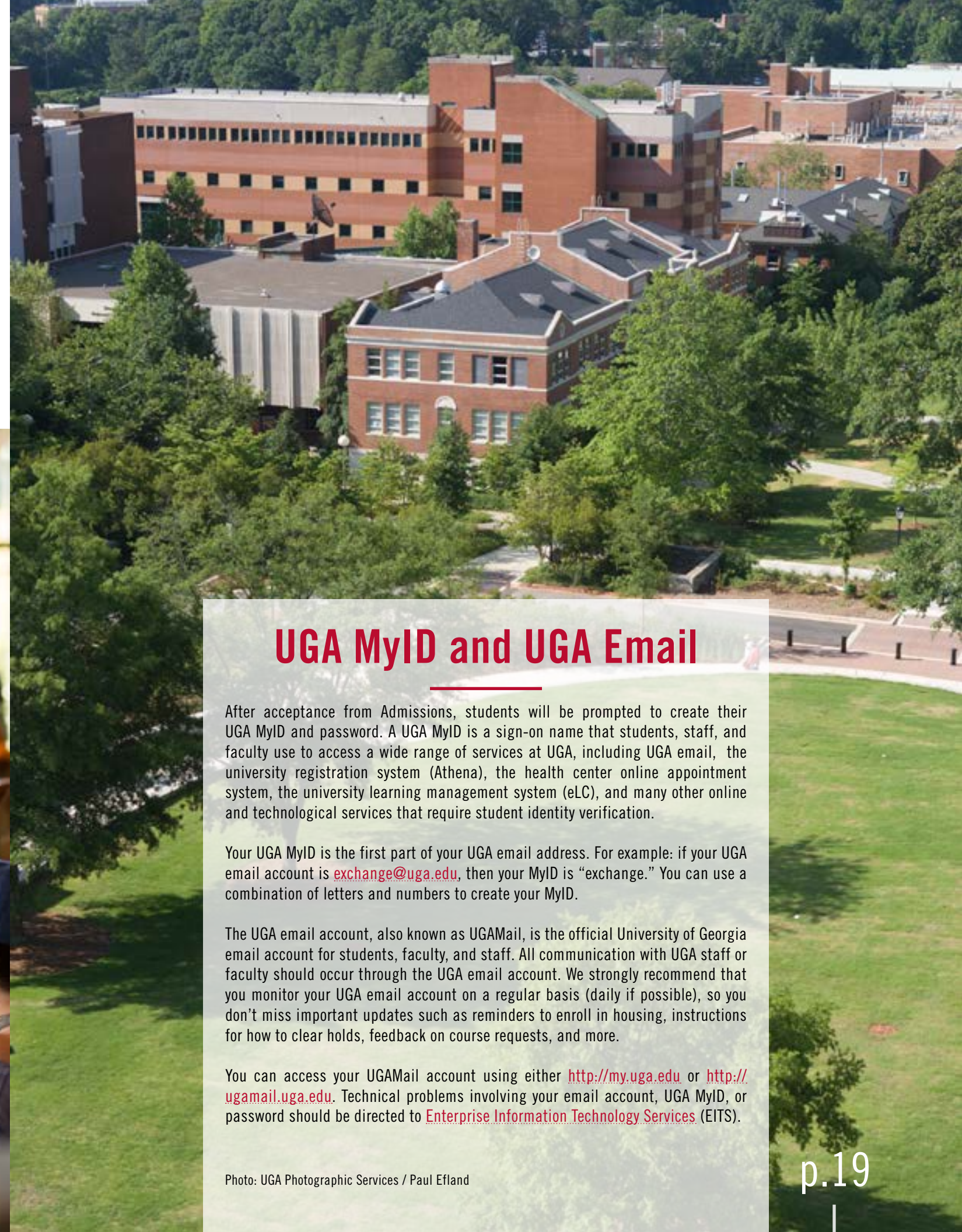


## Enroll in a Meal Plan

Students living on- or off-campus may enroll in a UGA meal plan online before or after arrival on campus. Students enrolled in the meal plan have access to all five award-winning dining facilities. Each dining hall has specific menu items and hours. All offer meals to meet various dietary needs, such as vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, and low-calorie options.

Most exchange students enroll in the 7-day meal plan because of unlimited access to the dining halls and the variety of dishes available. Upon enrollment, meal plan fees are charged to your student account each semester.

Note: students are subject to cancellation fees if they cancel the contract while enrolled at UGA. More information about meal plans is available on the [UGA Food Services website](#).



## UGA MyID and UGA Email

After acceptance from Admissions, students will be prompted to create their UGA MyID and password. A UGA MyID is a sign-on name that students, staff, and faculty use to access a wide range of services at UGA, including UGA email, the university registration system (Athena), the health center online appointment system, the university learning management system (eLC), and many other online and technological services that require student identity verification.

Your UGA MyID is the first part of your UGA email address. For example: if your UGA email account is [exchange@uga.edu](#), then your MyID is “exchange.” You can use a combination of letters and numbers to create your MyID.

The UGA email account, also known as UGAMail, is the official University of Georgia email account for students, faculty, and staff. All communication with UGA staff or faculty should occur through the UGA email account. We strongly recommend that you monitor your UGA email account on a regular basis (daily if possible), so you don’t miss important updates such as reminders to enroll in housing, instructions for how to clear holds, feedback on course requests, and more.

You can access your UGAMail account using either <http://my.uga.edu> or <http://ugamail.uga.edu>. Technical problems involving your email account, UGA MyID, or password should be directed to [Enterprise Information Technology Services](#) (EITS).



# Review Your Student Account

UGA uses a “Student Account” system to track charges and payments for most UGA services. The system is accessible through [Athena](#).

Charges added to your student account include housing, meal plan, insurance, international student compliance fee, additional lab fees, and any other charges.

Payments methods options include:

- Check from a U.S. bank account
- Credit card (you pay an extra 2.75% service fee)
- Traveler’s check
- Money order
- Flywire

Soon after enrolling in UGA classes, your Student Account will show charges for the UGA tuition and fees. OIE works with the Student Accounts Office to update each student’s account by waiving tuition/fees covered by your exchange program.

Students and parents should not be alarmed at these initial tuition bills or the payment notices sent via email prior to arrival on campus. Please **do not pay your student account** before attending the UGA orientation sessions.

Information about payment deadlines can be found on the [Bursar’s Office website](#) under “information for students.” Payments made past the deadline will include late fees. An extended



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Dorothy Kozlowski



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Andrew Davis Tucker

# Finalize Your Arrival Plans

Transportation to the University of Georgia campus in Athens is conveniently provided by the [Groome Transportation Shuttle Service](#). Shuttles depart from Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson Airport on an hourly basis and arrive at the UGA campus within 1.5-2 hours. The shuttle stops at various hotels in Athens prior to the Georgia Center (conference center and hotel on UGA’s campus), which is the primary shuttle stop on campus. Students planning on arriving in Athens before UGA housing is available can either stay at a local hotel off-campus or at the Georgia Center on campus.

Directions for Groome Shuttle stop: Exchange students whose international flights arrive at the Atlanta airport will land at the international terminal of the airport. After going through immigration and baggage claim, students can ride the airport shuttle (free of cost) to the domestic terminal, where the Groome Shuttle stop is located. Look for the airport sign indicating the “Non-Metro/Regional Shared Ride Shuttle” area (green bus aisle) outside the terminal (spots #11-15). Once students locate the shuttle area, they should talk to the driver to confirm their reservation on the shuttle that departs to Athens.

Advance reservations are highly recommended due to the high number of students using the shuttle to come to the UGA campus. Having a reservation will avoid students having to wait for an available seat. Payment can be processed by credit card (online) or cash (before boarding the shuttle). [Check the Groome Transportation website for current fares.](#)

Once you finalize your arrival plans, make sure you respond (to the best of your knowledge) to the UGA Exchange Student Arrival Questionnaire in the GoAbroad Portal. OIE staff will use your answers to assist you upon arrival.



# Athens: the Classic City

The University of Georgia is located in Athens (formally known as Athens-Clarke County). The UGA campus spans much of Athens-Clarke County's geography.

On North Campus, a notable fixture is the cast-iron gateway known as "The Arch," which stands at the university's main entrance. There is a superstition about walking through the Arch. It is said that if you walk under the Arch as an undergraduate student, you will not graduate from the University of Georgia on time.

In 2014, Athens was named one of the coolest small cities in the U.S. and one of the best towns for college graduates. Besides offering a variety of educational opportunities, Athens is famous for its sports, music, intellectual, and cultural scenes. The following local resources offer various guides to Athens:

- [Flagpole Magazine](#)
- [The Red & Black student newspaper](#)
- [Athens Visitor's Bureau blog: Athens Life - Unleashed](#)



# Useful Links

## Office of International Education — [oie.uga.edu](http://oie.uga.edu)

GoAbroad Portal [goabroad.uga.edu](http://goabroad.uga.edu)

iStart portal [istart.uga.edu](http://istart.uga.edu)

Athena — [athena.uga.edu](http://athena.uga.edu)

UGA Bulletin — [bulletin.uga.edu](http://bulletin.uga.edu)

UGA Academic Calendar — [www.reg.uga.edu/calendars](http://www.reg.uga.edu/calendars)

## UGA Health Center — [uhs.uga.edu](http://uhs.uga.edu)

Certificate of Immunization <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/documents/immunizations-form.pdf>

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Form <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/documents/TB-screening-form.pdf>

## EITS (Technology Services) — [eits.uga.edu](http://eits.uga.edu)

EITS live chat <https://hd.support.uga.edu/>

## International Student Life (ISL) — [isl.uga.edu](http://isl.uga.edu)

Orientation Handbook [https://isl.uga.edu/uploads/docs/2016\\_Handbook.pdf](https://isl.uga.edu/uploads/docs/2016_Handbook.pdf)

Orientation registration [https://isl.uga.edu/content\\_page/international-student-orientation-content-page](https://isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-student-orientation-content-page)

## UGA Housing — [housing.uga.edu](http://housing.uga.edu)

UGA Housing Rules and Policies [https://housing.uga.edu/site/resources\\_key\\_rules\\_policies](https://housing.uga.edu/site/resources_key_rules_policies)

East Campus Village Resident Guide [https://housing.uga.edu/uploads/documents/community\\_guide\\_ecv.pdf](https://housing.uga.edu/uploads/documents/community_guide_ecv.pdf)

2017-18 University of Georgia housing contract [https://housing.uga.edu/uploads/documents/housing\\_contract\\_2017-18.pdf](https://housing.uga.edu/uploads/documents/housing_contract_2017-18.pdf)

## Other Resources

Meal Plans [foodservice.uga.edu/meal-plans](http://foodservice.uga.edu/meal-plans)

Bursar's Office [www.bursar.uga.edu](http://www.bursar.uga.edu)

Groome Transportation [athens.groometransportation.com](http://athens.groometransportation.com)