



# Exchange

## POST-ARRIVAL

- Settling In
- Immigration Services
- Finding Your Way
- Useful Links



Photo: Office of International Education / Sue Myers Smith





**Incoming Exchange Students  
Post-Arrival Guide**

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Office of International Education

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Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Andrew Davis Tucker

# welcome!

The Office of International Education is happy to welcome you to the University of Georgia as an incoming exchange student. We hope this will be a positive and life-changing experience for you. The University of Georgia highly values our partnership with your home university, and we look forward to having you as a representative of your institution. Exchange students like you help diversify and internationalize our campus.

As an exchange student, you will find an incredible support system to assist you with getting settled in on campus and becoming successful as a student. To fully prepare you for life on campus in Athens, take part in International Student Orientation, OIE Exchange Orientation, and read through this resourceful handbook — they all will fully prepare you for life on campus in Athens. Keep this handbook as a resource for completing important tasks during the semester. The content of this handbook has been developed specifically for international exchange students, and might differ from other documents with instructions for domestic or international degree-seeking students.

Exchange students whose questions are not addressed in this handbook can contact Education Abroad advisors at the Office of International Education by emailing [exchange@uga.edu](mailto:exchange@uga.edu). The Education Abroad team wishes all students success studying abroad at the University of Georgia.

Dr. Yana A. Cornish  
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# Settling in at the University of Georgia

Upon arrival at the University of Georgia, incoming exchange students are assisted by a UGA staff member or volunteer from the International Student Life office. These volunteers will help students situate themselves on campus, attend international student orientation, and check-in with orientation housing. Upon arrival on campus, exchange students should use the checklist below, which contains 10 steps to settle down on campus:

- ☐ **Get a UGA student ID.** The UGA ID is a very important document that grants access to most UGA facilities/services. It contains a student's 81#, which is the UGA ID number. Students use the UGA ID to ride the city bus for free, to get student discounts both on and off-campus, to access the dining halls, and many other ways.  
  
To get a UGA student ID, take your photo ID (passport, driver's license, etc.) and \$20 to the UGA Card Office. The UGA ID is ready within a few minutes. This is a one-time fee unless a student loses or severely damages the UGA ID and needs another one. For more information, please check the [UGA Card Office website](#).
- ☐ **Check in with orientation housing.** Students who attend ISL orientation do not move into their permanent on-campus housing facilities until the final day of orientation. Instead, they stay in temporary housing.
- ☐ **Situate yourself on campus.** The UGA campus is huge. Students should bring with them the UGA campus map provided in their acceptance packet. The [interactive campus map](#) will be a resource for students to situate themselves on campus and help them find residence halls, dining halls, library, University Health Center, classes, and more.
- ☐ **Update your U.S. address in Athena.** After arrival on campus, all students should update their current address in the Athena online system using their student dorm address. Note: students can successfully register for health insurance or request an insurance waiver **only if** their Athena account has an updated Athens address (on or off-campus).
- ☐ **Download the UGA Mobile App:** this is a mobile app that can be useful to students, parents and visitors. With this app, students can find when the next bus is coming, plan meal times, check UGA email, find UGA buildings, view student accounts, and more. [Visit the EITS website](#) to learn more and download the app.
- ☐ **Attend orientation.** Attend the OIE mandatory orientation. This event sets up incoming students for success at the University of Georgia, as it covers critical information such as university policies, immigration documents, student account payment, health insurance and waiver, and others.
- ☐ **Check-in with Immigration Services.** Students will start receiving emails for online check-in 30 days prior to their arrival on campus. Students must upload required immigration documents to the [iStart portal](#) using their UGA MyID and password to login. Your VLP hold will not be lifted until you submit your documents. You will not be able to alter your schedule until you do so. For more information about the immigration check-in process, please see page 6.
- ☐ **Check in with the ECV dorm.** Once the orientation week ends, students must check in with the student housing facility they were assigned to. Incoming students usually stay at the [East Campus Village](#). Students will need a photo ID (a passport or UGA ID card).  
  
You will fill out a check-in form; receive the apartment, room, and mailbox keys; get a sticker on your UGA ID to indicate which building within ECV you are assigned to, and inspect your apartment to make sure it has no damages. Your UGA ID card will give you access to your dorm. For more information about on-campus housing, visit the [UGA Housing website](#) or the [ECV website](#).
- ☐ **Connect to PAWS-Secure.** PAWS-Secure is the UGA wireless network that can be used by faculty, staff, and students. Login with your UGA MyID and password. For instructions on how to configure PAWS-Secure on your mobile devices, visit the [EITS website](#).
- ☐ **Find out the best way to get to classes.** Student schedules in Athena show UGA building and classroom numbers. To find UGA buildings, students can check the [UGA building index](#) by number.  
  
Use the [UGA transit live bus routes](#) to find the best route to your class. Students who live off-campus and ride a city bus to get to class can use the [Athens transit website](#) time tables as reference. Note: bus schedules may change on holidays, weekends, and game days.  
  
Students who stay out at night studying at the library or doing school work in a UGA building can request a [Gotcha Ride](#), a safe and free on-campus ride that picks up and drops off students on campus between 7 p.m. and 2 a.m.



Students outside of the Miller Learning Center (MLC).  
Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Andrew Davis Tucker



# Immigration Services

General information for international students can be found on the Immigration Services website: [international.uga.edu/issis/international-student-information](https://international.uga.edu/issis/international-student-information)

## Arrival Check-in

Following your arrival to the U.S., a mandatory immigration check-in with UGA Immigration Services is required, as is a mandatory in-person J-1 orientation session.

1. Access the iStart portal: <https://istart.uga.edu> **after** arriving in the U.S.
2. Click on the blue “Login” button at the bottom of the “Current Students” box and use your UGA MyID and password to log in.
3. Click on “Immigration Check-in Forms” in the left-hand menu, and then “J-1 Check-in Forms.” There are two forms in the main body of the page: “J-1 Student Immigration Check-in Form” and “J-2 Student Dependent Immigration Check-in Form.”
4. Click on the J-1 Student form and complete it.
5. In the form, you will upload your immigration documents: DS-2019, passport ID page, J-1 visa entry stamp, and I-94 record. Click submit at the end of the form.

Note: Completion of the mandatory immigration check-in will allow OIE to remove the Verification of Lawful Presence (VLP) hold on your student account and allow you to alter your class schedule.

## Traveling Within and Re-entry Into the U.S.

Students who plan to leave the U.S. during the exchange term must have the necessary documents to permit entry to another country as well as permit re-entry to the U.S.

Students need the following documentation for re-entry to the United States:

- Valid passport with at least 6 months before expiration.
- Valid (unexpired) J-1 visa in your passport – check the number of entries allowed on your visa. Be sure to use your J-1 visa for re-entry (rather than a tourist or other visa).
- Valid form DS-2019, signed for travel – the travel signature signifies to the immigration officer at a port-of-entry that you are maintaining your immigration status. The signature must come from a Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) in the UGA Office of International Education.
- Acceptance letter from UGA and financial documentation – an immigration officer at port-of-entry may wish to verify your ability to fund your stay, and you may wish to request a letter from OIE stating that you are returning to the U.S. to continue your study.



Overhead shot of Sanford Stadium at night.  
Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Paul Efland

# Finalizing Your Course Schedule

Prior to changing course schedule, students need to submit copies of immigration documents to [iStart](#). Once Immigration Services staff in the Office of International Education receive those documents, the “Verify Lawful Presence/VLP hold” will be cleared in Athena. The VLP hold must be cleared prior to the first week of classes at UGA, as it prevents students from making changes in their schedules during the Drop/Add week.

## Drop/Add Week

The Drop/Add period occurs during the first week of classes. During these five days, all UGA students can attend classes and get a sense of them without a definitive commitment. Incoming exchange students can adjust their schedule as long as they comply with J-1 visa requirements, which includes a minimum of 12 hours for undergraduates, 12 credit hours for graduate students with assistantships, and 9 credit hours for graduate students without assistantships. Classes dropped during the Drop/Add week do not affect transcripts or grades. Students can request assistance from OIE education abroad advisors via email or in person for classes that require special permissions.

## Drop vs. Withdraw vs. Audit Courses

During registration, students can choose to add, drop, withdraw, or audit a class in [Athena](#). During the Drop/Add week, students can add or drop classes without implications on their grades or transcripts. After that week, students can still withdraw from a class, i.e., remove the course from your schedule due to difficulties. However, class withdrawal shows on the transcript and it negatively affects overall academic performance. Another option is to audit a class. However, this option is not recommended for exchange students as these classes do not count as credits.



## Finding Your Way on Campus

### UGA Campus Transit

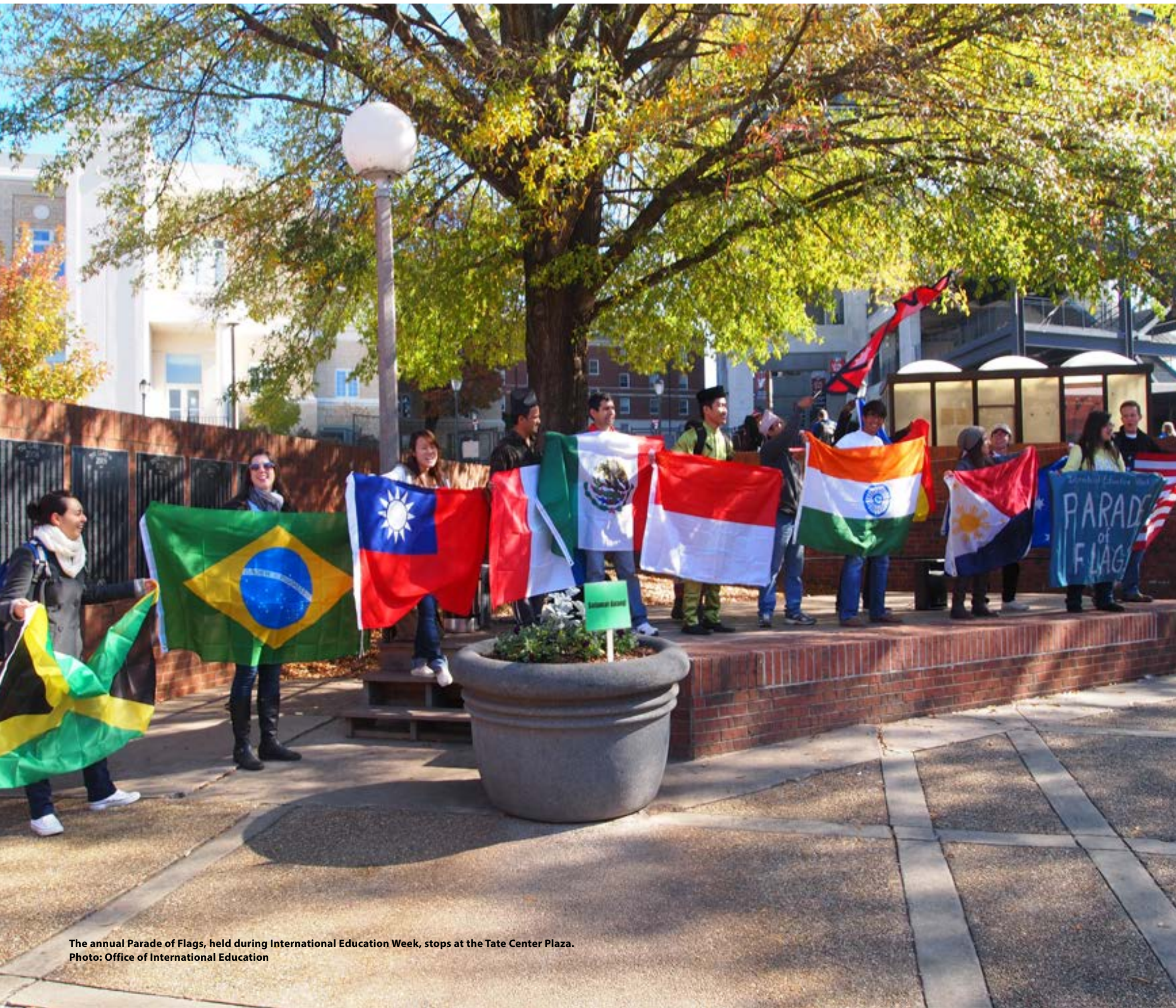
The University of Georgia has its own bus transit system, which is separate from the Athens transit bus system. UGA buses are at full service during the academic year and the transit system covers almost the entire campus. Campus transit is a useful resource for students to go from residence halls to dining halls and to classes. To view the different bus routes and times, students can use the UGA mobile app or this [interactive campus transit map](#).

### Athens Transit System

The city of Athens has its own transit system whose buses also go through the UGA campus and take students to other locations in town such as the Georgia Mall, groceries stores, and off-campus student housing. UGA students can slide their UGA ID card to have free access to Athens bus transit system. For more information about bus routes and schedule, visit the [Athens transit website](#).

Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Peter Frey





The annual Parade of Flags, held during International Education Week, stops at the Tate Center Plaza.  
Photo: Office of International Education

## Major Events & Programs for Students

### Welcome/Welcome Back Party

Every semester, the Office of International Education hosts a reception party for incoming exchange students starting their study abroad programs at UGA and for American UGA students returning from their study abroad experiences overseas. Students have the opportunity to share their perspectives about experiences in the U.S. and other countries as study abroad students and native citizens.

What: Welcome/Welcome Back Party

Where: Office of International Education, 1324 South Lumpkin Street

When: mid-January (spring) or late August (fall)

Time: 4 - 6 p.m.

Invitations reminders and an online RSVP form are sent to students via email. Students should confirm their attendance by the deadline.



## Major Events & Programs, continued

### International Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour at the University of Georgia is a free weekly program that brings UGA students, faculty, staff, and community members together over coffee and international cuisine. Excluding scheduled University breaks, this event occurs every Friday during the fall and spring semesters from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the [Memorial Hall Ballroom](#). The UGA Coffee Hour is hosted each week by our [International Student Organizations](#), campus departments, and/or local institutions.



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Peter Frey



Photo: Frans Judea Samosir

## Major Events & Programs, continued

### International Education Week

In 2001, the United States Department of State and Department of Education created International Education Week (IEW) to promote the benefits of international education and worldwide exchange. This week is celebrated annually across the United States and typically occurs during the month of November each year. In an effort to provide programs and services that prepare UGA students for a global environment, ISL prepares a week of events to celebrate international education here at UGA!

### International Photo Contest

During International Education Week, OIE invites submission of photos and videos from both international and domestic students both while abroad and while experiencing culture in the United States. Please check your email for the call for submissions. Entry is free.



# Major Events & Programs, continued

## International Street Festival

The annual International Street Festival (also known as ISF or Street Fest) was created in 1999 and promotes internationalization and cultural awareness within the Athens community. The Festival is student- and family-friendly, and boasts an attendance of 3,000 to 5,000 visitors each year. Various UGA student groups and community organizations host exciting cultural displays and performances throughout the Festival, which occurs in downtown Athens each spring.

## Language Partner Program

This is a volunteer program designed to build cross-cultural relationships and support international students who wish to improve their confidence and fluency in English (speaking and listening). The **Language Partner Program** pairs international students with a partner student from the U.S. to meet periodically and converse in English. The Language Partner Program promotes intercultural communication and understanding between international students and U.S. students through the sharing of language and culture. Join the fun and make a friend from a different part of the world! All UGA students are welcome! International students will improve their English, and U.S. students will learn about a new culture and form new friendships.



Photo: UGA Photographic Services / Dorothy Kozlowski

# Major Events & Programs, continued

## UGA Activities Fair

The University of Georgia has hundreds of student clubs and organizations. During the Activities Fair, at least 200 organizations get together to recruit new members. These organizations offer a variety of academic and social events such as ethnic nights, brown bag workshops, fundraising, and many others. Student organizations are beneficial to exchange students because students make friends and engage with peers who can provide mutual support on campus. Students interested in knowing more about these organizations can attend the Activities Fair for free. The fair is usually held within the first month of classes.

## UGA Career and Internship Fair

This is an event when UGA students meet recruiters to fill internship, part-time, or full-time job opportunities. Local employers on-campus and off-campus attend the Career Fair to talk to students and receive resumes directly from them. As an exchange student, you are not allowed to hold an off-campus job – your employer should be an on-campus office or department.

## International Graduation Ceremony

All exchange students who finish their exchange program at the University of Georgia during the spring semester qualify to participate in the **International Graduation Ceremony** and receive a study abroad certificate. The International Graduation Ceremony highlights the special accomplishments and sacrifices made by international students and their families, and includes a complimentary reception immediately following for graduates and their guests. Questions about the ceremony can be forwarded to [isl@uga.edu](mailto:isl@uga.edu).



Students celebrate after the International Graduation Ceremony.  
Photo: International Student Life



# Preparing to Return Home

## Housing Contract Cancellation

UGA Housing contracts work on a full-year basis (11.5 months). When preparing to return home, all exchange students should cancel the remaining portion of their contracts with UGA housing. Students who are not going to stay/study at UGA for the next term can cancel the contract without financial penalties.

Note: Students who do not cancel the housing contract will be charged the full amount for the upcoming term. Students who do not cancel the housing contract prior to the deadline are subject to paying a cancellation fee of \$300.

Instructions about cancelling a UGA Housing contract are sent via email to all students. To cancel the contract, students must:

1. Email [housing@uga.edu](mailto:housing@uga.edu) from your UGA email account or go in person to the Housing Assignments Office in Creswell Hall to cancel your spring/summer housing.
2. Include in the email your full name & current hall/room assignment
3. Identify yourself as an international exchange student at UGA.
4. Inform UGA Housing that your enrollment will not be renewed for the next academic term.
5. Confirm expected move-out date from ECV.
6. Request an inspection supervised by a Resident Assistant (RA) before your move-out.

The last day to check out of ECV is usually 24 hours after the students' last final exam. However, students who wish to stay longer in ECV can email UGA Housing to request a later move-out date. Extra days of stay will be pro-rated and charged to the student account.

Students enrolled for the calendar year should renew their housing contract to reaffirm they will continue studying at UGA and staying at ECV. If students fail to do so, they will not be assigned the same room in the residence hall.

## Holds & Transcript

Before students depart UGA, after what we hope was a great semester or year, students will need to complete a few tasks to ensure that their UGA Transcript is not delayed.

Note: Registrar's Office may send an automated message noting when a transcript is released to OIE.

Check with your home university's exchange coordinator for a scanned copy of your transcript in a .pdf format.

Check with your home university exchange coordinator for the receipt of your transcript from OIE. Transcripts are sent to their offices rather than to individual students' addresses.

The Office of International Education covers the Registrar's processing fee for one transcript requested by OIE. Additional official copies of transcripts can be requested from the [Registrar's Office](#). Students are responsible for the costs of additional copies.

Before receiving the official transcript, students can view grades on their own in Athena. Final grades typically become available within a few days after final exams.

## Exchange Bon Voyage

The Office of International Education holds a Bon Voyage Reception every semester for those exchange students heading home, and for the UGA outbound exchange students heading to universities abroad for their study abroad.

Education Abroad advisors invite students to celebrate their study abroad experiences and to wish them good trips. The reception usually is held late in the semester, before final exams week.



# Useful Links

## **Tate Center — [tate.uga.edu](http://tate.uga.edu)**

Building map	<a href="http://tate.uga.edu/content_page/tour-tate">tate.uga.edu/content_page/tour-tate</a>
Bulldog Bucks office	<a href="http://bulldogbucks.uga.edu">bulldogbucks.uga.edu</a>
Dining Services Locations	<a href="http://dining.uga.edu/locations-hours/retail">dining.uga.edu/locations-hours/retail</a>
Graduate Student Assoc.	<a href="http://graduatestudents.org">graduatestudents.org</a>
Movie theatre	<a href="http://tate.uga.edu/content_page/movie-at-tate">tate.uga.edu/content_page/movie-at-tate</a>
Print & Copy Services	<a href="http://dawgprints.uga.edu">dawgprints.uga.edu</a>
Student organizations	<a href="http://stuorgs.uga.edu">stuorgs.uga.edu</a>
UGA ID card	<a href="http://tate.uga.edu/ugacard_content_page/ugacard-about">tate.uga.edu/ugacard_content_page/ugacard-about</a>

## **UGA Libraries — [www.libs.uga.edu](http://www.libs.uga.edu)**

Citation mgmt software	<a href="http://guides.libs.uga.edu/citationmanagement">guides.libs.uga.edu/citationmanagement</a>
GALILEO Database	<a href="http://www.libs.uga.edu/research/">www.libs.uga.edu/research/</a>
GIL Search	<a href="http://galileo-usg-uga-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com...">galileo-usg-uga-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com ...</a>
Interlibrary Loan	<a href="http://www.libs.uga.edu/ill/">www.libs.uga.edu/ill/</a>

## **Miller Learning Center — [mlc.uga.edu](http://mlc.uga.edu)**

Tutoring	<a href="http://mlc.uga.edu/studyresearch/tutoring">mlc.uga.edu/studyresearch/tutoring</a>
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## **University Health Center — [www.uhs.uga.edu](http://www.uhs.uga.edu)**

Online appointments	<a href="http://patientportal.uhs.uga.edu/home.aspx">patientportal.uhs.uga.edu/home.aspx</a>
Health insurance	<a href="http://hr.uga.edu/students/student-health-insurance/mandatory-plan/">hr.uga.edu/students/student-health-insurance/mandatory-plan/</a>

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

iStart portal	<a href="http://istart.uga.edu">istart.uga.edu</a>
Education Abroad Portal	<a href="http://goabroad.uga.edu">goabroad.uga.edu</a>

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

Student organizations	<a href="http://isl.uga.edu/site/student_orgs">isl.uga.edu/site/student_orgs</a>
Student resources	<a href="http://isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-student-resources-content-page">isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-student-resources-content-page</a>
Tax assistance	<a href="http://isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-tax-assistance-program-content-page">isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-tax-assistance-program-content-page</a>

## **Division of Academic Enhancement — [dae.uga.edu](http://dae.uga.edu)**

Writing Center	<a href="http://writingcenter.english.uga.edu">writingcenter.english.uga.edu</a>
Tutoring	<a href="http://dae.uga.edu/tutoring/">dae.uga.edu/tutoring/</a>

## **Other Resources**

Academic Honesty	<a href="http://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty">ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty</a>
Disability Resource Center	<a href="http://drc.uga.edu">drc.uga.edu</a>
EITS Student Guide (PDF):	<a href="http://t.uga.edu/2xT">t.uga.edu/2xT</a>
Equal Opportunity Office	<a href="http://eoo.uga.edu">eoo.uga.edu</a>
Food Services:	<a href="http://foodservice.uga.edu">foodservice.uga.edu</a>
LGBT Resource Center	<a href="http://lgbtcenter.uga.edu">lgbtcenter.uga.edu</a>
Multicultural Services & Programs	<a href="http://msp.uga.edu">msp.uga.edu</a>
Ramsey Student Center	<a href="http://recsports.uga.edu">recsports.uga.edu</a>