



Human Development & Family Science
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE

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Welcome to the Department of Human Development and Family Science!

This manual was created for international graduate students who are studying and working in the Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) at the University of Georgia. This manual provides information on how to navigate through this graduate program and general tips for transitioning to life at UGA, Athens and the USA in general. Covered topics in this student guide include getting settled in Athens, campus locations and HDFS buildings, UGA student wellbeing and financial resources, and program specific information (i.e., HDFS, CFT & Child Life).

Key Department & HDFS Graduate Program Contacts

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For HDFS faculty office locations, please refer to faculty pages using the directory here:

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/people/dept/3/34>

Bulldog Note:

This is a guide developed by the HDFS Graduate Program to support international student's transition to life in the U.S., Athens, and UGA. Information in this guide is to be used as a resource only.

UGA has no direct affiliation (unless stated) with any specific companies or businesses related to the information in this guide. As this is a department-issued resource, we are unable to directly provide specific recommendations for companies/businesses in this document.

You are welcome to connect with fellow international students or contact the international student representative of the HDFS GSO for more information on potential apps and groups that students in the past have found helpful!

You can find the contact details of your current GSO rep here:

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-student-organization>



NAVIGATING YOUR TRANSITION TO ATHENS

Quick Checklist Before Your Arrival

Below is a rough checklist of useful things to remember during your transition to the US. This list has been curated by current and past international students who have successfully made their transition to U.S. life and wanted to share some tips for future international students. It is important to note that this is not a complete checklist of everything you need to do before arriving. It is important that you refer to other resources shared with you by UGA to ensure that you have completed everything you need to before you arrive.

Additional information that may be helpful to you can also be found here:

https://www.usg.edu/international_education/international_students/international_student_resources

1. Prepare your visa and passport
 - a. It is important to start the visa process early to ensure that it is approved in time for you to start your program. Visa processing and requirements will vary for different countries, please check and follow the instructions in place for getting your student visa in your home country. More information can be found here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>
2. Look for housing
 - a. UGA on-campus housing for graduate students is limited. You will likely have a better chance at finding housing off-campus, however for more information on on-campus housing please visit here: <https://housing.uga.edu/explore-options/?sort=graduate>
 - b. Renting apartments around Athens can also be expensive, many graduate students who move to Athens choose to find roommates (apartment mates) to help reduce the cost of living.
 - c. Some useful resources for finding off-campus housing and roommates are:
 - i. Facebook Groups
 - ii. Rental Apps & Websites:
 1. <https://www.zillow.com/>
 2. <https://www.trulia.com/>
 3. <https://www.apartments.com/>
3. Ship any belongings from home
 - a. Once you have found a place to live, you can choose to ship any belongings you want from home that you won't travel with to your new address

- b. It is important to research reliable shipping options in your home country. Deliveries within the US will likely be handled by the United States Postal Service (USPS) or FedEx.
4. Get vaccine ready!
 - a. Prior to entering the U.S. and studying at UGA there are several mandatory vaccinations that students have to get. Additionally, vaccination requirements can vary depending on your country of departure.
 - b. Information on required vaccinations can be found here: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu/info/immunizations/>
 - c. Make sure to set aside enough time to get these vaccinations in your home country.
5. Manage your money
 - a. It can be important to have a way to access funds as soon as you arrive in the US. Some international students choose to set up credit cards in their home country that can be used internationally for initial use before setting up a bank account in the USA.
 - b. You want to make sure that throughout your time as a student, you have a USA bank account set up for employment pay, bills, and other expenses.
 - c. There are many options to choose from when deciding which company to bank with. Something to also consider is how accessible an in-person location for your bank is, both to campus and your apartment, as this can be useful.
 - d. Beware of scams! Unfortunately, bank scams and wire fraud are common. However, with some additional support and knowledge on what to look out for, these can be avoided. If you are unsure whether you are being targeted by a scam as a UGA student, the University offers resources for support.
 - i. Contact the UGA Police Department at 706-542-2200 for assistance.
 - ii. If you are unsure whether the source of an email you have received is legitimate, forward the email to abuse@uga.edu and request an assessment, or contact the EITS Help Desk at 706-542-3106.
 - iii. More information on how to stay safe and secure online can be found here: <https://safeandsecure.uga.edu/network-security/>
 - e. If you plan to transfer money internationally (i.e., if you receive scholarships or funding from your home country that you need to transfer to your US bank account), there are some safe, reliable, and efficient apps that you can use. Many current international students recommend: <https://wise.com/>
 - i. Again, make sure to research these carefully.
 - ii. Connect with other international students in the department, they can be a great resource for helping you find trustworthy sites/apps.

Getting to Athens from Atlanta Airport

You've landed in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and now it's time to get to Athens. ATL airport is approximately 2 hours away from Athens by car. As one of the world's busiest airports it can be an overwhelming place, but it is manageable to get your head around after a few visits. Depending on your airline and departure destination, you will likely land in the International Terminal.

Airlines that operate out of the international terminal include: AeroMexico | Air Canada | Air France | British Airways | Copa Airlines | Ethiopian Airlines | KLM Royal Dutch Airlines | Korean Air | LATAM Airlines | Lufthansa German Airlines | Qatar Airways | Turkish Airlines | Virgin Atlantic | WestJet

There are several reliable ground transportation options available to support your travel to Athens, including Rideshare options and Shuttle Buses.

Rideshare Options

At the airport, there are several rideshare options that can be used to navigate your trip to Athens. Options include:

- <https://www.lyft.com/>
- <https://www.uber.com/>

Rideshare companies/businesses are similar to taxis for hire, they offer a wide range of car services to suit your travel needs and can be accessed through an app on your phone. Some examples of rideshare services in the USA include Uber and Lyft (links listed above), and these can be used to travel between Athens/UGA campus and the airport. Note however, while these can be more efficient than other transportation options from the airport, due to the long distance between ATL airport and the Athens area, hiring a car through these apps can be expensive, often \$100+. This is something to keep in mind when planning your journey.

Shuttle Bus Options

Groome Shuttle

The Groome Shuttle Airport Service is a cost-efficient alternative to rideshare options when making the journey to Athens from the airport. Groome is a bus company that provides service in the Athens and surrounding areas to transport customers to and from ATL airport. A one-way trip from ATL airport to Athens costs \$52 for adults and \$28 for children aged 3-7 when booked online at their website. Children and infants under the age of 3 travel for free. Each traveler is able to bring up to two standard suitcases and one personal item with them for travel and reservations for your travel should be made in advance.

Links to the main Groome Shuttle website and common questions can be found below:

- Athens Groome Shuttle Main Page: <https://groometransportation.com/athens/>
- Athens Groome Additional Information: https://groometransportation.com/athens-faq/?&sd_client_id=bd26459f-ccbc-412c-955f-ab092f3fece9&sd_client_id=b7c9673f-2c5b-441a-aba8-51dac4f47da9

You can find the Groome Shuttle for your pick up at the **domestic arrivals terminal only**. Groome shuttles **do not pick up** passengers from the international arrivals terminal. However, if you are traveling from Athens to the airport, then you can be dropped off at the international terminal. If you are unsure about where to find the Groome Shuttle pick up location, or how to get to the domestic arrivals area, agents at the airport will be able to assist you.

UGA Groome Airport Shuttle Initiative

UGA runs an annual initiative with the Groome Shuttle service to provide discounted shuttle reservations for UGA students during the Thanksgiving Break (late November) period and the Winter Break period (Early December – Mid January).

For information on how to book a shuttle service to the airport at a discounted rate for these times in the academic year, please see the website link here: <https://tps.uga.edu/navigating-campus/airport-shuttle-initiative/>

NAVIGATING ATHENS

Athens Bus Services

The city of Athens offers a **free** transit system for anyone to use. There is **no fare** for boarding the bus, so you can walk right on. This can be useful if you don't have a car or want to access different parts of town. Students and locals can board Athens buses at designated bus stops around the city. Often, bus stops will be marked with a signpost displaying the bus route numbers that stop there. All Athens bus routes have a number and color code, which makes it easier to know what bus stop to go to for your chosen route (see image below).



Bus routes and destination will be displayed on the side and front of the bus

Many bus stops will be indicated by a sign post displaying the bus routes that stop there, with their corresponding colors for city maps. For example, the number 7 bus and number 21 bus stop here. Also, at the very bottom of the sign, a QR code can be scanned for you to access live bus tracking!

Keeping track of your buses progress can be helpful for planning your journey and knowing where to get off, as bus stops are typically named after nearby streets, so these may be unfamiliar to you.

You can track Athen's transit buses live through several methods:

- Athens City Live Bus Tracking: <https://bustracker.accgov.com/InfoPoint/>
- MyStop Bus App: <https://www.accgov.com/10106/Transit> (Links to download apps for both Android & iPhones)
- UGA Official App (see more information below in the Navigating UGA section)
- Google Maps Directions: <https://www.google.com/maps> (also accessible as an app on your smartphone)

Local Grocery Stores & Shopping Areas

There are lots of mainstream companies in the US for getting your food and essentials. Below are some of the main stores that you can find around Athens.

 <p>CVS</p>	<p>There are multiple CVS stores in the Athens area. To find your local store, go to https://www.cvs.com/ and use the search for store option here: https://www.cvs.com/store-locator/landing and enter your zip code e.g. 30602</p>
 <p>Walgreens</p>	<p>There are multiple Walgreens stores in the Athens area. To find your local store, go to https://www.walgreens.com/ and see the list of stores in and around Athens here: https://www.walgreens.com/storelocator/pharmacy/athens-ga</p>
 <p>Target</p>	<p>There are multiple Target stores in the Athens area. To find your local store, go to https://www.target.com/ and use the search for store option here: https://www.target.com/store-locator/find-stores and enter your zip code e.g. 30602</p>
 <p>Kroger</p>	<p>There are multiple Kroger's stores in the Athens area. To find your local store, see the list of Athens stores here: https://www.kroger.com/stores/grocery/ga/athens</p>
 <p>Walmart</p>	<p>The main Walmart Supercenter in Athens can be found here: https://www.walmart.com/store/1400-athens-ga Address: Walmart Supercenter #1400 1911 Epps Bridge Pkwy, Athens, GA 30606</p>
 <p>Trader Joe's</p>	<p>Link to Athens location: https://locations.traderjoes.com/ga/athens/736/</p>
 <p>Publix</p>	<p>There are multiple Publix stores in the Athens area. To find your local store, go to https://www.publix.com/ and use the search for store option here: https://www.publix.com/locations and enter your zip code e.g., 30602</p>

Shopping Areas

There are also several shopping areas to explore in the city. Some of these include:

- Beechwood Shopping Center | 196 Alps Rd, Athens, GA 30606
 - <https://beechwoodathens.com/>
- Epps Bridge Center | 1791 Oconee Connector, Athens, GA 30606
 - <https://www.marketsateppsbridge.com/>
- East Athens Marketplace | 4375 Lexington Rd, Athens, GA 30605
 - <https://east-athens-marketplace.whereee.com/>
- Alps Village | 191 Alps Rd, Athens, GA 30606
 - <https://alps-village.whereee.com/>
- Athens Farmers Market: <https://athensfarmersmarket.net/>

Things To Do and See



The State Botanical Garden of Georgia
<https://botgarden.uga.edu/>



Starland Lounge & Bowling Lanes
<https://starlandlanes.com/>



Big Dogs On The River Canoe & Kayak Rental
<http://www.bigdogsontheriver.com/>



Georgia Theatre
<https://www.georgiatheatre.com/>



Athens Classic Center:
<https://www.classiccenter.com/>



Attend UGA Sports Events
<https://georgiadogs.com/>



Georgia Museum of Art
<https://georgiamuseum.org/>



Ciné Movie Theatre
<https://www.athenscine.com/>



Rook & Pawn Board Game Lounge
<https://www.therookandpawn.com/>



Bulldog Note: <https://www.visitathensga.com/> can be a great website to explore some of Athen's most popular attractions, events, and restaurants. You can also follow them on social media for upcoming events!

NAVIGATING THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

UGA International Student Orientation

UGA's Center for Global and Cultural Student Engagement (see more information on them below) offer an International Student Orientation to help incoming international students prepare to settle into their new life in Athens and UGA. This is a great opportunity for you to learn more about life in the USA (if it's your first time living here) and get set-up for your new life as a UGA student. From learning about the student organizations on campus, to setting up a US bank account, to navigating taxes, ISO offers a variety of workshops, campus fairs and social events to help you adjust to your new environment. Registration for ISO costs \$80 and more information on how to register and what to expect can be found here:

<https://cgcse.uga.edu/gse/orientation/#what-to-expect>

Additional orientation resources for international student can be found here:

- [Graduate School New International Student Resources](#)
- [UGA Student Affairs International Student Transition Resource](#)

The University System of Georgia International Student Manual

As a resource, the University System of Georgia has provided a general manual for international students to use when studying at one of the public colleges or universities in the state of Georgia. While this manual does not provide specific details about navigating international student life at the University of Georgia (UGA) specifically, it does include useful information on transitioning to and settling in the U.S., including preparing for arrival, obtaining a social security number, health insurance, and maintaining visa status during your program.

The University System of Georgia Manual for International Students and other information can be found here: https://www.usg.edu/information/international_students/

Office of Global Engagement and International Student Life

At UGA, there are two main offices that offer specialized services to support international students:

1. **Office of Global Engagement:** The Office of Global Engagement is a great resource for visa-related services such as I-20 or student visa extension and consultation related to students' immigration-related issues. A lot of general resources, including information on student wellbeing, career development, and important support contacts can be found at their website here: <https://cgcse.uga.edu/gse/resources/>.

2. **International Student Life:** International Student Life (ISL) is a hub for international student/scholar life and cross-cultural inclusion. ISL offers cultural events, international coffee hours, and even a tax preparation program for international students at UGA. These events provide an opportunity to build social networks, friendships, and community among students at UGA. You can find more information about ISL here: <https://cgcse.uga.edu/gse/>

Student Care and Outreach

Student Care and Outreach (SCO) is a great resource to be aware of as a student at UGA. SCO aims to promote student wellbeing in general, therefore they offer services to provide support for navigating a variety of hardships including (but not limited to) challenges related to housing, finances, wellbeing, and academics. If at any point during your time at UGA you require additional support in any of these areas, you can contact SCO, and an SCO mentor refer will you to the right resources and work with you to support you through any issues that you have.

An SCO mentor/rep can be contacted by email here: sco@uga.edu .

Below are some useful links from the SCO website:

- [SCO Main Homepage](#)
- [SCO Financial Support Funding Resources Page](#)

SCO Students Who Parent Program

If you are a student who is also a parent, there are resources available to support you during your time at UGA. *Students Who Parent* is dedicated to supporting, empowering, and advocating for parent-students and students who parent at UGA. They strive to create a welcoming and inclusive community that recognizes the unique challenges and strengths of parenting while being a student. Through peer support, resource sharing, and collaboration with campus partners, they aim to foster academic success, personal well-being, and a sense of belonging for all students who parent at UGA. If you are interested in learning more about *Students Who Parent* then you can fill out the information form here:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=HmwhqGNNUkOMO1D6HxR1sa_AEimoC9JNslI8ynqn-JVUREZVOEJKMVJHMOpVSEZROVU5R1RROFQ0RS4u&origin=QRCode&route=shorturl

UGA Bus Services

UGA offers a free transit system that can help you get around campus easily and efficiently without the use of a car. The weekday bus routes operate on regular academic instruction days during the fall and spring semesters. There are twelve weekday routes that service locations on campus as well as many UGA facilities across Athens. Additionally, for transport services after

school hours, three routes serve bus stops on and off campus, providing a safe alternative to navigating campus and the nearby Athens area at night. A weekend bus route is also available during normal daytime service hours throughout the spring and fall semesters (outside of university holiday breaks). It is important to note, however, that all UGA buses are out of service during home football games and on university holidays, so if you plan to make your way around campus at these times, you will have to use other forms of transportation.

A full list of the UGA bus routes, their service areas, and hours of operation can be found here: <https://tps.uga.edu/transit/routes-schedules/fall-spring/>

Information on UGA bus service during the Summer semester can be found here: <https://tps.uga.edu/transit/routes-schedules/summer/>

UGA App

The UGA Mobile App is the official mobile app for the University of Georgia, where students, staff, faculty, and visitors can find campus resources and learn more about the University. This is a useful resource that offers a live bus tracking tool (in addition to many other UGA resources) that you can access anytime, anywhere from your mobile phone. The transport navigation tool allows you to explore and navigate both UGA and Athens bus routes, access maps, and plan your route to different on-campus locations and buildings/facilities.



The app is free to download on both Apple and Android devices from the App Store or Google Play store. The logo should look like the image on the left. Links to download the UGA Mobile App on your iOS or Android device can be found here:

<https://uga.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/3190/eitsclientportal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=168470>

If you experience an issue with the UGA Mobile App, contact the EITS Help Desk at 706-542-3106 or helpdesk@uga.edu.

Website Tracking

Another way to access the live bus tracking for UGA buses is online via the PassioGo webpage here: <https://uga.passiogo.com/>

UGA Ride Smart in Partnership with Lyft

In partnership with Lyft, UGA offers a rideshare program for students to travel on campus and some surrounding areas at discounted rates in the early and late hours of the day. This is a great resource for navigating campus after hours safely! More information can be found here: <https://tps.uga.edu/navigating-campus/uga-ride-smart/>.

Parking on Campus

If you plan to bring a car to campus/drive to school, there are designated student parking spaces on campus. It is important to note that student parking permits are limited and extremely popular, therefore if you would like to secure one for the school year, you need to request a permit early. Parking request applications open late in the spring semester for permits that will be valid for the upcoming fall semester. More information about how to apply for a student parking permit can be found here: <https://tps.uga.edu/permits/student/>. A useful tip, some labs may already have their own designated parking spots for student/staff use, so check with your advisor if applicable!

Campus Dining

There are lots of opportunities for graduate students to eat on campus including multiple dining commons, retail dining, and markets: <https://dining.uga.edu/>.

All UGA students are eligible to purchase a Meal Plan, which gives them access to dining options on campus for a fee. Information on graduate and professional student specific meal plans can be accessed here: <https://dining.uga.edu/meal-plans/purchase/graduate/>. There are also opportunities to access UGA dining services without purchasing a meal plan. Students are welcome to use their credit/debit cards to eat in dining halls, retail dining spaces, and markets on campus.

UGA Dining Halls/Commons: <https://dining.uga.edu/locations/dining-commons/>

Retail Dining Spaces on Campus: <https://dining.uga.edu/locations/retail-dining/>

Food Markets on Campus: <https://dining.uga.edu/locations/markets/>

If you have concerns about being able to pay for food during your time at UGA, please see the on campus resources that can help support you in the *Navigating Financial & Mental Health* section of this guide. Additional helpful questions and answers about UGA dining services can be found here: <https://dining.uga.edu/about/faqs/>.



Bulldog Note: You can find links to campus maps at the end of this manual!

HDFS Graduate Student Organization (GSO)

The HDFS GSO (or GSO for short) is a collection of student scholars who are focused on promoting the professional development of students and building community in the HDFS

department. Every year interested graduate students within the department apply and are elected to serve on the GSO leadership for the academic year. The GSO team dedicate their time to organizing department events, creating networking opportunities, and supporting the needs of students in the HDFS, CFT and Child Life programs.

Information on the current HDFS GSO team can be found here:

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-student-organization>

The GSO International Student Representative

The GSO International Student Rep is dedicated to supporting international graduate students in the HDFS department. They are there to advocate for your interests, concerns, and unique needs as an international graduate student, and communicate these to department faculty. They aim to foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment and promote cultural exchange and understanding within the graduate student community as a whole.

The international student rep of GSO can be a great resource for you as you make your way through your program, so it is important to know who they are, and how to contact them (information on the current international student rep can be found at the link above with the rest of the GSO leadership team).

The international student rep will contact you at the start of the academic year to introduce themselves and connect you with other international students in the program!

Important Buildings to Know

There are several buildings that you will likely need to know as a HDFS graduate student. Below are a few, others can be found at the link here: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/locations>



Dawson Hall
305 Sanford Dr, Athens, GA 30605
South Campus



Family Science Center (House A)
403 Sanford Dr, Athens, GA 30602
South Campus (behind House D)



**Love and Money Center
(McPhaul Center)**
202 Carlton St., Athens, GA 30602
South Campus



Family Science Center (House C)
415 Sanford Dr, Athens, GA 30602
South Campus



Hoke Smith Annex
300 Carlton St., Athens, GA 30602
South Campus



**Georgia Center for Developmental Science
(River's Crossing)**
850 College Station Rd., Athens, GA 30602
South Campus

NAVIGATING YOUR PROGRAM

Read the Handbook

The most important resource you will need for navigating your degree as a graduate student is your program handbook. All handbooks are distinguished by program. It is vital that you read and refer to the handbook that is specific to your program to keep yourself informed of what needs to be completed in what timeline. It is also important that you discuss the timeline outlined in the handbook with your major professor (as well as your other committee members if you have selected them) to meet your degree goals. This will allow you to develop a plan for completing your milestone requirements to earn your degree.

If you have any questions about information included in your program handbook, you can reach out to: HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu

The current handbooks and forms for each of the programs (HDFS Doctoral, HDFS-CFT Doctoral, HDFS CFT MS, HDFS-Child Life MS) can be found here: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-for-current-students>.

The Graduate School

The Graduate School plays a significant role in the administrative work during your program. This means that they are required to be informed of key milestones that you reach during your degree progress, such as your program of study, comprehensive exams (Comps), and thesis and/or dissertation. Refer to your specific program handbook for more detailed information on the processes that involve the graduate school.

In addition to managing and monitoring your degree progress, the Graduate School can also be a resource for additional academic support, career and professional development, and funding opportunities. Different types and sources of funding are available to support graduate students, including assistantships, fellowships, grants for research or conference travel, and support for students facing unexpected financial hardship. Information on Graduate School funding opportunities will often be emailed to you through the graduate school's and department's graduate student listservs.

You can find more information about these resources at: <https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/>

Choosing Your Advisor and Committee

An important part of your program journey will be selecting your faculty advisor/major professor and your committee. In addition to the Director of Graduate Studies and your Program Director, your advisor and committee will support you in navigating your academic studies.

If your advisor is not already assigned to you, then you will have the opportunity to select an advisor of your choice early on in your program. Your advisor will be your main mentor and point of contact throughout your studies. When choosing your advisor, it is important to consider your research interests and goals. You want to choose someone that will be able to best support you throughout your academic journey and set you up for success post-graduation.

Similarly, when the time comes in your program to select your committee members for your milestone project, master's thesis and/or dissertation, it is important to choose committee members who can help you advance the skills you need for your degree. Your major professor/advisor can be great resource for helping you decide who to include on your committee based on your interests and goals.

It is important to note that it is normal and not uncommon to select an advisor or committee member and then decide they are not a good fit for you or your goals. You can request to change your advisor or committee member to find the best support for you! Your program handbook provides information and guidance on how to navigate this process.

Registering for Classes

Registering for classes can be challenging when you start a new program at a new school, however, the HDFS department and graduate programs will make sure that you are fully equipped to navigate class registration throughout your graduate school experience. Your first year of your program will likely consist of core courses that everyone in your program cohort will be expected to take. Program directors will make sure you are aware of these specific courses and the HDFS program director will provide additional information on how to access courses for the semester, permission of departments (PODs), and registration holds.

To register for classes, you will access the UGA student portal called Athena. The Athena portal allows you to register for all classes, build, and access your class plan for the current or upcoming semester. Athena can be accessed at:

<https://my.uga.edu/htmlportal/index.php?guest=normal/render.uP>

To log into Athena, you will need your UGAMyID and password. Your MyID is your unique UGA login, more information on the UGA MyID can be found here:

<https://uga.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/3190/eitsclientportal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=154661>

If you have trouble accessing Athena or your UGA Student Portal/Account, you can reach out to the UGA Information and Technology (IT) team. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) provides support services and equipment to students and faculty when needed. They are a great resource if you have any trouble with setting up your email, accessing your student portal and more. To contact them, you have to submit an IT request via email to: helpdesk@uga.edu

Professional Development and Conferences

Attending conferences can be a great way to network and learn more about the work being done in your research and/or practice area. Based on your research, clinical, and or career interests, you can explore the many national and international conferences being held in the year and potentially find an opportunity to present your paper, research project or your work at.

If you are unsure about conference opportunities in your career area, it can be a good idea to talk to peers, your advisors and other faculty in your program to learn more about conferences that might be of interest to you and when and how to apply. Often, labs may work together to submit work or attend a conference. If you are part of a lab, check in with your advisor about conferences they or your peers may be interested in going to.

Note, while conferences are great opportunities to share your work, they are also great professional development opportunities, therefore you do not have to submit a proposal to present at a conference in order to attend one! These are spaces to learn from other researchers, clinicians and practitioners in your field, and you never know who may become a future colleague or mentor!

Below is a list of some popular conferences that some graduate students in the department often attend. Note, this is not a complete list; check in with peers and faculty about others they may recommend!

Common HDFS Conferences:

- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR): <https://www.ncfr.org/>
- Society for Research on Children Development (SRCDD): <https://www.srccd.org/>
- International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP): <https://isdp.org/>
- Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA): <https://www.s-r-a.org/>

Common CFT Conferences:

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT): <https://www.aamft.org/>
- International Family Therapy Association (IFTA): <https://www.ifta-congress.org/>

Common Child Life Conferences:

- Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP): <https://www.childlife.org/>
- Southern Association of Child Life Professionals (SACLP): <https://www.saclp.org/>

NAVIGATING FINANCIAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Assistantships

One way that graduate students receive funding while they are enrolled in their program is through an assistantship. An assistantship is a form of student employment that requires students to dedicate a portion of their weekly hours to paid duties. There are different types of assistantships that a student may be assigned to, however, teaching assistantships and research assistantships are the most commonly assigned to graduate students in the program.

More information about the different types of assistantships you can be employed in can be found in your handbook and here: <https://grad.uga.edu/funding/assistantships-students/>.

Typically, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head will assign and inform you of your assistantship assignment at the start of each academic year in the form of an Assistantship letter. Your assistantship is like your job. Therefore, it is important that you make your assistantship tasks a top priority and commit to the assigned number of hours a week.

Assistantship Payments

In most cases, assistantship pay is for 10 months, August to May. In some instances, 12-month assistantships are available, and payments are adjusted accordingly. All assistantships include a tuition waiver in the fall and spring, followed by an automatic waiver in the students if funded on an assistantship during the fall and spring semester. Note, this waiver reduces the tuition to \$25 per semester. The student is still responsible for paying mandatory fees each semester. Payments from your assistantship are typically distributed to your chosen direct deposit account at the end of each month. Income from assistantships is subject to state and federal income taxes.

If you are unsure or have any questions about your assistantship assignment or payment, please reach out to the HDFFS Director of Graduate Studies at: HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu

Dealing with Financial Hardship

Getting settled in your program can be tough, and life as an international student can be financially straining. If you are experiencing financial hardship at any point during your program, resources and support can be located at:

- UGA Student Care & Outreach Support Funds: <https://sco.uga.edu/resources-financial/>
- UGA Wellbeing Resources for Basic Needs: <https://well-being.uga.edu/basic-needs/>

Your Health & Wellbeing

Being a graduate student is hard. Being an international graduate student is even harder. Your health and well-being should **always** come first in your program. It is important that you make time to support your mental health and general well-being, and build a supportive network that will be there for you when times get tough. While it can be difficult to build community in a new place, the HDFS department strives to provide a safe and supportive space for you to build connections amongst both faculty and peers. It is important that you know where to find resources on campus to support both your physical and mental health. On campus resources can be found here: <https://well-being.uga.edu/>

Health Insurance

There is no universal healthcare service in the US. This means that the US government does not provide health benefits to citizens or visitors. Any time you receive medical care, it has to be paid for. Getting health insurance is a way most people in the US navigate expensive medical costs. Health insurance can also help you pay for regular check-ups, laboratory tests, vaccines, and prescription medication. All UGA-enrolled, International students have access to the UGA student health insurance plan. Every student pays the “Health Fee” which affords each student access to a Primary Care Provider (your main point of contact doctor) with no out-of-pocket costs for the appointment with the clinician. Any other services, such as labs, prescriptions, testing, etc., provided during that appointment will be filed to your student insurance (UGA Health Center Website).

Information on the mandatory student health insurance plan that is required for all international students can be found here:

https://hr.uga.edu/students/Mandatory_Plan/student_mandatory_plan_home/

To learn more about your health insurance and medical care in the US please see the site for international students here: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu/international/>

The UGA Student Health Center



University Student Health Center
 55 Carlton St., Athens, GA 30602
 East Campus
 (706) 542-1162 | contact@uhs.uga.edu

Hours

Clinics: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm (Mon – Fri)
 Pharmacy: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm (Mon-Fri)

The university student health center is where you can seek non-emergency medical care on campus. This includes appointments for regular check-ups, getting vaccinations/shots, and prescriptions.

- UGA Vision Clinic: <https://visionclinic.uga.edu/>
- UGA Vision Coverage Information:
https://hr.uga.edu/students/students_vision_insurance/
- UGA Dental Clinic: <https://dentalclinic.uga.edu/>
- UGA Dental Coverage Information:
https://hr.uga.edu/students/students_dental_insurance/
- Emergencies and After Hours Care: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu/emergencies/>

Nearby Hospitals, Emergency Rooms, and Pharmacies

In times when you need urgent care or the clinics and pharmacy at the UGA Student Health Center is closed, below is a list of some local off-campus medical care sites. Remember, if you are in an emergency or need emergency support (police, ambulance, fire department etc.) then the number to call in the USA is **911**.

Services	Medical Center	Address	Contact Details
Local Clinics & Hospitals	Piedmont Urgent Care – Athens	485 Hwy 29 North Athens, GA 30601	706-353-9300 www.piedmont.org/locations/urgent-care-centers/urgent-care-home
	Urgent Care of Oconee	2375 W. Broad Street, Suite G Athens, GA 30606	706-567-6151 https://urgentcareofoconee.com/
Local Pharmacies	Kroger – Pharmacy open Mon – Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-7pm, Sun 11am-6pm	2301 College Station Road, Athens GA 30605	706-353-6882 https://www.kroger.com/stores/grocery/ga/athens/college-station/011/00665
	CVS – Pharmacy open 9am-12am	795 Oglethorpe Ave, Athens GA 30606	706-549-6838 https://www.cvs.com/store-locator/athens-ga-pharmacies/795-oglethorpe-ave-athens-ga-30606/storeid=5704

UGA Wellbeing Resources

UGA provides a variety of resources to support your health and wellbeing. This includes on campus/community mental health resources, in addition to digital wellbeing resources that can be accessed from your mobile/computer device. #BeWellUGA week is an annual campus event held early in the Fall semester (usually early to mid-September) which aims to spread wellbeing and mental health awareness throughout the UGA campus. This is a great time to learn more about the wellbeing resources offered by UGA, as well as get involved in free wellbeing events and activities on campus.

More information on the general wellbeing resources offered by UGA can be found here:

<https://well-being.uga.edu/>

Student Organizations & Clubs

Joining a student organization or club can be a great way to get involved and active in the UGA community during your graduate studies. Student organizations also provide additional opportunities to build community and meet new people, which as an international student, can be particularly important. There are hundreds of different clubs and student groups to get involved in, so you are likely to find a few that may fit your personal and/or social interests.

Most student organizations are required to be registered with the UGA Engagement, Leadership and Service Office, so you can explore some of the student groups, as well as other opportunities to get involved on campus at their website here: <https://els.uga.edu/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for Writing

Academic writing can be a challenge that graduate students may encounter, especially for international students. There are a couple of resources that UGA offers to assist students with their writing challenges. The [UGA Division of Academic Enhancement](#) offers a free higher level editing service where students can submit a limited page number of writing each week for review. The editors usually return your paper within a week of your requested appointment. Due to demand, it can be helpful to turn your paper in early in the week to increase your chances of having it edited and returned to you in the same week.

The Writing Centers

Located in the UGA Science Library and Main Library, there are [UGA Writing Centers](#). The writing centers are operated by undergraduate students (English and education-related field majors) who offer proofreading and editing services. This can be a useful resource for feedback on academic papers and projects. To schedule writing consultation with the Writing Center, here is the link <https://uga.mywconline.com/>.

UGA Library Services

The College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) has its own librarian to assist students with research searches, literature reviews, and funding opportunities. Please see here for relevant contacts at the UGA libraries: <https://www.libs.uga.edu/staff-directory>

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides teaching resources to faculty and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) at UGA. It aims to support both GTAs and faculty to thrive and develop their skills as teachers by providing workshops, materials, and consultation services. For international students who work as GTAs or are interested in pursuing a teaching-related career, the CTL can be a great resource for things such as:

- Solving or troubleshooting a teaching problem
- Developing and implementing a new idea in your teaching
- Crafting your teaching statement and/or teaching portfolio for a post-graduate teaching position

The full range of services and resources offered by the CTL can be reviewed here: <https://ctl.uga.edu/>

Accessibility and Testing

The Accessibility and Testing Center (formerly the Disability Resource Center) aims to serve and provide support and resources for students with disabilities in the UGA community. The center also provides access to testing and evaluation services to ensure a welcoming and accessible learning environment. Resources available may include but are not limited to placement exams, notetaking registration, and classroom accommodations.

More information on the support offered by Accessibility and Testing can be found here:

<https://accessibility.uga.edu/>

Awards and Scholarship for International Graduate Students

General Scholarships and Awards

There are several awards and scholarships available for international graduate students within UGA. Below is a list of some of the awards available for international graduate students. The Graduate School and the Department will inform you (via email) about any other available scholarship opportunities. The Graduate School and HDFs website also provide information on scholarships and any application requirements, including who may or may not be eligible.

Information on scholarships and awards available can be found here:

<https://grad.uga.edu/funding/scholarships-fellowships/>

Sponsors	Award and Scholarship Names
The Center for Teaching & Learning	Outstanding Teaching Assistant (OTA)
The Center for Teaching & Learning	Future Faculty Fellows Program
The Center for Teaching & Learning	Excellence in Teaching Award (ETA)
College of Family and Consumer Sciences	Anne Montgomery Haltiwanger International Study Award
Dept of Human Development and Family Science	Virginia Wilbanks Kilgore Scholarship
Dept of Human Development and Family Science	Price-Coker Award
Office of Global Engagement	Global Internship Scholarship

Browse here for more scholarships available to graduate students offered by the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS): <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/ssac/scholarship-list>

The Saeeda Peermahood Award for International Students

Learn more about the Saeeda Peermahood award for international students and how to apply here: <https://cgcse.uga.edu/gse/saeeda-peermahomed-award/>

NAVIGATING POST-GRADUATION

Navigating the job market post-graduation can be tricky and time-consuming. It can be helpful to start your job application early, at least one semester before you plan to graduate. If you are interested in academic positions, some jobs become available for All-But-Dissertation (ABD) candidates, allowing you to begin the job search process **before** you complete your dissertation. Professors and peers who are willing to support you during this process can be great resources. Reach out to your support network for help with anything from job application writing to mock interview practice.

Visas and the Job Market

Career paths after graduation can vary for different graduate students. Some students may pursue post-doctoral (post-doc) positions after graduation to continue researching their area of interest. Others may pursue teaching-related careers in roles such as assistant professors or lecturers. Whether you choose to stay in academia, or enter the world of policy or practice, considering your post-graduate plans as an international student can feel overwhelming. Below is a quick summary of the Optional Practical Training (OPT) and some useful pages for understanding your post-graduation options.

Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is off-campus work authorization that allows international students to work off campus in their major field of study for a period of time (typically 12 months, however, OPT extensions can be applied for depending on your field of study). If you are interested in pursuing work in the U.S. related to your area of study post-graduation, it is advised that you reach out to the Office of Global Engagement and your immigration advisor before you graduate. To apply to OPT, students must be in their final semester of their academic program (applications to OPT **cannot** be submitted more than 90 days before your program end date), therefore, connecting with your immigration advisor in advance (i.e., the semester before you plan to graduate) can help with planning your application timeline. If you do not know who your immigration advisor is, you can find information on the Office of Global Engagement page here: <https://globalengagement.uga.edu/immigration/advising/> UGA requires all students who plan to apply for OPT to follow a 3-step application process:

1. **Complete Online OPT Workshop:** Students applying for Pre- Completion OPT, Post-Completion OPT, or a STEM OPT Extension must complete a mandatory online workshop before applying.

The workshop contains all relevant information about applying to OPT as a student at UGA, including application timeline guidelines, information on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

Services (USCIS), and OPT compliance requirements. Materials for the workshop can be accessed here:

[https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/student/Optional Practical Training Workshop.pdf](https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/student/Optional_Practical_Training_Workshop.pdf)

2. **Submit Compass Portal Request:** Students applying for Pre-Completion OPT, Post-Completion OPT, or a STEM OPT Extension must complete request forms in Compass.
3. **Meet with a UGA Immigration Advisor (Optional):** After completing steps 1 and 2, students are encouraged to meet with an advisor to review the application and discuss any last-minute questions. Consulting an advisor is not mandatory but encouraged.

For general information about navigating employment as an international student (including OPT, CPT, F-1 and J-1 visas), visit:

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/immigration/international-students/current-international-students/employment/>

For information about H1B employment visa with UGA, visit:

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/international-employees/h-1b>

Interstride

Interstride is an interactive tool designed for international students to enhance their employment potential. The platform includes information on job-listings, hiring trends, H1B visas, self-assessments, and immigration advice. To access this platform for job searching, you can login using your UGA MyID and password at: <https://student.interstride.com/>

After you've logged in, click on the "Visa Insights" tool to see a list of companies in your field who have recently filed H1B petitions (i.e., they have recently hired and sponsored an international scholar with an H1B visa). This information can help you determine which companies to target when submitting applications.

Useful Resources for Job Applications

Below are some links to resources that can help you prepare documents for job applications. This can include cover letters, curriculum vitae (CVs), research statements, teaching statements/philosophies, diversity statements etc. While the below links provide information mainly formatted for academic positions, some of the information provided can be useful for other career goals and documents for a broader range of job applications in general.

Suggestions for writing a cover letter: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/research-statements-for-faculty-job-applications/>

Suggestions for writing Curriculum Vitae: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/cvs-for-faculty-job-applications/>

Suggestion for writing research statement: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/research-statements-for-faculty-job-applications/>

Suggestion for writing teaching philosophy: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/teaching-philosophies-for-faculty-job-applications/>

Suggestions for writing diversity statement: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/diversity-statements-for-faculty-job-applications/>

USEFUL CONTACTS AND SITES

Center for Global and Cultural Student Engagement (CGCSE)
404 Memorial Hall, Athens, GA 30602
706-542-5773 | CSEInfo@uga.edu

Student Care & Outreach (SCO) / UGA Well-Being Resources
318 Tate Student Center, Athens, GA 30602
(706) 542-8479 | sco@uga.edu

UGA Police Department & Campus Safety
286 Oconee Street, Suite 100, Athens, GA 30602
Contact Info Links: <https://police.uga.edu/contact/>

CAMPUS MAPS

Links to all current UGA official maps can be found here:
<https://www.architects.uga.edu/maps/pdf-maps>

Below are pdf links to the main and health science campus maps:

- [Main Campus Map with Buildings](#)
- [Health Sciences Campus Map](#)

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