

INDIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA (ISA-UGA)
[FAQs]

** For any other specific information, please feel free to email isauga.housing@gmail.com or any ISA member. Visit <http://isauga.com/> for contact information.

1. What electronics can I bring from India?

Mobile phone, laptop and their accessories are recommended. You will have to use a pin convertor to match the type of power socket and voltage supply in USA. Any other electronic items, like iron box, hair dryers etc., are best bought in the USA.

2. Do I need to get winter clothing from India?

July-August is usually hot, so you will not need any winter clothing if you are coming in Fall. But if you are reaching in December-January as a Spring student, then it's better to carry a good jacket for the travel.

You can carry a light jacket from India if you want, depending on the baggage weight restrictions of your flight. Other winter clothing can be bought in the US. You can bring thermal wear, woolen socks & gloves if required.

3. How much luggage can I take?

Depends on the flight you book. Baggage/ luggage restrictions are mentioned in the flight ticket.

4. How early do I come to the US?

Just in time for the International orientation, which is one day before the orientation starts. Usually students come a day or two early to get over their jet lag. There would be no much work to be done as most of the things are taken care of during the orientation. Moreover, if you are taking temporary accommodation with ISA, please check the duration (typically for 5-6 days) for which accommodation will be provided.

5. What food items do I need to bring from India?

Firstly, there are stores which sell Indian grocery in Athens (Fooks Food and Koyla). Besides this, there are bigger and well established stores in Atlanta (Patel brothers, Suvidha etc.,). So it is better not to bring too much food from India. This will also eat up your baggage allowance.

DO NOT BRING:

1. Rice
2. Poppy seeds
3. Meat
4. Pickles

Please refer to the following link for more info:

https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/3619/~travelers-bringing-food-into-the-u.s.-for-personal-use.

On a side note, Koyla Sizzling Grill is located on South Milledge Avenue, Athens. They stock most essentials like Maggi and Dosa Batter. There is also an Asian store(Fooks Foods, right beside Koyla) which has vegetables and other general items.

6. Does ISA help with housing?

ISA helps incoming students to choose apartments according to their needs and preferences. You can also find the link to the various housing options in Athens in the Housing Option FAQ. You can also fill out the housing [form](#) to let us know your preferences and we will suggest you the best options available in the town accordingly.

ISA will also help you with the temporary accommodation if you arrive before your lease to stay at your apartment begins.

7. What are my housing options?

These are the places where Indian students usually stay at:

1. University Village (On-campus housing) (https://housing.uga.edu/site/register_famgrad)
2. Carousel village apartments (<http://www.carouselvillage.us/>)
3. Argo apartments(<http://www.argo-athens.com/>)
4. Moose club Condominiums (<http://www.mooseclubcondos.com/index.html>)
5. Lakeside apartments (<http://thepark-athens.com/>)
6. Riverbend Club apartments (<http://www.clubproperties.com/properties/#riverbendclub>)
7. Polo Club apartments (<https://poloclubuga.com/>)
8. Hillside apartments (<http://thepark-athens.com/>)
9. Cross creek apartments (<http://greenathens.net/>)
10. Surrey square apartments (<http://greenathens.net/>)
11. Redland apartments (<http://theredlandapts.com/>)
12. Bromsgrove apartments (<http://www.bromsgroveapt.com/>)
13. River mill apartments (<https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/ga/athens/river-mill>)
14. River club (<http://riverclubathens.com/>)
15. The Standard apartments
(<https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/ga/athens/the-standard-at-athens>)

If your leasing contract starts later than the date you arrive in the US, contact the ISA as we provide temporary accommodation for a maximum of 7 days.

8. Do I need a guarantor for signing the lease?

When you sign the lease for an apartment, the leasing office might ask for a Guarantor. You will know more about it in detail during the signing process. At least, try to confirm on an apartment before you reach here.

NOTE: Study the lease carefully before signing. Know the termination rules as well beforehand. It varies from apartment to apartment. Usually, **lease is for an year.**

9. Can I know who would be my temporary accommodation host?

You will know your host only when you reach Athens, as the temporary accommodation list is dynamic and might keep changing. If you have any specific request or any issues, you can contact us through email at isauga.housing@gmail.com or any of the team members personally.

10. I e-mailed a housing form past the submission deadline. will it still be accepted?

We will consider the application if we have any open slots, however we cannot guarantee anything.

11. What if I want to break my lease of a year and move out?

The rules change from apartment to apartment. Generally, if you want to break the lease, then their deposit is forfeited if they cannot find a replacement. Usually nobody does this unless something drastic happens. Also, it is not difficult to find a replacement, since there are people looking for an apartment most of the time. It's recommended to thoroughly read the lease papers for any clause of breaking the lease.

12. Can I wait until I reach Athens before signing up for an apartment?

Yes, it is possible but it is not recommended as it might be difficult to find an apartment after you reach here. Most of the apartments get full as everyone books them beforehand.

13. What transportation is available in Athens?

The university operates a number of buses covering almost all parts of the campus and beyond. More information can be found at <http://www.transit.uga.edu/>

There are also other buses operated by Athens Transit (<http://athenstransit.com/>) which go to various locations such as WalMart, Kroger etc.

14. I have an International Driver's License. Can I skip the test?

Georgia recognises valid driver licenses issued to and held by residents of other countries as long as the "Out Of Country" license is valid. You can also take a Knowledge/Driving test to obtain a Georgia Driver's License. More information is available at <https://dds.georgia.gov/how-do-i>

15. What are my options if I want to work in UGA?

You may find on-campus jobs, after you come here, in residence hall mess, cafeterias (on-campus), or as lab operators, graders, etc. Bring copies of your resumes when you come, in case you want to find on-campus jobs. The DAWGlink student portal maintains a list of available on-campus jobs. These jobs may pay enough to manage your living expenses. You have to make some other arrangements for tuition. Tuition is covered only for those students who has a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship. Getting these assistantships depends entirely on your academics, GRE score, job experience and the funds available in your department.

ISA CANNOT HELP YOU IN OBTAINING ANY ASSISTANTSHIP OR JOBS NOR HAS ANY INFORMATION ABOUT FUNDS AVAILABLE IN ANY DEPARTMENT. CONTACT YOUR DEPARTMENT'S GRADUATE COORDINATOR IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION.

Tuition and fees-Please refer to the Tuition and Fee Schedules on line at http://busfin.uga.edu/bursar/bursar_quick_links/

Visit ATHENA (<https://athena.uga.edu>) for course registration, hold etc.,.

16. What is the need for health insurance in the USA?

Medical costs are very expensive in the USA. The concept of the U.S. system of health care and health insurance can be very complicated to understand. Having good health insurance helps provide relief from incurring unexpected, high medical costs in the U.S. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly INS) regulations require you to have health insurance.

- UGA has a specific insurance plan that is required for international students.
- These websites might help answer your questions.

- <http://www.uhs.uga.edu/>
- <http://www.uhs.uga.edu/insurance/>
- There are pharmacies elsewhere, so one can buy over-the-counter medicine anytime (without going to the university center).

17. What is immunizations hold? How do we remove it?

Before you can register for any classes, you must submit proof of certain immunizations to the **UGA Health Center**. For the most current listing of the types of immunizations required of UGA students, visit the Health Center's website. If you do not have proof of the immunizations required, you will not be able to register for classes and will be required to get the appropriate immunizations before registering for class. There is usually a charge for getting your immunizations in the U.S.

You must also complete the University Health Center's Immunization and Medical History Form. This form should have been included with the materials UGA sent to you by the admissions office when you were admitted. If you do not have this form, visit the Health Center's website to download a copy. If requirements are met, the Health Center staff will clear you to register for classes.

18. I do not have financial aid this year. What are my other options?

There are plenty of options available for students at UGA to obtain a waiver or financial-aid. Some of them are:

- International Student Life has a list of scholarships specifically for international students. Application deadlines vary and each scholarship / award program has its own set of criteria. Interested students may contact ISL for more information about this list.
- The Office of International Education (OIE) has a special Out-of-State-Tuition Waiver Program which allows international students to pay only in-state tuition.
- You can contact your Graduate Coordinator and other Grad Students in your department to check if you can be a Teaching Assistant.
- You can contact professors from your department or other departments at UGA to be considered for a Research Assistant.
- Look for more information from Intercultural Affairs at UGA and University System of Georgia on their website.

Apart from financial aids, international students can still work as a tutor or work for on-campus services like bookstore, housing, dinings etc.

19. What should i pack?

- Clothes: The weather in Atlanta can range from 38 degrees Celsius in summer, to -5 degrees Celsius mid-winter. Clothes are cheaper in India , and winter wear is definitely required (although it does not snow frequently in this region).
- Food: Try to avoid bringing a lot of food (moreover since Atlanta has a huge Indian population and there's no dearth of desi stores) , and remember to check the customs regulations on permitted items.
- Books: The university system of Georgia has an extensive library system, and keeps most texts including books from popular literature. Although, if you plan on buying the books, most international editions, available in India are cheaper but there might be subtle differences in the international editions. So do a little research before you invest money buying the textbooks.
- Medicines: They are also easily obtainable (except for prescription use). Please refer to

<https://www.drugs.com/otc/> for the list of medicines that you can get here without any prescription.

20. AFTER REACHING ATLANTA AIRPORT HOW CAN I REACH ATHENS?

Following are the options to reach Athens from Atlanta Airport:

- [Groome Transportation](#) (recommended)
 - [Megabus](#)
 - [Greyhound Transportation](#)
 - Taxi / Uber (Usually very costly)
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21. How do I get from Georgia Center to my place of residence?

We will be collecting information about your arrival very soon. Once we know the details we would be able to arrange a pick up to get you to your housing location.

Inform ISA of your arrival date and estimated arrival time via e-mail and ISA can arrange a pickup. UGA has open Wifi hotspots you can use to contact ISA once you reach Georgia Center.

22. Do we get internet access once we arrive on campus?

Since you are already a student, you should be able to log into the university WiFi named "PAWS-Secure" which is available in all university buildings. The username is your UGA MyID (e.g. abc12345) and the corresponding password. UGA also has many open networks that you can use temporarily to get in touch with us.

23. Which orientation sessions should I attend?

- International Student Orientation (Sponsored by [International Student Life](#))
 - Graduate Student Orientation (Sponsored by the [UGA Graduate School](#))
 - UGA Departmental Orientations (If applicable this orientation will be sponsored by your academic department; check with them concerning specific dates and times.)
 - Graduate Teaching Assistants (TA) & Research Assistants Orientation (Sponsored by the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#))
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24. Why should I attend International Students Orientation prior to the start of Fall semester?

The purpose of International Students Orientation organized by ISL at UGA is to provide the most accurate information about student life in the U.S. Highlights from ISL's orientation schedules include information concerning immigration issues, taxes for non-residents, cross-cultural adjustment, housing assistance, course registration procedures, Social Security Cards, UGA payroll, and campus tours. This information might not be always covered in other orientations on campus. ISA highly recommends every student to attend and make full use of this orientation. More details can be found at

https://isl.uga.edu/content_page/international-student-orientation-content-page

25. Where will I have an immigration check?

You will have the immigration check at the port of entry which is the first airport you land in the US. You will need to show your passport, I-20, offer letter, and any documentation showing your financial support etc. Sometimes the officers may ask additional questions and for more relevant documents. Please have all your documents in your cabin luggage, so as to present in front the immigration officer when asked for .

Note: Please contact Immigration Services at immigration@uga.edu or +1 706 542 2900 for any immigration specific questions.

26. How much cash should I bring in hand?

As per Customs rules, you are not allowed to carry a lot of money. Also, paper money is not extensively used here either. For emergency purposes, you can bring about \$500 in cash. Split this by the various available denominations. Make sure you have at least \$10 change. At EACH airport for getting a trolley you will need quarters(25 cents coin) to put in the machine. Carry \$1 in dimes(10 cents) and nickels(5 cents) as well. Also have \$39 for the groome shuttle, if you have not booked online, and \$3 to \$5 as tip for the shuttle operator.

If you need to bring your tuition and fees money, the only way you can do that is by Demand Draft or Traveller's cheque. You can also transfer it later after you open a bank account here.

27. How do I get a mobile number without credit history?

You can either get a prepaid service which doesn't require credit history. However for post paid plans, if you don't have any credit history, you might need to pay a security deposit up front.

28. How do I build my credit history?

- Always pay your credit card bills on time. You don't need to pay the entire balance each month, but make at least the minimum payment promptly.
- Avoid going over the credit limit on your credit card account. Some credit card companies allow you to do this as a courtesy, but it can reflect poorly on your ability to handle your account.
- Cancel credit cards you aren't using or don't anticipate using.
- Ask your bank or credit union about a secured credit card. You can make a deposit to your account and have a credit limit in the amount of your deposit. The bank takes little risk and you build credit slowly.
- Use a co-signer on your first few credit accounts. Lenders will consider the co-signer's existing credit. The co-signer essentially 'vouches' for you while you build credit. Note that this is a big responsibility-you can cause major headaches for the co-signer if you don't pay as agreed.
- Use credit programs for modestly large purchases like furniture. For example, you may buy a television on the "\$40/Month Payment Plan". These programs can be easier to qualify for and they certainly help you build credit. Be sure that the retailer will report your loan to the major credit reporting companies.
- Get a credit card with any reputable institution that will give you one. Make sure they'll report your timely payments to the credit reporting companies. Of course, you have to always pay at least the minimum before the due date.