



Pre Arrival Information For PhD Students

April 2020

Dear Incoming PhD Students,

I hope that you are well, and off to a productive Summer! The purpose of this letter is to convey important information and dates about your arrival in Atlanta, our orientation program, and the start of your PhD studies in the [School of Math](#). Please let us know if we can be of any assistance, and **keep us informed of any changes in your postal address, telephone number, or email**.

You may reach me at yu@math.gatech.edu and our graduate program coordinator Mr. [Mitchell Everett](#) may be reached at mitchell.everett@math.gatech.edu. Both of us will also see emails sent to dgs@math.gatech.edu. In addition to this document, you might find the

[Checklist for New Graduate Students](#)

useful. The [Office of Graduate Studies](#) may have already pointed you to this checklist. It reiterates, and expands on, some of the general information below.

I. Practical Information

I.1. Immunization and Health Insurance

Georgia Tech requires documentation of a recent tuberculosis screening and various immunizations. You can see the required health forms at the [Immunization Requirements](#) site. No student is allowed to register until the immunization and the medical entrance forms are accepted by the [Student Health Service](#). In addition, all students must have medical insurance. Please look carefully at the [Student Insurance](#) site for details on the mandatory plan. If you already have adequate medical coverage, for example through your parents' insurance, most likely you will not want (nor need) to purchase the "mandatory plan".

I.2. The Office of International Education (OIE)

International students should refer to the [OIE website](#). In particular, browse the links at [International Students and Scholars](#). All procedures outlined in the [after-arrival link](#) will be covered during our orientation workshop described below. All international students will check in and attend OIE mandatory sessions together. The following topics are covered in detail on the website or will be discussed during orientation:

- Obtaining a U.S. visa and entering the United States
- F-1 transferring from another institution in the US to Georgia Tech
- Medical entrance form and certificate of immunizations
- Health and accident insurance; Housing and climate

I.3. Institute-Wide Orientation Programs

Before the beginning of the Fall term there will be several [Institute-wide orientation programs](#) for new graduate students which are highly recommended for all to attend. Participation in these programs will save you a great deal of time and effort in doing the many preliminary tasks that you must complete before classes begin. We embed the above Campus-wide orientation activities in our own School of Math Orientation program described below.

I.4. School of Math Workshops and TA Training

The School of Math requires **all new domestic PhD students** to be on Campus the week of **August 10-14**. Therefore, you must arrive in Atlanta no later than **August 9**. During this week there will be Campus-wide orientation activities, as well as orientation specifically for Math TAs, course selection, registration, scheduling issues and so forth. The orientation program runs each day of the week of August 10-14. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am-4:00pm each day.

If you are an **international PhD student** (you hold a Visa), you will be required to be on campus the weeks of **August 3-7** and **August 10-14** to participate in the School of Math's orientation program for international students. Therefore, you must arrive in Atlanta no later than **August 2**. The orientation program runs each day of the week. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am-4:00pm each day of the week. International PhD students should not book your flight to Atlanta until you have completed an online Interview with Dr. Burke (see section II.5. Oral English Instruction).

Attending these orientation programs and workshops will give you a head start on academic issues and TA training, and will give you a chance to socialize with new and current graduate

students. During the week of August 10-14, Ms. [Klara Grodzinsky](#), the School's TA coordinator, will begin the TA training workshop. In addition during the week of August 3-7, Dr. [Mo Burke](#), the School's Director of International Instructor Training & Language Specialist, will coordinate various activities and workshops designed specifically for international students, and continue as the principal coordinator of the School's orientation program during the second week.

I.5. Your Arrival and Hotel Information

Grad students have a variety of different housing arrangements with different moving dates. In order to accommodate you we have reserved rooms at the [Home2 Suites by Hilton Atlanta Midtown](#) up to the morning of Saturday, **August 15**. These rooms are *free* to you (School of Math pays for them), and you will share a room with another new PhD student.

Breakfast every day at the Hotel is free. We will provide lunch daily for you during the orientation. You will need to check out of the hotel no later than Saturday, August 15, unless you make a different arrangement with the hotel upon arrival. Parking fees are your responsibility. The Hotel's address is *975 West Peachtree St NW, Atlanta, GA 30309*. Please do not contact the hotel directly about your room reservation. We will arrange the reservation for you.

The Home2 Suites by Hilton Atlanta Midtown is within walking distance to Campus and to restaurants and coffee shops in [Midtown Atlanta](#). Other nearby attractions include the [Piedmont Park](#), the [Beltline](#), and [Ponce City Market](#). The Hotel is also near a [Tech Trolley](#) and a block from the subway system ([MARTA](#)), which can be used to go to other attractions ([High Museum of Art](#), [Downtown](#), [Decatur's town square](#), and [shopping malls in Buckhead](#)).

As soon as you know your arrival date and time, airline, and flight number please email that to mitchell.everett@math.gatech.edu. We will arrange a pick-up for you at the airport by one of our current grad students, if you are flying into Atlanta. Also, please let us know as soon as possible whether or not you will need to stay at the hotel or have made different arrangements. In order to secure a hotel room for you, we need to hear from you by **July 1**.

On Monday, August 3, at 8:30am, international students will meet in the lobby of the hotel and be escorted to the orientation. (Even if you are not staying in the hotel you will need to meet there to start the orientation.) Two Math graduate students will meet you there and accompany you to the School of Math. This will probably be your first contact with our campus, and we will provide the needed practical support to make sure that your documents are in order, thus facilitating your check in with OIE. You should bring the following documents with you on Monday, August 3:

- Passport
- Original degree(s)

- Original transcript in your language
- AND English translations
- Laptop computer

I.6. Housing and Transportation

Please make sure to check information on housing ahead of arrival. For on-campus housing, contact the [Georgia Tech Housing Office](#). For off-campus housing, you may want to look at the information at [apartmentguide.com](#). The Housing Office also maintains a list of [off-campus housing](#). Finally, your best resource might be our current [graduate students](#). Please contact them for advice; you can find their names and email addresses on the School of Math website.

Long term parking on campus requires a permit, see the [Parking Office](#). Most graduate students live close to campus, and walk or bike to the School. Further, if you find a place to live near a MARTA station, it will not be necessary to own a car. I encourage you to try to live close to campus or MARTA, as traffic in Atlanta can be daunting. There are several [bike shops](#) around campus where you may purchase a bike. See also the [Atlanta Bicycle Coalition](#) website.

II. Academic Information

II.1. Schedule of Classes

I will be here when you arrive, and will be available to discuss appropriate classes to take in the Fall Semester. At the same time, shortly before your arrival, you will be assigned a Faculty mentor. The mentor will be your future reference point for all questions of academic concern. All graduate students who are supported as either Research or Teaching Assistants, or are on a Fellowship program, or hold a Visa, must be enrolled Full Time at all times. The Fall 2020 schedule will be posted on our [Courses and Registration Page](#). More information about registration will be discussed at the orientation.

II.2. Math Comprehensive Exams

If you are coming to study for the PhD in Math ([ACO](#) and [CSE](#) students should see the corresponding websites for details about their comprehensive exams), and have had prior graduate level coursework, you are encouraged to consider taking the [Written Math Comprehensive Exams](#) in August 2020. You may attempt the Math exams as many times as you want, during the first two years of your studies. A description of the examination and the dates is available on the exam page where you can also find past exams and syllabi. You will have the opportunity to register for these exams in the Fall.

II.3. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

All incoming PhD students must complete [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) training. This will consist of an on-line component and an in-person component. Graduate Admission will send you more information about this shortly. For the in-person training, the School of Math has its own in-house RCR training course, [Math 6001](#), which we require all incoming PhD students to take. You can find a detailed syllabus for a recent offering of Math 6001 [here](#).

II.4. Grad Groups

All incoming PhD students are required to register for [Grad Groups](#), which is a one credit hour course for the first eight weeks of Fall 2020. All of the activities are designed to provide guidance, support, development, and/or time for reflection. We hope that this course will set a foundation for your time as a graduate student at Georgia Tech. You can find a detailed syllabus for a recent offering of Grad Groups [here](#).

II.5. Teaching Assistants

If you are going to be a Teaching Assistant (TA), Ms. Klara Grodzinsky will ask you to let her know which courses you are planning to register for in order to coordinate schedules. We will discuss this in detail after your arrival. Klara's email is klarag@math.gatech.edu. Typical duties for new PhD students in Fall 2020 are:

- Teaching 1 Studio Section (1 hr per week in class)*
- Tutoring 1 hr/week in the Math-Lab
- Preparing for class, grading papers, communicating/meeting with students, and attending meetings with the course instructor(s)
- Enrolling in and participating in CETL 8000, the teacher training course for Math TAs.
- Registering in, and attending Grad Groups.

Alternate duties may be assigned at the discretion of the TA training team, and will total the same number of weekly hours.

The CETL 8000 course is mandatory for all new Graduate Teaching Assistants and is required during the first semester you teach for the School of Math.

*Please note that during your first semester, you will receive a teaching reduction of 1.5 studio class (3 hours per week). Beginning in your second semester, your duties will revert to the standard teaching duties of two studio sections per semester (4 hrs per week of classroom teaching). Standard TA responsibilities typically total approximately 13 hours per week. .

II.6. Oral English Instruction

Non-native English speakers are required to attend the following aural/oral English courses provided by the School of Math during the Fall and Spring semesters. In some cases, students may be exempt from these courses, as determined by Dr. Mo Burke.

- *Math 8305* – (Fall 2020) Academic Spoken English for International Graduate Students (2 hrs/week)
- *Math 8306* – (Spring 2021) Communication Strategies for International Teaching Assistants (2 hrs/week)

Online Interview

If you are a non-native English speaker, Dr. Burke will contact you to arrange an online interview to determine your language skills and communication ability. Her email is burke@math.gatech.edu.

We look forward to your arrival! Please contact us if we can be of further assistance in the meantime.

Best wishes,



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