

Checklist for New International Students

1. Check in with OIPS (bring your immigration documents)

We want to meet you, and verify that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) admitted you in the appropriate status. The U.S. Government requires us to keep copies of your passport and I-20 or DS-2019, in our files. We will:

- Copy your documents
- Have you sign the International Student Responsibility Agreement
- Record your address and telephone number & emergency contact information
- Answer your questions
- Complete your immigration transfer (only applicable to transfer students. Note that an immigration transfer has to be completed within 15 days of the start date on your I-20)

2. Meet with an Academic Advisor

Make an appointment with an advisor in your academic department to help you decide what courses to take. Undeclared undergraduates should go to the Academic Advising Office in SUB I, room 304. Exchange students should check in with the Center for Global Education, Johnson Center, Room 235.

3. Register for Courses

Check class listings and register for courses online at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>. Your User ID is your G number and your password is set as your birth date in MMDDYY format. Instructions for registering can be found at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/QuickGuide.pdf>, and answers to frequently asked questions about registration can be found at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/patfaq.html>. Information about classes for which you are wait listed can be found at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/waitlistfaq.html>. Students in F-1 or J-1 status must register for a full course load each semester; undergraduates must take a minimum of twelve credits, and graduates a minimum of nine graduate level credits.

4. Pay Tuition and Health Insurance by Deadline

F-1 and J-1 students are automatically enrolled in the GMU health insurance plan, and payment is due at the same time as tuition. Deadline for payment of tuition, fees, and health insurance is August 28. (See <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/Resources/NewTuitionPaymentPolicyFall.pdf> for the tuition payment policy.)

Note: If you do not pay by the deadline, there will be an additional cancellation fee of 10% or \$250 (whichever is less) added to your account.

Pay at the Cash Office, SUB I, room 104, using cash, check, Visa or Master Card, or pay with Visa or Master Card online at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>. If you have arranged for third party billing, you are responsible to ensure that payment is received by the deadline. Please check online at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu> to verify that your bill has been paid. You will also be assessed a \$25 fee for third party billing processing costs.

5. Get a GMU Student ID Card

Get your Mason ID card in the Photo ID Office, SUB II once you have registered for classes. The card is used as a library card and as a debit card (if you sign up for a meal plan or Mason Money). With the card, you can ride the CUE bus for a discounted rate; get free tickets at the Center for the Arts, free admission to the Aquatic Center, the Field House, and more.

Important:

Find a Place to Live

Students living on campus must check in with the Housing Office. For help with off-campus housing, see:

- www.och.gmu.edu
- www.washingtonpost.com
- apartment guides
- newspaper advertisements (Fairfax Journal, the Broadside etc.)
- university bulletin boards

Ask other students if they know of openings. Some students use the [gmuintlstudents Yahoo](http://gmuintlstudents.yahoo.com) listserv to post housing opportunities. If you have not received an invitation to join, email the listserv administrator at edunlea1@gmu.edu. It is convenient to live by the CUE bus line if you don't have a car. If you need to purchase household items or furniture, visit "yard sales" in residential neighborhoods on Saturday mornings. Thrift shops also sell used furniture (Yesterday's Rose, Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.).

Open a bank account

Some local banks that students use are:

- Apple Credit Union (Johnson Center)
- Chevy Chase Bank (Johnson Center)
- Sun Trust (4020 University Drive, Fairfax, VA)

6. Activate Your E-Mail Account

Activate your email account at mail.gmu.edu (click on the “Activating My Account” link). E-mail is free of charge, and is often used for coursework and as a means for the university and OIPS (through our newsletter) to post important announcements. Place a “forward” from your Mason account if you prefer to use a different email system so that you don’t miss university announcements.

To avoid unnecessary late fees, and cancellation of your classes...

- Pay tuition, fees, and health insurance by the first day of classes
- Return books to the library on time
- Avoid getting parking tickets, but pay on time if you do get one
- Pay housing and telephone bills on time if you live on campus
- Present your immunization records to Student Health within the first semester

7. Apply for Social Security Number or ITIN, Complete I-9, and Meet with the Tax Coordinator

If you are employed by GMU (e.g. Graduate Research or Teaching Assistant or On-Campus Student Wage employee) you must [apply for a Social Security Number](#) if you do not already have one, [complete an I-9 form](#), complete the [online Foreign National Information Form](#), and [meet with the Tax Coordinator](#) for U.S. tax analysis and completion of the appropriate tax documents. If you have a [taxable scholarship or fellowship](#) (e.g. paid room and board or cash payment) you must meet with the Tax Coordinator for application of an Individual Taxpayer ID (if you do not already have a social security number), U.S. tax analysis, and completion of the appropriate tax documents.

8. Update Your Local Address with the OIPS and Office of the Registrar

Office of the Registrar is located at North Chesapeake Module) OR by logging on to <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/> within 10 days of your move. Remember to update your records any time you move. Failure to report current address can result in a “hold” being placed on your account (see below). Your change of address will be reported the Department of Homeland Security through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Please also email a copy of your change of address to us at oips@gmu.edu.

9. Present your Immunization Documents to the Student Health Office

Bring records of vaccinations to the Student Health Office, SUB I, room 215, within the first semester. If you do not have records, or if you did not obtain a required immunization, you may get the shots you need at Student Health for a minimal fee. Failure to comply will result in a “hold” placed on your account (see below).

10. Adjust Your Class Schedule within the Add/Drop Period

If you wish to change your schedule, do so within the add/drop period, using the Patriot Web system. To simply stop attending a class is not sufficient as this will result in a failing grade that will stay on your record. When adding a course, it is not enough to get verbal permission from the professor. You must use the Patriot Web system to add that course, or get a force-add slip and add in person at the Registrar’s Office. Dropping a class after the deadline requires permission from the Dean. Refer to the Schedule of Classes or the Registrar’s website at registrar.gmu.edu for deadlines and procedures. Remember you MUST BE FULL TIME.

11. How to Avoid Holds, Late Fees and Cancellation Fees

If you fail to comply with certain requirements at Mason, a “hold” will be placed on your account. A hold means that you will not be able to register for courses, check out library books, or receive official transcripts, etc., until you have resolved the problem causing the hold. If you find that you have a hold on your account, login to the Patriot Web system at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu>, or call the Registrar’s office at (703) 993-2441, to find out the reason for the hold. Once you resolve the issue, the hold will be lifted.

To avoid a hold, make sure to...

- Present your immunization records** to Student Health within the 1st semester
- Keep your Student Account current** and promptly pay any balances that become past due.
- Keep your address updated** with OIPS and the Registrar’s office via Patriot Web.
- Make appointment with Tax Coordinator** if you work on campus or receive benefits from Mason such as a scholarship/fellowship, travel reimbursement or award.