

PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

*EXCHANGE
VISITOR
GRADUATE
STUDENT*

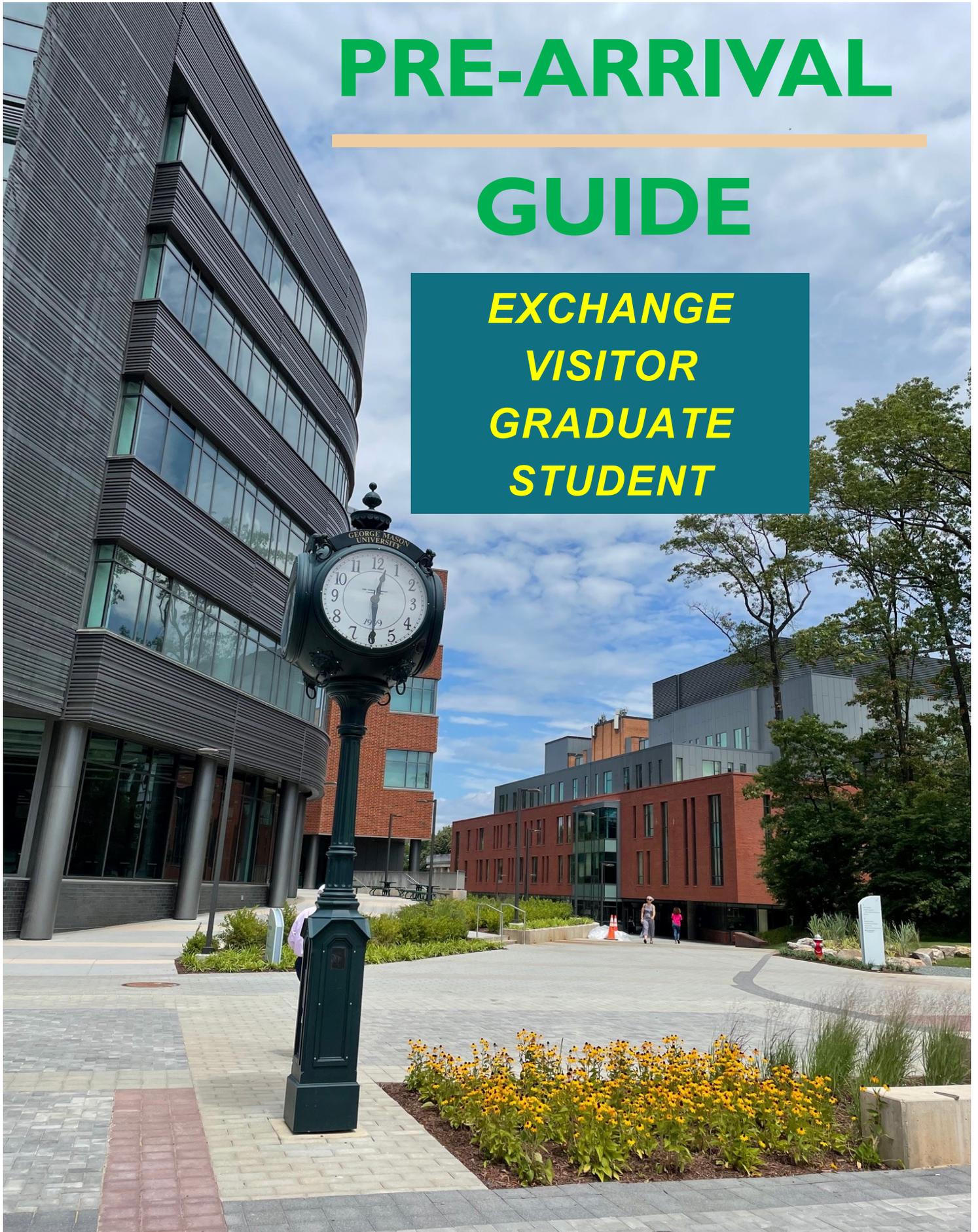


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Photo by Evan Cantwell/Creative Services

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International Programs and Services

Dear Exchange Visitor Student,

We are glad to welcome you to our Exchange Visitor Program at George Mason University! The Exchange Visitor Program, also known now as BridgeUSA, operates under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Its purpose is to provide you with an opportunity to participate in an educational and cultural program in the United States, return home to share your experiences, and encourage Americans to participate in educational and cultural programs abroad. Exchange Visitors enter the United States on a J visa. Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) regulates Foreign Relations. Part 62 regulates the Exchange Visitor Program. As a designated sponsor, GMU complies with regulations and compliance administration outlined in 22 CFR Part 62. As a participant, you are expected to comply with 22 CFR Part 62. As the Alternate Responsible Officer for GMU's exchange visitor students, I am writing to provide information that you will need to prepare for your trip to the U.S.

For the Spring 2022 semester, GMU plans to have in-person, hybrid (partially in-person and partially online), and fully online classes. **Currently, new Exchange Visitor students need to have at least 50% of their classes be in-person or hybrid classes.** Please note that government guidance and GMU policies may change before the start of classes or during your program. New rules for entry to the U.S. have been recently announced to take effect in November. As the details have not been finalized, please review any updates on the US consulate's website and also visit www.cdc.gov. Please read any emails from OIPS sent to your official GMU email address to keep up on any new developments.

Orientation and Arrival at George Mason

The Office of International Programs and Services will host a virtual orientation program. More information is located here: <https://oips.gmu.edu/attend-orientation/> As part of your required orientation program, I will also schedule a virtual post-arrival J-1 compliance meeting.

I wish you safe travels to the United States!

Sincerely,

Christine A. Bodziak
International Advisor
cbodziak@gmu.edu

OBTAINING A U.S. VISA

Due to pandemic conditions, you should first confirm that the consulate in your country is open for routine visa processing or will accept emergency appointments for J-1 Exchange Visitor students with an upcoming program start date of January 21st.

Steps to Obtain a U.S. Visa

- Have on hand your passport and your Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019 Form)
- Have ready a digital photo that meets the requirements
- Find the website of the U.S. consulate in your country of residence here: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- Confirm if there are any additional documents or fees needed for this particular consulate
- Open a record in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and pay the *required* SEVIS fee (901 fee) at <https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/> Currently, the fee is \$220
Note: Your SEVIS number is the number that begins with the letter “N” in the top right of your DS-2019 form
- Print the SEVIS fee payment receipt
- Complete the Visa Application Form (DS-160)
- Print the DS-160 confirmation page and payment receipt
- If you applied for a US visa before or if your country participates in the Visa Waiver Program, check to see if the in-person interview can be waived. If not, follow the directions on the consulate’s website to schedule your interview
- Pay the MRV/visa fee when you schedule your interview. Currently, the fee is \$160. Please note, the visa and SEVIS fees are valid for a year, but are nonrefundable. Costs are subject to change.

Approximate wait time to receive a visa appointment can be found at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

However, due to the pandemic, it may or may not be accurate. Read the consulate's updates regarding visa processing on their website and follow the specific consulate on social media.

Bring to your Visa Interview

- Your GMU acceptance letter
- Your OIPS welcome letter that confirms you will be taking some or all of your classes in person
- Proof of funding documents
- Printed copies of your DS-160 confirmation page, your DS-160/visa (MRV) fee receipt and your I-901 SEVIS fee receipt
- Your original DS-2019 Form
- **Check the consulate's website to confirm if any additional fees or documents are needed per the consulate's requirements**

Be prepared, honest, polite, and confident when presenting yourself to the consular officer during your visa interview. They may ask what you plan to study, why you selected Mason, and what your plans are after your program. You may be asked to show your admission letter from GMU, proof of financial support, proof of strong ties to your home country, etc. The consular officer will review whether you have sufficient funds to cover expenses and confirm your non-immigrant intent. Consular officers have the sole authority to either grant the visa or refuse the visa.

Please note that there is a chance refused applications may be flagged for administrative processing if the consular officer determined they did not have adequate information to verify if you are eligible for a visa. Please notify your J-1 advisor immediately if your application was flagged for administrative processing so we can advise you on next steps.

TRAVELING TO THE UNITED STATES

Since the start of the pandemic, multiple announcements from U.S. government agencies have impacted exchange programs, international students, and travelers from certain regions to the United States. Although we can offer some guidance now, some other entity may interpret a specific announcement in such a way that prevents you from traveling and entering the United States. It was recently announced that new rules requiring COVID vaccinations and a negative COVID test for entry to the U.S. will take effect in November. As the details have not been finalized, please review any updates on the US consulate's website and also visit www.cdc.gov Additional government guidance may also be issued before your arrival that can impact your travel.

You can enter the United States up to 30 days before the program start date indicated on your DS-2019 form. Also, you have a grace period that allows you to stay in the U.S. for up to 30 days from the program end date on your DS-2019 form before departing the U.S.

Your visa permits you to travel to a U.S. Port of Entry. For most travelers, this is an international airport in the U.S. where you present yourself to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer after disembarking from your flight. You will present certain documents and may be asked to show supporting documents. Be prepared, honest, polite, and confident when presenting yourself to CBP officials. Place these important items in your carry-on luggage during your flight when you travel so that they are readily available:

- Your passport with valid visa
- Your original DS-2019 form
- Your admission letter
- Your OIPS welcome letter that confirms that you will be enrolled in hybrid or in-person classes
- A print out of your classes from Patriot Web
- Your proof of funding documents
- Emergency contact information both in the United States (if applicable) and in your home country
- Any additional documents required due to updated pandemic-related travel guidance
- OIPS contact information
- The address where you will be staying

Present **your passport, original DS-2019 form and entry visa** to the immigration official at the U.S. port of entry. They may ask questions that will require you to show some of your supporting documents. If they have additional questions, they may direct you to a secondary inspection site.

Almost everything in the United States can be paid using a credit card, so you should have one with you when you arrive. You will use it for your living expenses and might need it in an emergency. Do not carry a large amount of cash with you. If you must enter the U.S. with cash, we encourage you to use traveler's checks, which are more secure and can be replaced if lost.

Please follow the link to explore your transportation options from Virginia airports:
<http://transportation.gmu.edu/airportservices.html>

ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION

The Office of International Programs and Services will host a virtual orientation program. More information is located here: <https://oips.gmu.edu/attend-orientation/> Please email your J-1 advisor at cbodziak@gmu.edu to let us know your arrival plans in order to facilitate scheduling a required post-arrival compliance orientation meeting. Your graduate department would provide you with any information regarding their separate orientation activities.

Once you have arrived in the United States, OIPS will validate your SEVIS record to confirm that you have arrived and started your program. In order for us to do so, each J-1 student must complete the J-1 online check-in process on the OIPS website. For the check-in process, you will need to know your G#, your local address, U.S. phone number (if applicable) and emergency contact information. You should plan to complete the J-1 check-in form as soon as possible after arrival, but no later than January 31st. You can only complete the check-in form AFTER arriving in the U.S. as you need to upload your most current I-94 record. Please follow this link to start the check-in form:

<https://oips.gmu.edu/international-student-check-in-form-for-j-1-students/>

What is an I-94 Record?

The I-94 record is the “Arrival/Departure Record” issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) whenever you enter the United States. This record confirms that you have been legally admitted to the U.S. in a specific visa status, and for a specific duration of time. For F and J visa holders the amount of time is indicated by the notation “D/S” which means you can be in the U.S. for the Duration of Status of your student program. The CBP officers will enter the I-94 data into an on-line registration system using your passport and visa stamp. You will be able to access an electronic version of the I-94 record by visiting: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> This record can be printed when applying for immigration benefits, such as a driver’s license or a Social Security Number (SSN).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Get I-94 Number **I-94 FAQ** OMB No. 1651-0111
Expiration Date: 11/30/2014

Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 69001333663

Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): D/S

Details provided on Admission (I-94) form:

Family Name:	Testing
First (Given) Name:	Monday
Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY):	05/06/1985
Passport Number:	123000456
Passport Country of Issuance:	Mexico
Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY):	03/12/2013
Class of Admission:	J-1

IMPORTANT!
Please check that your online I-94 shows "D/S" and "J-1".
If your I-94 has something different, please contact ISS for assistance.

HOUSING

Graduate student on-campus housing is located at Beacon Hall at the Sci-Tech campus. Graduate students may also apply to live at Masonvale, off-campus apartments adjacent to the Fairfax campus. <https://www.masonvale.com/masonvale-fairfax-virginia/>

In addition, we recommend working with Contemporary Student Services for your off-campus housing search: <https://contemporary.gmu.edu> Read their Renter Resources and Renter Education sections of their website.

You can also find a variety of tips on the OIPS website at: <https://oips.gmu.edu/offcampus/>

Tip: The current minimum figure needed to meet basic living expenses (excluding health insurance) for a single graduate student at GMU is: \$22,970 per nine-month academic year. Students who plan to stay for the summer should expect their costs to be at least 33 percent more. Please note that the cost of living in the metro Washington, DC area is one of the highest in the United States. Thus, it is very important that you research the cost of housing and other living expenses before you travel to the U.S. Please pay particular attention on how to avoid housing scams: <https://oips.gmu.edu/scams/>



Photo by Lathan Goumas/Office of Communication and Marketing

HEALTH INSURANCE

Exchange Visitors and their dependents must maintain health insurance for the entire period of J status in the United States. U.S. regulations require the following:

1. Medical benefits of **at least** \$100,000 U.S. per accident or illness
2. Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000 U.S.
3. Expenses associated with medical evacuation of the Exchange Visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000 U.S.
4. A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness

The George Mason University Health Insurance plan is offered by Aetna Student Health. It meets and exceeds the requirements. Along with your DS-2019, you will receive an International Student Welcome letter from the Student Health Insurance office explaining that international students are automatically enrolled in the health plan and the international student premium is due by the first day of classes. Per regulation 22 CFR 62.14(i) a willful failure to maintain health insurance will result in termination from the exchange program. Sponsored students who receive scholarships that cover the insurance fees must work with the Third Party Billing Office in Students Accounts to ensure they have a copy of your sponsorship letter. Sponsored students must follow up with their government sponsor to confirm that invoices are received and are in process.

You can find more information about the plan and how to access your health insurance benefits at: <https://shs.gmu.edu/insurance/resources/>

If you are bringing a spouse or children with you on a J-2 visa, you will need to show proof of health insurance for your accompanying dependents that meets the requirements. You may either select the GMU plan for dependents or enroll in another plan. Please follow the link below to learn more about enrollment options for dependents:

<http://shs.gmu.edu/insurance/international/>

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please review the plan dates when considering your health insurance coverage. J-1 students arriving before the start of their Aetna Student Health coverage may want to purchase supplemental insurance coverage until the health plan start date. Once your program starts, there cannot be any breaks or lapses in insurance coverage even if one travels outside the U.S for an extended period of time during the J program. Below are some outside insurance companies that provide health insurance for dependents or Exchange Visitor Students on post-completion Academic Training:

ISO Insurance:

<https://www.isoa.org/>

Seven Corners Travel Insurance

<https://www.sevencorners.com/student-travel-insurance#/quote>

VISIT® International Health Insurance Program for *International Students, Scholars, Spouses, Families & Visitors*

Website: <http://www.visitinsurance.com/>

Tips for selecting a health insurance provider:

There are many health insurance providers available and the options can be overwhelming. When selecting an insurance plan, you should select a plan that meets your individual needs and the minimum J requirements mentioned earlier. A plan that worked for your friend or colleague may not be the best option for your family. You should carefully review the details of any insurance plan you are considering. Some plans have a higher deductible than others. Some may require you to pay out-of-pocket and submit claim forms for re-imbusement. Consider your budget and ability to meet the terms of the specific insurance plan.

* *Medical evacuation and repatriation requirements.* Note the explicit requirement for medical evacuation and repatriation insurance. Most domestic health insurance policies do not include this feature, or include it only for bringing people or remains back to the United States from abroad. You may have to purchase medical evacuation and repatriation coverage separately for your J-2 dependents. Many insurance companies provide this special coverage at a reasonable cost.

OIPS must terminate the SEVIS record of an exchange visitor who: 1) does not provide OIPS with a valid health insurance by the start of the Exchange Visitor program at GMU; and 2) does not submit updated health insurance when s/he seeks to extend their program.

The willful failure to carry the required insurance or material misrepresentation of insurance coverage will result in the termination of your program and legal status in the U.S. If you have a sponsor that pays your health insurance fee and they do not submit payment in a timely manner, you may be required to pay the fee and then request a re-imbusement when the credit appears on your account.

If you are employed at GMU and eligible for health insurance benefits, please attend the Benefits Orientation in Human Resources (Fairfax campus, Merten Hall, 4th floor).

THE COST OF U.S. HEALTH CARE

Your health insurance may not cover the full cost of your doctor's visit, hospitalization or medication. Review the rules related to your plan to understand fully what is covered. Here are some of the terms defined:

Premium

The amount you pay to your insurance company for your insurance policy. This is paid on a monthly or a yearly basis, depending on your insurance plan.

Co-Pay

The co-pay or co-payment, is the amount you are expected to pay directly to the healthcare provider at the time you receive medical treatment. This is usually a small amount and varies depending on your insurance.

Deductible

The deductible is a part of the medical bill that you are expected to pay in addition to the co-pay. Insurance plans usually specify the amount of a medical bill they cover and the amount you must pay. The deductible is usually described as a flat amount or as a percentage, depending upon the policy. Generally high premiums have a lower deductible while lower premiums have a high deductible.

In many cases, the doctor's office or hospital where you seek treatment may not bill your insurance directly. They may require you to pay them directly and for you to be reimbursed by your health insurance company.

Information on the Possible Applicability of the Affordable Care Act

The general rules regarding applicability of the individual mandate of the ACA and availability of ACA-compliant coverage also apply to J nonimmigrants, but that the minimum levels and types of coverage are still required as a condition of J-1 or J-2 status, even if those nonimmigrants are additionally subject to the ACA's individual mandate. For more information please visit: <https://shs.gmu.edu/insurance/resources/>

DURING YOUR PROGRAM

The OIPS Website

The OIPS website has many resources regarding J-1 student responsibilities, remaining in status, employment, program extension procedures and much more at: <https://oips.gmu.edu/j-1-students/>

Cultural Activities

Pursuing a degree program at George Mason University as an Exchange Visitor Student is also a commitment to engage in cultural activities in the U.S. and share your culture with Americans. OIPS offers a variety of cultural programming for our international students. Read the OIPS weekly newsletter, follow us on social media, and check out [our website](#) to find out about events and programs. Additionally, your department will also host and share information about a variety of engagement opportunities. We encourage you and your family members to become involved in campus and local organizations and clubs. Mason 360 is a great resource to find campus groups and activities: <https://mason360.gmu.edu/> GMU's Graduate Student Life is also an excellent resource: <https://gradlife.gmu.edu/>

If you need assistance to locate any additional resources, please do not hesitate to contact us. We also want to recognize and celebrate your participation in cultural events during your program. Please share with us any significant involvement or achievement. In the past, GMU J-1 students have been involved in student government, OIPS iCafes, GMU club sports, student research symposiums and campus award ceremonies to name a few.



Mason Graduate Bike and Paddle. Photo by Ian Shiff/Creative Services

SAFETY AND WELLBEING RESOURCES

Your safety and well-being during your Exchange Visitor Program are among our highest priorities. As you begin your program, we would like to share the following resources offered by GMU and inform you of the requirements for reporting health and safety incidents to OIPS.

OIPS has a website for **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information** for international students and Scholars. It includes a link to GMU's Safe Return to Campus website. Please note that throughout the semester, individual offices may change in person and virtual service operations.

The Mason Ready website has links to campus offices and resources to assist in emergency and disaster preparedness including the university's Active Threats Awareness and Prevention Video. If you have not yet signed up, please register your cell phone number with the Mason Alert Emergency Notification System to receive timely information about campus emergencies. Severe weather such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or wildfires can impact your well-being whether you are in Fairfax or traveling. Please consider the hazards of severe weather and have a safety plan in place. Pay attention to local advisories, follow local news or the National Weather Service Forecast Office.

Educating yourself about the safety and security of your environment can be different in the U.S. than in your home country. There are a number of campus and local resources that will assist you in understanding crimes in the area and crime prevention. GMU's Department of Police and Public Safety publishes a daily Crime and Fire log so that you can be informed about crimes that have occurred on campus. If you are traveling off-campus, other cities and counties provide a similar log often called a police blotter. The GMU Department of Police and Public Safety has links to other area law enforcement websites and also information regarding promoting awareness and responding to campus violence. There have been reports of increased crime, including physical assaults, in various areas of the United States since the beginning of the pandemic. Thus, it is important to educate yourself about any other areas you travel to during your program and remain vigilante. Please exercise caution when in new locations and with new people. If you ever feel unsafe walking across campus, call (703) 993-2810 and a Police cadet can escort you to your destination.

Rave Guardian Public Safety App: This free public safety app offers a variety of features including a virtual safety option and a panic call button to alert GMU Police. It's free at iTunes and the Google Play store.

With the worldwide increase in scams targeting international students, OIPS has also created a Scam Awareness Website. **We highly encourage you to read over the scam awareness website as soon as possible.**

As a model well-being university, GMU strives to provide everyone in the campus community with the support to thrive together. Please check out the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being and discover links to online well-being assessments, campus offices and campus events that promote well-being. Students may want to take advantage of the Mindful Mason Moments in-person and virtual drop-in events or explore Resilience Resources.

GMU's Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) offers programming, consultations, and resources in the areas of interpersonal violence, financial wellbeing, personal wellness, and alcohol and drug use.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides important resources for students. In addition to having counselors on staff for guidance, they also have crisis hotlines available 24/7, a text line and an online chat. They offer online information and workshops focusing on a variety of issues such as stress reduction, suicide prevention and eating disorders. CAPS provides referrals for off-campus services. They also have a virtual outreach program. There are also weekly drop in meetings, "Coping with Coming Back" from more virtual pandemic interactions and a "Relax and Unwind" drop-in space.

Learning Services offers online academic coaching and virtual academic success workshops. They have an online library of video presentations on topics such as: Exam Strategies, Managing Academic Anxiety, Time Management, Notetaking and Studying among others. These workshops are a great resource for international students to also become better acquainted with American academic culture! They also have a guide on how to be a successful online learner.

The CAPS website has Multicultural Resources with links to Disability Services; LGBTQ Resources; and the Center for Culture, Equity and Empowerment. On the CCEE website, you can find information about reporting an incident that was motivated by bias (act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, violence or a criminal offense that appears to be intentional and motivated by prejudice or bias).

GMU's Student Health Services (SHS) provides high quality health care, counseling, health education and prevention services to George Mason University students. The Fairfax location is open. Students need to first call 703-993-2831 to speak to a nurse before scheduling an appointment. For assistance when the clinic is closed, SHS has an after-hours nurse advice hotline at the same number (703-993-2831) and a list of after-hours urgent care centers (walk-in clinics) on their website.

GMU Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the catalog. This section lists what steps can be taken for various concerns. It also includes information about the Student Conflict Resolution Center.

If you have been approved by OIPS to work, either on-campus or off-campus as part of Academic Training, it is important that you feel safe and are treated fairly in your work environment. The "Know your Rights" Pamphlet you received during your visa interview also details your rights as an exchange visitor. Please remember to review approval requirements for on-campus and off-campus employment at the OIPS website or contact your J-1 student advisor: cbodziak@gmu.edu.

In certain cases, we are required to report incidents concerning the Health and Safety of Exchange Visitors to the US Department of State. Please inform us if you are involved in any of the following types of incidents:

- lost or stolen immigration documents (i.e., passport and visa)
- theft of intellectual property or violations of export controls
- serious illness or injury or if you are quarantined due to COVID-19

- incident involving litigation or the criminal justice system (incidents with police including arrests or court system)
- incidents involving sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation
- other incidents that involve health and safety (e.g. if you are involved in a natural disaster, civil unrest or outbreak of violence)
- if you become aware of a death of another exchange visitor or if another exchange visitor is missing.

There may be situations not listed where we can help you resolve an issue affecting your health or safety. Please reach out to us with any concern or question you have, and we will help you sort it out. We share the goal of the US Department of State that you have whatever assistance you need, and that you understand how a situation may affect your J-1 status. We also need to know how to reach you, and by law you must update your contact information (address and phone number) within 10 days of making any change. In addition, if your permanent address in your home country changes or your emergency contact person either here or abroad changes, please inform us right away.

Remember, for an urgent or life-threatening emergency, call 911 for immediate assistance. While on-campus, you can report suspicious activity, crimes, and emergencies to Mason Police at 703-993-2810 (non-emergencies) or 9-1-1 (emergencies). Remember to report to OIPS any emergencies INVOLVING AN EXCHANGE VISITOR'S HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE by calling (703) 993-2970 or emailing GMU's Responsible Officer, Irina Chizhova at: ichizhov@gmu.edu

The Department of State also provides a 24 hour/7 days a week J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline toll-free number at 1-866-283-9090. The Hotline number is reserved for the use of current J-1 visa exchange visitor participants, or individuals calling on their behalf, in need of immediate contact with the State Department to address a matter concerning their health, safety or welfare. More information about the Department of State and J-1 program can be found at: <https://j1visa.state.gov/> GMU students can also find links to many of these resources on the [OIPS website](#).

We also need to know how to reach you. By law you must update your contact information (address and phone number) within 10 days of making a change. Also, if your permanent address in your home country changes or your emergency contact person either here or abroad changes, please inform us right away.

NEAR THE END OF YOUR PROGRAM

Program Completion

Your program completion date is generally the date of your last exam or your defense date. Your J-1 program end date on your current DS2019 is the last day of exams for that semester. If your defense date is earlier in the Fall or Spring semester, then OIPS will need to shorten your program end date on your DS2019 form and your 30-day grace period will begin after your updated J-1 program end date. Students with summer defense dates will have their J-1 program completion date be the defense date or the last exam date of the session their defense is scheduled. Keep this timing in mind if you want to attend your graduation ceremony during your grace period.

Program Extension

If you will not complete your academic program by the current end date on your DS-2019 form, remember to apply for a program extension as soon as possible. More information is at:

<https://go.gmu.edu/pgm3>

Post-Completion Academic Training

If you are interested in participating in post-completion Academic Training, please schedule an appointment with your J-1 advisor as soon as possible. More information about Academic Training can be found at: <https://oips.gmu.edu/academic-training/>



photo by Evan Cantwell/Creative Services

THE TWO YEAR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Some J1 exchange visitors are subject to Section 212(e) in the Immigration and Nationality Act; what is called the Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement, the Two-Year Residency Requirement or simply, the Two-Year Rule. It applies to exchange visitors in the following situations:

- If you receive any indirect or direct funding (including nominal travel grants) from your home government or a U.S. government agency at any point during your J-1 stay in the U.S.
- If your country of citizenship or permanent residency and field of work are identified by your home government as being in short supply and consequently listed on the U.S. State Department's Exchange Visitor's "Skills List." here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/skill-list-by-country.html>

How to Fulfill?

To satisfy the home residence requirement, the individual subject to 212(e) must reside in the country of nationality or last legal permanent residence or be physically present in those locations for at least two years. It can also be an aggregate amount of two years if the person departed and returned to the country at various times. The two-year time period begins after the completion of the J1 program and the Exchange Visitor's departure from the United States. Exchange Visitors who are subject may return to the U.S. while they are still subject in other non-immigrant categories including but not limited to F-1 student, J-1 Exchange Visitor, B visitor and the O-1 foreign national of extraordinary ability. Exchange Visitors that are subject:

- Cannot pursue a change of status in the U.S. (with certain exceptions).
- Apply for H, L, or K visa
- Cannot change status in U.S. to a legal permanent resident/immigrant visa.

Exchange Visitors interested in applying for a waiver of the Two Year Residence Requirement can find more information on the Department of State's website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor.htm>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Banking and Driver's License Information

On-Campus banking options will be updated soon. More information is here:

<https://shopmason.gmu.edu/banking/>

Banks off-campus near the Fairfax campus:

United Bank (10695B Braddock Road/University Mall, Fairfax, VA)

<https://bankwithunited.com>

Bank of America (10440 Main Street, Fairfax, VA)

<https://www.bankofamerica.com/>

TD Bank (11098 Fairfax Boulevard, Fairfax, VA)

<https://www.td.com>

Driver's License:

If you plan to apply for a driver's license, OIPS can assist you. Due to the pandemic, appointments are required at Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices. Appointments may take weeks to schedule. The most up-to-date information is on the DMV website. The closest DMV office is located inside Fair Oaks mall:

Address: 11805 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax, VA

Hours of operation: Monday—Saturday: 10:00 a.m.—6:30 p.m.

Please note that road tests are not given at this location. If the DMV requires for you to take a road test, then you may want to visit another location. DMV offices are also located in other locations in Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun counties and Alexandria. Find other locations here:

<http://www.dmv.state.va.us/DMVLocator/>

Requirements for obtaining a driver's license:

<http://www.dmv.state.va.us/drivers/#eligibility.html>

J-2 RESOURCES

Employment

J-2 dependents can find information about applying for work authorization on the OIPS website: <https://oips.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10-1-J-2-Employment-Instructions-October-2020.pdf>

Please note that due to the pandemic, students have reported that there have been considerable delays in receiving EAD cards.

Daycare and Preschools

For information about daycare, private pre-schools and childcare, please visit:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc/>

<http://family.arlingtonva.us/child-care/>

<https://www.loudoun.gov/2503/Child-Care-Providers-Resources>

Public School Enrollment for Children

Please visit the appropriate county website of where your local address is located:

Fairfax County Public Schools:

<https://www.fcps.edu/registration/general-registration-requirements>

Arlington Public Schools:

<https://www.apsva.us/registering-your-child/>

Loudoun County Public Schools:

<http://www.loudoun.k12.va.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>

Prince William County Public Schools:

[Registration - Prince William County Public Schools \(pwcs.edu\)](https://www.pwcs.edu)

The GMU Contemporary Student Services Office is also an excellent resource for families of graduate students: <https://contemporary.gmu.edu/>

Campus Maps

<https://www.gmu.edu/resources/welcome/Directions-to-GMU.html>

Our office at the Fairfax campus is located in Student Union Building (SUB) I Room 4300 and is open from 8:30am – 5:00 pm M-F. Please visit our website at: <https://oips.gmu.edu/oips-is-online/> to confirm the most recent announcements regarding walk-in hours and virtual services for Spring 2022.

We look forward to meeting you!

Christine A. Bodziak

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