

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



**A resource guide published by the
Office of International Education
Albany State University
Albany, GA**

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Office of International Education

NOTICE TO STUDENTS

This guide should be used in combination with the ASU Undergraduate Catalog/ASU Graduate Catalog and the RAM Student Handbook. The University Catalog contains important information and regulations of the university that you will need to know. You should obtain a copy of the Catalog (Undergraduate or Graduate) and the RAM Student Handbook as soon as you begin your program of study.



Potential. Realized.

Office of International Education

Dear International Student:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the campus of Albany State University. I will serve as your International Student Advisor. I want you to know that you are a valuable part of the ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY family like any other student and most of all I want you to be successful in your studies.

To help you reach this goal, I offer services that include providing you with important information about your visa status and the benefits it includes. There are laws and regulations you are required to follow in order to legally remain in the U.S. and I am required to submit updates and other reports regularly and by specific deadlines to confirm that.

This guide is designed to help you locate the resources and services you will need while you are at ASU and answer some of your questions. You are encouraged to ALWAYS know your F-1 Visa Student Status and regulation involved.

As an international student at ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY you are required to meet with me each semester of your matriculation. I encourage you to schedule appointments so that we can meet to discuss and review options available to you at any point of your educational endeavors at ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY.

In addition, please note that while you are matriculating as an International Student ASU currently does not provide any financial assistance for you. It is your responsibility to have the financial resources to continue your education. If for any reason you are unable to continue to make financial contribution to your education endeavors you are at risk of being in violation of the student immigration status. *(please see the next page)*

I look forward to assisting you at ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY and seeing you reach the end of your program as focused and ready for the future as you are here today.

Sincerely,

Sue Ann Balch, J.D.
F1-Visa Student Advisor
sueann.balch@asurams.edu (Email)
229-430-7075 (Office Number)
229-434-7106 (fax Number)
205 Reese Hall

Financial Documentation (Required Forms)

You can acquire these forms from the office of Recruitment and Admission

*Albany State University International Student Financial Statement (To Be Completed by Student)

*I-34 Affidavit of Support (To Be Completed By Sponsor, Affirmed Under Oath and Notarized)

Original/Official Supporting Financial Documentation Must be:

1. Written in English or have certified English translation attached and a recognized transcript evaluation by a company such as WES or Silney.
2. Dated no more than six months prior to the first day of the semester you plan to attend.
3. Clearly state the account balance in United States Dollar amount(s).
4. Must provide the following information: Date account opened; total amount deposited for the past year;

Tuition and fees	\$14,600.00
Living Expenses	\$9,000.00
Expenses of dependant	\$0.00
Other: Books & Health Insurance	\$4,000.00
	*\$27,600.00

*(*Fee changes yearly, 2016 cost listed above)*

5. All monies for tuition, health insurance, Room Board, Books & Supplies and other fees must be must be paid by the first day of classes each semester at Albany State University after student has been accepted. This process must occur until the student has completed matriculation at Albany State University

How to set-up account?

1. After student receives acceptance letter from undergraduate or graduate admissions, student will begin the account set-up process.
2. Student will mail fees for the year in United States Dollar Amount to:
Albany State University
Financial Operations
Attn: Student Account Manager
504 College Drive
Albany, GA 31705
3. Student will mail money certified or return receipt request or any secure means of mail delivery or pay in person.

ACADEMIC LIFE

ADVISORS

All students are assigned an academic advisor when they enroll in a degree program. Your advisor will be a faculty member in your department. He or she will help you choose which courses to take each semester. If you need to

change your schedule in any way, you must get the approval of your academic advisor.

Academic advisors can better serve you when they understand your educational and career plans. They can help you prepare for graduate school or for a job. They can arrange work experiences as a part of your degree program if this will help you. If you give your advisor a clear picture of what you plan to do, he or she can guide you toward the most suitable courses and university activities.

INDIVIDUALITY

Individuality is very important to Americans. This value is as important in the classroom as it is in other parts of U.S. culture. Independent thinking is expected of students in American classrooms. Interpretation, analysis, critical thinking, and even challenging the professor may be expected of you in class. You may be graded on your class participation. Usually, professors will tell you at the beginning of the course if you are to be evaluated on class participation. It takes time and practice to get used to speaking out in class, but it is often an important part of the learning experience.

REGULATIONS

Certain acts are considered to be academic dishonesty and are not permitted at Albany State University. Submitting another person's work as your own or doing academic work for another person is not allowed. Academic dishonesty includes copying exam papers, assignments, or term papers or allowing another person to copy your work. If you use ideas or information published by other people in papers that you turn in, you must give the writers credit by providing citations in footnotes or references. Your professors will tell you how to do this. Students who turn in work which is not their own will be disciplined by the professor and possibly the university. It could lead to expulsion from the university.

GLOSSARY OF "UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE"

CATALOG/BULLETIN

The university publishes an undergraduate and graduate catalog. These catalogs are sometimes called bulletins. They include information on all aspects of university life, including regulations governing academic life, course descriptions, and a list of faculty members. You must follow the rules set forth in the catalog for your academic program. It is an important resource. Read it carefully and refer to it when you need information about academic offerings and requirements.

CLASS

Sessions or meetings of particular courses. These are listed in the Schedule Report, issued each semester, which lists the days, times and venues the class meets.

COLLEGE

The University is divided into units known as "Colleges." The Colleges at ASU are the Colleges of Arts and Humanities, College of Business, College of

Education, and College of Science and Health Professions. Unlike many other countries, the term college in U.S. usage does not refer to high school or secondary education. It is often used interchangeably with the term university.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Examinations are required by most departments before a student can receive a Master's degree. The exams test the student's knowledge of his or her entire field of study.

CORE CURRICULUM

The Core Curriculum is composed of a wide spectrum of general courses. It is designed to give all students a broad base of basic knowledge and is required of all students seeking bachelor's degrees at ASU.

COURSE

Subject Offerings. These are listed in the course catalog, by department. Students usually take 4-5 courses per semester. The course listings are also available through BANNER on the ASU website.

CREDIT HOUR

Courses are given credit hour values. Most courses are 3 credit hours. This means that the course meets for approximately 3 hours each week during the semester. 1-hour course meets for 1 hour, etc. In order to be considered full-time, undergraduates must enroll in 12 credit hours, graduate students need to take 9 credit hours each semester.

CURRICULUM

This refers to the program that you are following, and its requirements. There are required courses and elective courses in most curricula.

DEPARTMENT

Within each College are several Departments that specialize in a certain subject. For example, the College of Education includes the Department of Teacher Education and Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership.

DROP-DATE

Students may choose to drop or withdraw from a course without penalty up to the middle of the semester. However, you must remember that:

1. As a foreign student, you must remain a full-time student at all times. You must be enrolled for 12 hours at all times, unless it is a vacation period which is the summer semester or you otherwise have permission from the DSO in the International Office. Graduate students must take 9 hours.
2. Withdrawal hour's associated with classes that are dropped due to documented extenuating circumstances will be included in the 12 hour total.

3. Students will receive a "WF" (*This symbol indicates withdrawal with penalty*) for course withdrawals identified after the 16 hour limit has been reached. There are financial and G.P.A conditions associated with the "WF".
4. "W" (*This symbol indicates that a student was permitted to withdraw without penalty*) grades will be awarded to students who withdraw from classes prior to the end of the schedule change deadline and to those students who are authorized to withdraw due to extenuating circumstances.

After the midterm drop-date, special permission is required for course withdrawal. The grade the student has earned up to the point of withdrawal will be reflected on his or her transcript; however, it will not affect the GPA. In addition, as a F1-Visa Student you are required to notify the International student Advisor of any schedule changes you are making.

ELECTIVE COURSE

These are optional courses. Each student must choose several of these courses. The academic advisor will suggest specific electives.

FINAL

This is the last, major examination of the semester. Usually, one week is set aside at the end of the semester for final exams. A final is a long exam, which sometimes lasts as long as two hours. Not all professors choose to give final exams. Some will assign research papers or special projects instead.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Your performance is evaluated with grades of A, B, C, D, or F. The grades A through F are given a numerical value (A=4, F=0) and weighted by the number of credit hours associated with each grade. Your grade point average is computed by averaging the numerical values of the credit hours for all of the courses you have completed. "GPA" is the common abbreviation for Grade Point Average.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

These are students who have already received a Bachelor's degree or the equivalent. The graduate degrees offered at ASU are the Specialist degree in Education and Master's degree in several disciplines.

MID-TERM

A Mid-Term is a major examination given in many classes in the middle of the semester. This word also refers to the date signaling the end of the first half of the semester.

MINOR

A secondary, optional program of study in addition to the student's major.

SEMESTER

The school year at Albany State University is divided into two semesters. Fall semester, which begins in August and spring semester, which begins in January,

constitute the normal academic year. There is a full six-week summer session. Summer terms are optional terms for foreign students.

QUIZ

An informal examination, shorter in length than a regular examination.

REQUIRED COURSE

These are courses which each student seeking a particular degree must take.

RESEARCH PAPER

This is a major paper which can be from 5 to 25 pages in length. In order to write this paper, a student must select an approved topic, somewhat narrow in scope, and do research in the library. Papers are to be typed. There are manuals in the bookstore to show you how to type it, or you can hire a professional typist.

SECTION

Some courses are offered in a number of sections, or classes, each semester, so that a large number of students may attend. A course number, section letter, and call number identify each section.

SYLLABUS

A list of information about a course including the books you will use, the professor's name, office and phone number. Usually there is a general outline of how the course will proceed, and sometimes assignments and dates of examinations are included.

TRANSCRIPT

A record of students' courses and grades. An "official transcript" is sealed by the issuing institution, and normally sent directly to the school or office requesting it. It is used to document a student's academic performance while attending college. Universities, graduate schools, and some employers use this to determine the desirability of accepting or hiring students.

UNDERGRADUATE

These are students who are studying for their first degree at the university. During the first year, students are called freshmen; the second year, sophomores; the third year, juniors; and their last year, seniors. The undergraduate degree is the Bachelor's degree.

AMERICAN CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

The culture and customs of the United States are difficult to define precisely, because geographic areas and the people who live in them differ. Most of what you will learn about the customs and culture of the people of the United States will be by experience and through contact with people.

While you are in the U.S., it is good to learn the customs of the people here. It is important, however, that you maintain your own values and beliefs. If you're personal preferences or religious beliefs influence you not to do certain things, do not be embarrassed to explain this.

TIME

Being on time is very important in the American society. Classes, parties, concerts, meetings, and other planned events all start at a specific time. If you need to see someone, you should ALWAYS make an appointment beforehand. Do not show up at their office or home unexpectedly. It is considered very important not to be late to scheduled appointments or events. If you are late for an appointment, it is important to apologize to the person(s) you have kept waiting. Students who are always late for appointments or who turn in assignments after the deadline earn negative reputations. Many professors will deduct from a grade if an assignment is late or if a student arrives late for class.

INFORMALITY

There is a great deal of informality between all types of people in the U.S. It is our way of life. The American society does not have a formal class structure. We may dress more casually and act more informally in social situations than you may be used to.

GREETING, INVITATIONS, AND VISITING

The most common forms of greeting are a handshake, smile and "Hello, I'm pleased to meet you." The Americans do not usually embrace in public, except with members of their family or very close friends.

Professors should be addressed as Doctor or Professor unless they request otherwise. You should also use titles (usually Mr., Mrs., or Ms.) with older persons unless they ask you to call them by their first name. For other students, it is customary that you address them by their first name.

If you are invited somewhere and you accept the invitation, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you appear at the event. Do not accept an invitation simply because you are afraid to say no. If you cannot or do not want to go to the event, politely tell the person who invited you that you cannot or choose not to attend. It is much more inappropriate to accept an invitation and then fail to appear than it is to decline the invitation in the first place. If invited to visit someone's home, you are not normally expected to bring a gift. It is always acceptable, but not necessary, to bring a small token or an inexpensive gift to your host or hostess. An expensive gift is usually inappropriate and may make

your host or hostess uncomfortable or embarrassed. American homes, usually does not have domestic servants, so if you stay as a houseguest, it is proper for you to make your own bed or volunteer to help with other household chores.

TABLE MANNERS

Table manners is most common to Americans including not speaking with food in your mouth, keeping your elbows off the table, and keeping your hands in you lap while you're not eating. A knife, fork, and spoon are used unless "finger foods" are being served. You should not belch at the table after eating; this is considered rude in the U.S. After the meal is finished, the napkin should be laid beside the plate and used silverware should be laid across the top of the plate.

RELATIONSHIPS

Most Americans have many friendly acquaintances, but just a few close friends. Visitors from other countries often remark that Americans are very friendly, even at the first meeting, but that it is difficult to get to know them very well. Sometimes this is true; although Americans are friendly to everyone, they are also very private people and often have just a few intimate friends.

Americans often say things like "let's get together sometime" as a friendly way to say good-bye, NOT as an invitation. If you would like to get to know someone better, it is a good idea for you to invite them to go somewhere with you on a specific day, at a scheduled time. Participate in as many social activities as you can and you will meet and make many new friends.

MEN AND WOMEN

American women are independent, and women and men are considered equal. It is not appropriate to whistle at, touch, or make personal comments about women whom you do not know EXTREMELY well. It is common for American university women to live alone or with other women in apartments off campus. Guests of both sexes are often invited to these apartments. Do not assume that your hostess has romantic intentions simply because she has invited you to stop by her apartment.

There are no clear guidelines for dating Americans. If you want to get to know someone, it is often best just to ask the person to join you for a snack or to get together to study. It is important to remember, however, that if two people go out on a date, it only means that they enjoy each other's company. It does not always indicate serious intentions or constitute a promise! If you begin to date someone from another culture, it is important to remember that s/he simply may not view the relationship in the same way that you do, especially regarding the seriousness of the relationship or the desire to engage in sexual activity.

It is most often the man who invites the woman out on a date, and customarily the man pays all of the expenses unless the persons agree that it will be a "Dutch Treat," that is, each person pays for his or her own expenses. Women sometimes ask men for dates. A woman who asks a man out should be prepared to pay for the expenses.

BATHING AND HYGIENE

Most Americans bathe or shower daily, and use deodorants and anti-perspirants. Americans are not accustomed to body odors and find it offensive. Some international visitors may want to adjust their bathing habits and accommodate American preferences for the time they are here.

CULTURE SHOCK

There are many differences between the American culture and the home culture of many international students. Adapting to these differences can cause "culture shock." If you are having trouble adjusting to life in the U.S., or are experiencing depression or physical or emotional problems, you may be experiencing culture shock. The Office of the International Student Advisor can provide cross-cultural counseling to help you, or refer you to a counselor on campus free of charge. Counseling is always confidential.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you would like additional information about American culture, please visit the Office of the International Student Advisor. The office contains several handbooks and guidebooks for foreign visitors in the United States.

IMMIGRATION STATUS

THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS) is the branch of the Federal government created to monitor the entry and exit of foreign nationals. This branch of the government was formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). You will encounter INS officials as you travel between the U.S. and your home country and when you apply for special programs. The following information should help you understand the regulations concerning student immigration status. Most ASU students have either F-1 or J-1 immigration status.

PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid at all times. When it is time to renew your passport, contact your country's embassy in Washington, D.C. to determine what procedures you need to follow in order to extend your passport.

VISA

There is a visa stamped in your passport, which permitted you to enter the United States. A single entry visa permits you to enter the U.S. only once on that specific visa. A multiple entry visa allows you to enter the U.S. as many times as you like (after leaving on vacations or trips home) as long as you

remain a full-time student. Student stays are valid for the "duration of status". This status is indicated by the mark "D/S" in your passport and on your I-20/DS-2019 and I-94. As long as you remain in full-time student status, you are in the country legally, regardless of the expiration date on your entry visa. If you leave the U.S. after your visa expires, you must go to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate-General in your home country and obtain a new visa before you can return to the U.S. It is difficult to obtain a new visa in a "third country." It is difficult to obtain new F-1 visas in Canada or Mexico, unless you are from those countries.

F-1 IMMIGRATION STATUS

If you are a full-time degree-seeking student or a Rotary student at ASU, you have entered the U.S. with F-1 immigration status. This type of immigration status is designed to allow you to obtain your degree and return home following your graduation. F-1 status is a "non-immigrant" status. "Non-immigrant" means that you are not moving to the U.S. permanently. This immigration status is valid for "duration of status."

- You should carefully consider the dates of your authorized stay and make sure you are following the procedures under U.S. immigration laws. It is important that you depart the U.S. on or before the last day you are authorized to be in the U.S. on any given trip, based on the specified end date on your Arrival-Departure Record, Form I-94. Failure to depart the U.S. will cause you to be out-of-status. Additional information on successfully maintaining your immigration status while a student or exchange visitor can be found on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website.
- Staying beyond the period of time authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and being out-of-status in the United States is a violation of U.S. immigration laws, and may cause you to be ineligible for a visa in the future for return travels to the U.S.
- Staying unlawfully in the United States beyond the date Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have authorized--even by one day--results in your visa being automatically voided, in accordance with INA 222(g). Under this provision of immigration law, if you overstay on your nonimmigrant authorized stay in the U.S., your visa will be automatically voided. In this situation, you are required to reapply for a new nonimmigrant visa, generally in *your* country of nationality.
- For non immigrants in the U.S. who have an Arrival-Departure Record, Form I-94 with the CBP admitting officer endorsement of Duration of Status or D/S, but who are no longer performing the same function in the U.S. that they were originally admitted to perform (e.g. you are no longer working for the same employer or you are no longer attending the same school), a DHS or an immigration judge makes a finding of status violation, resulting in the termination of the period of authorized stay.

Staying Beyond Your Authorized Stay in the U.S. and Being Out of Status

- You should carefully consider the dates of your authorized stay and make sure you are following the procedures under U.S. immigration laws. It is important that you depart the U.S. on or before the last day you are authorized to be in the U.S. on any given trip, based on the specified end date on your Arrival-Departure Record, Form I-94. Failure to depart the U.S. will cause you to be out-of-status. Additional information on successfully [maintaining your immigration status](#) while a student or exchange visitor can be found on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website.
- Staying beyond the period of time authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and being out-of-status in the United States is a violation of U.S. immigration laws, and may cause you to be ineligible for a visa in the future for return travel to the U.S. Select [Classes of Aliens Ineligible to Receive Visas](#) to learn more.
- Staying unlawfully in the United States beyond the date Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have authorized--even--results in your visa being automatically voided, in accordance with INA 222(g). Under this provision of immigration law, if you overstay on your nonimmigrant authorized stay in the U.S., your visa will be automatically voided. In this situation, you are required to reapply for a new nonimmigrant visa, generally in *your* country of nationality.
- For non immigrants in the U.S. who have an Arrival-Departure Record, Form I-94 with the CBP admitting officer endorsement of Duration of Status or D/S, but who are no longer performing the same function in the U.S. that they were originally admitted to perform (e.g. you are no longer working for the same employer or you are no longer attending the same school), a DHS or an immigration judge makes a finding of status violation, resulting in the termination of the period of authorized stay.

What Items Do Returning Students Need?

All applicants applying for renewals must submit:

- A passport valid for at least six months;
- An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157. Blank forms are available without charge at all U.S. consular offices and on the Visa Services website under Visa Applications Forms at the [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](https://www.uscis.gov/) (<https://www.uscis.gov/>).
- A receipt for visa processing fee. A receipt showing payment of the visa application fee for each applicant, including each child listed in a parent's passport who is also applying for a U.S. visa, is needed;
- A new I-20 or an I-20 that has been endorsed on the back by a school official within the past 12 months.

All applicants applying for renewals **should be prepared** to submit:

- A certified copy of your grades from the school in which you are enrolled;
- Financial documents from you or your sponsor, showing your ability to cover the cost of your schooling.

Students Away from Classes More Than Five Months

Students in or outside the U.S., who have been [away from classes](#) for more than five months, will likely need a new visa to enter the U.S.

How long may I stay on my F-1 student visa?

When you enter the United States on a student visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status. That means you may stay as long as you are a full-time student, even if the F-1 visa in your passport expires while you are in America. For a student who has completed the course of studies shown on the I-20, and any authorized practical training, the student is allowed the following additional time in the U.S. before departure:

- F-1 student - An additional 60 days, to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer to another school.
- M-1 student - An additional 30 days to depart the U.S. (Fixed time period, in total not to exceed one year). The 30 days to prepare for departure is permitted as long as the student maintained a full course of study and maintained status. An M student may receive extensions up to three years for the total program.

As an example regarding duration of status, if you have a visa that is valid for five years that will expire on January 1, 2001, and you are admitted into the U.S. for the duration of your studies (often abbreviated in your passport or on your I-94 card as "D/S"), you may stay in the U.S. as long as you are a full-time student. Even if January 1, 2001 passes and your visa expires while in America, you will still be in legal student status. However, if you depart the U.S. with an expired visa, you will need to obtain a new one before being able to return to America and resume your studies. A student visa cannot be renewed or re-issued in the United States; it must be done at an Embassy or Consulate abroad.

FORM I-20

Before you came to ASU, you were sent Form I-20 by the ASU Admissions Office. This form is the one you use to obtain your F-1 student visa, and it is a very important form. You should keep it safe with your passport. A Designated School Official (DSO) must sign your I-20 whenever you travel outside the United States, even if you are only going for a short time. If you change degree programs (change your major), you will need a new I-20. New I-20 forms are available from the International Admissions Officer on campus at 229-430-4646 or visit the Office of the International Student Advisor for further assistance. If you transferred to ASU, be sure to keep your ASU I-20 and the I-20 from your

previous school together. Note the date of expiration in #5 on your I-20. If you need to stay past this time to complete your studies, you must contact a DSO at least 30 days before this expiration date to extend your stay as a student.

FULL-TIME STUDENT STATUS (In-Status)

In order to maintain your full time status, you must attend school at least 9 semester hours per semester for graduate studies and at least **12 semester hours per semester for undergraduate studies**. If you have any questions about this regulation, please see the International Student Advisor. Students who fail to maintain this requirement risk being placed on probation and could lose university scholarships, including International Student Scholarships. To avoid losing your full-time status, check with your advisor and/or Registrar before you drop a class.

VACATION

The Summer Term is considered a vacation period for all non-immigrant students, as long as the student intends to register full-time for the next term. You may enroll part-time, full-time or not at all during the summer term. Make sure you check with the International Student Advisor before taking ANY semester other than the summer semester off. You can go home for summer any time you wish.

VACATIONS INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE USA

- (A) Inside the USA: You do not need permission of any kind from anyone to travel anywhere within the USA. Travel between the 50 states is totally unrestricted. Have fun—see the USA!
- (B) Outside the USA: Before leaving the USA, you must go by the office of a Designated School Official (DSO) with your passport and I-20 and let the DSO sign your I-20 and check your visa. Your I-20 must be signed for you to re-enter the USA. You must have both the signed (or a new) I-20 and a valid F-1 visa in your passport to re-enter the USA.

If your visa has expired, you will need to go to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate-General to get a new visa before you can re-enter the country. U.S. VISAS ARE NOT ISSUED IN THE USA. If you have dependents that are on an I-20, we need to check their passports and visas as well.

PLEASE VISIT THE OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR AT LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS BEFORE YOUR TRIP SO THAT THERE WILL BE SOMEONE AVAILABLE TO SIGN YOUR DOCUMENTS.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

If you are transferring from another U.S. college or university to ASU, you must see the International Student Advisor within 5 days of your registration at the beginning of the semester for completion of the transfer process, which must be done to maintain your student status.

EMPLOYMENT

- (A) ON-CAMPUS: As soon as you have registered for classes, you may work on campus as a student assistant in the various departments if hired. . . Each department or facility has its own budget for student workers, so you must go directly to them to seek employment. Once you have found a job, you must register with the ASU Human Resources Department (Department of Human Resources) in order to be paid for your work. To register, you must have a Social Security Number. For more information about Social Security Numbers, please see the section on Social Security Numbers in this handbook.
- (B) OFF CAMPUS—ECONOMIC HARDSHIP: You must see the International Student Advisor before you can work off campus. Due to recent changes in immigration laws, it is virtually impossible for foreign students to work off campus. The only two exceptions are internships for academic credit or extreme economic difficulty due to conditions beyond his or her control. Students must apply to USCIS for permission to accept employment off campus due to economic hardship, and the ISA can assist you with this application.
- (C) OFF CAMPUS—PRACTICAL TRAINING: You must see the International Student Advisor before you can work off campus. Curricular Practical training (or an internship) is work directly related to your course of study that will give you “hands-on” job experience that will help you get a better job when you return to your home country. It can be granted only after you have been at ASU for an academic year, and then only under certain specific conditions. There are provisions for curricular practical training before graduation and after graduation.

Other than the above types of work, NO OTHER EMPLOYMENT IS PERMITTED while you are in student status. You may not work off campus without permission from USCIS and/or the ISA. If you do work off campus illegally, you will lose your student immigration status and its benefits. Working illegally in the United States is the most serious violation of non-immigrant status in the eyes of the USCIS, and you WILL NOT be reinstated if you violate this regulation.

INFORMATION UPDATES

Any change in address, phone number or marital status must be reported to the Office of the International Student Advisor (ISA) and the Office of the Registrar within 10 days. You must report the changes to both offices. If you do not notify the ISA and the Registrar, you will not receive important mail from the university. Please note that the Office of the Registrar maintains two addresses on each student, a local address and a home address. The local address is your address in Albany. If you live on campus, the university will automatically record your ASU box number. If you live off campus, you must report your address to the ISA and the Registrar. The home address is your address in your country. It is the address you listed on your application for admission. All official correspondence concerning your grades and your fees will be sent to the home address. You may want to change your home address to your Albany address to make sure you receive these notices. If you move off-campus, you must also

complete a United States Postal Service Change of Address card and sign the card. Completing this card will allow the campus mailroom to forward mail to you at your new address.

THE CARDINAL RULE

*If you have questions about working or any other USCIS-related matter while in the USA, visit the Office of the International Student Advisor. The Office of the International Student Advisor and Designated School Officials are here to assist you. We will help you as much as we can; however, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to keep the office informed of your status and to ask for help when you need it. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services holds you accountable for your own actions and expects you to follow all laws pertaining to your immigration status. If you choose to violate the law or fail to educate yourself about the law, you will be responsible, not the Office of the International Student Advisor. Do not allow yourself to fall out of status. Do not rely on the advice of other students for immigration matters. You could lose the privilege of studying in the U.S. now, and you could be prevented from returning to the U.S. in the future.*

A revision of the immigration law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, contains very harsh penalties of students who violate student immigrant status, including provision to prevent offenders from returning to the United States for periods of several years. The new immigration regulations based on this act are currently in place, but because the law is a new one, there are often modifications or updates to the regulations. The International Student Advisor will keep you informed about modifications in the regulations.

AUTOMOBILES

REQUIRED INSURANCE

Law requires liability insurance for a car. If you own an automobile in Georgia, you must purchase liability insurance. Collision insurance is not required, but it is recommended. Proof of insurance, usually in the form of an insurance card, must be carried in the car at all times. Look in the "Yellow Pages" of the phone book to locate insurance agents, or ask a friend to refer you. Compare prices with several companies before buying.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

As a non-resident student at the university, you may drive in Georgia with a valid international driver's license. If you do not have an international license or if your license expires during your stay, you may apply for a state of Georgia license at the Dougherty County Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS), 2062 Newton Road, Albany. The contact telephone number is 229-430-4258. Getting a Georgia license requires a written test and a driving test. You should present your passport, I-94, and your I-20 or DS-2019 to the examiner. You will also need to bring a lease or utility bill, which verifies your address. If you live in

a residence hall, you may also need a letter from the International Student Advisor certifying that you live on-campus. The fee for a five-year license for driving a passenger car is \$20.00. A provisional permit costs \$10.00. All fees must be paid in cash. In addition, you will need a denial letter from the Social Security Office and/or a Social Security Card. Also, you will need a letter from your International Student Advisor before you go.

Many students find that having a State of Georgia license helps them to obtain lower rates for automobile insurance. Georgia identification cards are also available at the driver's license office for a fee. Both the license and the ID card contain photographs of the bearer. Because the driver's license and the state ID card are the most widely accepted forms of identification, it is easier to verify your address and age with these items than with your passport or ASU ID. Having proper identification is especially important for writing checks and handling other banking matters. You should consider obtaining an official form of identification other than your passport. If you must carry your passport with you at all times, you risk losing it. You should call the license bureau at 229-430-4258 to make sure that the test is being given on the day you plan to apply for a license. The bureau is closed on Mondays and will not give tests when it is raining.

If you hold a license from another state in the U.S. or from another country, you will need to surrender this license to obtain a Georgia license. Please note that once an out-of-state license has been surrendered to the State of Georgia, it is not possible to reclaim the license. You should consider whether you wish to surrender your home country license before you go to the bureau. If you have questions about this regulation, please see the International Student Advisor.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Although your international license is valid in the U.S., it is a good idea to read the State of Georgia Driver's Manual before you begin driving. Every country has different traffic laws. Reading these laws in advance could prevent you from having an accident. Copies of the State of Georgia Driver's Manual are available in the Office of the International Student Advisor.

TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

If you break any of the traffic laws, including driving over the speed limit, you risk being stopped by a police officer. If a police or sheriff car follows you with flashing lights and sirens, the officer wants you to pull over to the side of the road. You should be prepared to pull over in a safe spot and do as the officer instructs. Usually, the officer will ask to see your driver's license, proof of liability insurance, and registration for the car. He will also ask you questions about your driving. If you have broken a traffic law, he may issue you a citation (ticket). Citations involve paying fines, and in extreme cases, imprisonments. If you are in an accident, you must wait at the scene of the accident for a police officer to investigate the accident. Do not move the car and do not leave until the officer has interviewed you about the accident.

PARKING

Most parking in Albany is free. Parking on the ASU campus requires a permit, which costs \$15 per academic year. Please refer to the ASU Parking and Transportation resource guide for parking regulations. If parking regulations are violated, you will get a "ticket" and be required to pay a fine. Parking Rules on campus are clearly stated in the RAM Student Handbook.

RENTAL AND PURCHASE

If you have a valid driver's license and are at least 21 years old, you will probably be able to rent or lease a car. Some rental places also require a credit card in your name or that you are at least 25 years of age. Check with the larger local car dealerships about short- and long-term rental.

If you wish to buy a car for your stay in the U.S., be CAREFUL. Most companies will service your car if it needs repair after purchase. You must pay for all repairs unless you have a "manufacturer's warranty" or paper which states that the maker of the car will pay for repairs for a limited period of time after purchase. If you buy a used car from a private dealer or individual, check the vehicle carefully before purchase. It might help to bring a friend who knows about the mechanical working of an automobile to inspect the car for you. An honest car dealer will be happy to let you inspect all parts of the car and remember to ask questions before you buy. When purchasing a car, you must have a TITLE and LICENCE PLATE (tag) from the State of Georgia. The dealer where you purchased the car will give you the correct papers to fill out and help you obtain these things. In addition, you must renew items such as insurance, license and tags on a yearly basis. If you buy a car from an individual, be sure to ask for assistance with these items. If you are bringing a car to Albany from another state, you must transfer the title for the car and obtain license plates from the State of Georgia. You should also notify your insurance company that you have moved.

License plates must be renewed each year before paying the tax on your car. Once you have paid the tax, you will be given a sticker for that year. The sticker should be placed in the upper right hand corner of the license plate. If you have questions about license plates, please contact the Dougherty County Tag Office, 225 Pine Avenue, Room 104, Albany, GA. The telephone number is 229-431-3255.

EMERGENCIES

To call the POLICE, AMBULANCE, or FIRE DEPARTMENT, dial 911. Call this number only if someone needs immediate help. This is a special emergency aid number and needs no other numbers. For medical problems that are not life-threatening emergencies, call the Palmyra Medical Centers, 2000 Palmyra Road, Albany. Tel.: 229- 229-434-2000 or Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, 417 3rd Avenue, Albany. Tel.: 229-883-1800, 229-312-1000. Police concerns are handled according to location:

Campus Police:	229-430-4711
Albany Police:	229-431-3266 or 229-431-2100
Leesburg Police:	229-759-6012

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Students who scored below 523 on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) are REQUIRED to take special supplementary English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. These courses are non-credit-bearing, but they will help you with your academic English needs. The course numbers are ENGL 0075, 0077, 0098 and 0099. Any international students are welcome to take these courses, even if the TOEFL score was above 523.

English 1101 is the introductory university level English course required for all ASU degree programs. The course prepares students for the remaining required English courses in their degree program.

There are some options available for students who wish to improve their English language skills. For students who need help with their writing skills, the English Department offers tutoring in the Writing Center lab located in Simmons Hall. Another option for tutoring is the PEER TUTORING program. Tutoring is available in most subjects free of charge during the fall and spring semesters. Contact the Office of the International Student Advisor or your English professor to find out which of these facilities will best meet your language needs.

ENTERTAINMENT

ASU provides many entertainment and social opportunities for students. The student centers on both campuses are available to you for all activities. It has as its objectives the fulfillment of the cultural, educational, and recreational desires of all students of ASU. Various programs and activities are planned and supervised by the Director of Student Activities and the program coordinator to round out and broaden the experiences of each student. The services and facilities of the Student Union are open from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturdays and Sundays, the Game Room hours will be posted in the game room, unless other wise notified. The facilities and services of the Union are for students to make full use of. They include conference and meeting rooms, lounges, a game room, Pizza Hut, the ASU Bookstore, Student Government Office, a Post Office, an ATM, an information desk, vending machines, and the ASU Board of Managers.

The Albany State University International Student Association (ASUISA) is a special club for international students at ASU. This group plans and promotes cultural diversity and global awareness activities involving ASU and the community. It also organizes programs and field trips for students who are interested in more international activities. Look for information about the first meeting in late August.

For more information about clubs and activities, you should read the campus paper, The Student Voice, and listen to the community radio stations. Also plan to attend the campus-wide activities fair that takes place during the early part of

the Fall Semester. Each of ASU's clubs will have a booth at this fair to provide more information for potential members.

HEALTH CARE

The United States philosophy of health care is different from that of many other countries. Health care in this country is viewed as an industry. All Health Care professionals are expected to be paid by their patients or clients. Patients often must prove ability to pay before treatment will be given. Doctors in this country usually manage their offices so that they spend a minimum amount of time with each patient. Nurses do as much as possible to help free the doctor to see more patients. Expect to deal with nurses in the office and over the telephone.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

In case of medical emergency involving a life-threatening situation, or to request an ambulance (emergency transportation to the hospital), call 911. Call this number only in true emergencies. ASU students should not use the emergency room services at the local hospitals, Phoebe or Palmyra, unless the medical problem is life threatening. Students should use the university health center infirmary as their main source of medical care. If you do not know whether the situation is a true emergency, it is probably best to call campus police and have the officer escort you to the health center. The nurse will evaluate the problem and will send emergency cases to the hospital. THE HEALTH CENTER IS THE CLOSEST MEDICAL FACILITY TO THE RESIDENCE HALLS. Please note that using the ambulance and the emergency room at the hospitals is very expensive. This expense will not be covered by medical insurance if the situation is not a true emergency.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University Health Service of Albany State University is located in the Academic Administration (ACAD) Building, Room 138. Student Health Services provide opportunities for safeguarding the health of all students at ASU. The staff provides the following through student health fees:

1. General medical care.
2. Confinement in the Health Services. Overnight stays are not available.
3. Consultation on general health needs.

The health fee DOES NOT cover expenses for special medicines and treatments, visits to doctors' offices, operations or off-campus hospitalization.

The University Health Services office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Our Doctors' hours are Monday through Friday, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Emergency calls are possible at any time. Each student, freshman or transferee, is required to have on file a medical record completed and signed by a physician. These records will be good for four years provided the student is in continuous attendance at Albany State University and has consulted with the University Physician periodically.

DENTAL CARE

If you need to have your teeth cleaned or another dental service, you should look in the telephone book Yellow Pages under "Dentists." Phone to make an appointment before you go.

EYEGASSES AND CONTACT LENSES

If you need an eye examination, or you want your eyeglasses or contact lenses changed, you should look in the telephone book Yellow Pages under, "Opticians and Optometrists." Phone to make an appointment before you go. For medical concerns with your eyes, look under "Ophthalmologist."

COUNSELING

Sometimes individuals become depressed, lonely or fearful in a strange environment. Many overseas students come from a culture very different from that of the U.S., and they often miss the support of their family and friends at home. If you are feeling emotionally upset, depressed, or just need someone to talk to, contact the International Student Advisor. S/he can make helpful suggestions, listen to your concerns, and may refer you for further counseling.

The primary function of the Counseling Services is to assist students in their total development by providing services and programs to facilitate their intellectual, emotional, social and academic growth. Counseling services also aid students in determining a purpose and direction for their lives and in developing coping skills and behaviors to aid them in working more efficiently with others in their environment.

PAYMENT

Health care in the United States is not free. Patients must pay for the services of doctors, dentists, laboratory workers and hospitals. Their fees are often very expensive. Care at the Health Services on campus is paid for by student health fees each semester, so go to the Health Center first for any illness. **If you have an appointment with any off campus doctor or dentist, be prepared to pay the bill at the conclusion of the appointment.** Insurance will not always cover 100% of the cost. Medical insurance does not cover the expense of dental visits or eye exams and glasses. Students may want to plan to take care of routine visits to these doctors during vacations at home.

INSURANCE

Due to the high cost of medical care in the U.S., all foreign students must purchase health insurance before enrolling for classes at ASU. ASU is pleased to offer one policy for all ASU foreign students student. Since September 1994, new regulations from the U.S. government have determined what type of insurance coverage students must have. The ASU policy has been designed to meet this minimum level of coverage at a reasonable price. The plan covers portions of hospital costs, doctor visits, and medication but not dental visits or eyeglasses. Insurance to cover all costs at 100% and to cover dental visits and eyeglasses is extremely expensive. Few U.S. residents carry such coverage due to the high cost. The insurance system in the U.S. is

designed for the patient to pay a portion of the cost in addition to the insurance premium already paid. Insurance premiums are the fees paid for insurance coverage. The university will bill all ASU international students for the insurance premiums. Insurance from another source is generally not accepted, since the coverage must meet U.S government standards. If you need information about the ASU health insurance program, see the International Student Advisor. If you do not pay your premium, you will lose your insurance coverage and you will have a hold placed on your student account, which will prevent you from registering for classes. You should be careful to avoid a situation where you lose your coverage because you never know when an illness or accident may occur. If you have an illness or an accident and you have no insurance, you will be responsible for 100% of the cost of your treatment. For Student Health Insurance, please visit the [Student Health Insurance](http://www.studenthealthinsurance.com) website. www.studenthealthinsurance.com

GOOD HEALTH

The demand of university life and adjusting to a new environment can be very stressful. Whenever a person is under stress, s/he is much more susceptible to illness. Be sure that you take steps to protect your health. Eat properly, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and protect yourself from communicable diseases, especially sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. If you think you have a health problem, seek help immediately. If you have questions about any health matter, please visit the Student Health Center or the Counseling Center.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All students in the state of Georgia must be vaccinated against measles, mumps, and rubella. The vaccination can be obtained in one injection called an MMR. It is recommended that you also receive a shot for Meningitis as well as a Tuberculosis test. The vaccines are required because these diseases are present in the U.S. You must protect your health while you are in the U.S. Students must receive two doses (injection) of this "MMR" vaccine at least 30 days apart. These vaccines are available at the Dougherty County Government Office at 222 Pine Avenue, Albany. The telephone number of the Health Department is 229-430-6200. Students who do not receive these vaccines will not be allowed to register for classes. We prefer that you send proof of immunizations and TB test as part of your application package.

HOUSING

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

The residence halls provide convenient, inexpensive housing on campus for students. Most students will share a room with another student (roommate) and a bathroom with other students nearby. Students must sign a room contract and pay an application fee and deposit in order to live in a residence hall. The exact amount to be paid will be included in your letter of admission. The contract obligates you to live in the residence hall for the entire nine-month academic year (2 semesters). The on-campus apartments are open all year. They are,

however, in great demand. If you want to live in an on-campus apartment, stop by the Office of Housing for more information or call 229-430-4741.

If your room needs repairs or you have questions and concerns about any aspect of life in the residence hall, you should contact your Resident Assistant. The Resident Assistant, or RA, is also a student who lives in the hall, but this student is an employee of the Office of Housing. The RA enforces the rules of the residence hall such as quiet hours. The RA also handles issues such as changing rooms or roommates and reporting when repairs are needed. The Residence Hall Director supervises the Resident Assistant of the residence hall. Your questions and concerns about life in the residence hall should be addressed to the RA or the Residence Hall Director. Of course the staff of the Office of Housing and Residence Life will be happy to assist you as well. The telephone number is 229-430-4741.

During recent years, the demand for on-campus housing has been high. It is very important for you to read carefully any correspondence from the Office of Housing. You need to follow specific procedures to reserve your room each year. Please make a note of all deadlines and procedures.

ROOMMATES

Living with an American roommate can be an excellent way to practice English, learn about the U.S. culture and customs, or to meet a new friend. Living with another person requires patience, tolerance, and kindness, especially as you get to know one another during the first few days. It can also be one of the most enjoyable aspects of your stay on campus. You should expect to disagree with your roommate about some things. This is normal. The best way to solve your differences is to speak honestly to one another. Americans are accustomed to direct discussion of problems. If there are problems, which cannot be solved between the two of you, you may go to your Resident Assistant (RA) who will work with you to assign a new roommate.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Off-campus housing is plentiful in Albany. There are many apartment complexes and rental houses near campus and around town. Listed below are a few suggestions of places to look for housing:

1. Albany Herald, the local newspaper, lists apartments, houses, and rooms for rent in the classified advertising section of the paper. The ad will usually list the monthly rent as well as a phone number to call for more information.
2. Bulletin boards and notices on campus: check classroom buildings for notices and ads about apartments for rent. Many students looking for roommates advertise in this manner.
3. The telephone directory: look under "Apartments" in the Yellow Pages.
4. The Office of the International Student Advisor has listing of apartment complexes in Albany, which lists such information as rental cost, size, and distance from campus.

RENT AND DEPOSITS

You will probably have to pay a deposit of two or three hundred dollars, plus your first month's rent before you can move into an apartment or rental house. When you move out of the apartment you will get the deposit back if there has been no damage to the apartment. You will also be required to sign a lease. A lease is a legal contract that states the amount of time that you will live in the apartment. Most leases are for one year. Once a lease is signed, you are legally bound to live in the apartment, and you must pay the rent even if you decide that you no longer want to live in the apartment. Do not sign any lease that you do not understand. Be sure to check the dates of the lease carefully. Please visit the International Student Advisor before you move off campus. He/she can offer advice about apartments and assist you with interpreting leases. Please note that if you lease an apartment in your name but also have roommates living with you, you must be very careful about changing the name on the lease if you move. If your name is on the lease, you are responsible for the payment of rent even if you move out and allow other students to move into the apartment. If you do not pay the rent, the landlord may take legal action against you. Please be especially careful in situations where you share telephone and utility services with other students. Never agree to have a lease or a utility bill placed in your name unless you are certain no additional money is owed on the account. If you change a lease or utility bill from another student's name to yours, you will be responsible for any money owed on the lease or account even if the charges were billed before the account was placed in your name.

DINING SERVICE

The University Dining Hall, which is under the supervision of the Director of Food Services, provides nutritious and wholesome meals at a minimum cost to the student. Meals are served in an ultra-modern facility, which includes a food court consisting of the following concepts: Café Features, Wokery, Grill Works, Itza Pizza, Deli Corner, Sweet Things, Salad Garden, Veggie and Drinks. The meals are unlimited (all you can eat). The Dining Hall seating capacity is approximately 525 students. All boarding students must present proper University student identification. Non-boarding students, faculty, staff and visitors must pay cash at the cashier's stand before being served.

Meal Schedule

Monday-Thursday

Breakfast	7:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Dinner	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Friday

Breakfast	7:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Dinner	4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday

Brunch	10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
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(Schedule is subject to change without notice)

LEGAL CONCERNS

LAWS

While you are in the U.S., you are subject to all of the laws and regulations, which govern U.S. citizens. In addition, you are subject to immigration laws, which define and limit your activities as a non-immigrant. Failure to comply with immigration laws can lead to a request for your voluntary departure, or a forced deportation from the U.S.

EQUAL PROTECTION and DUE PROCESS

All persons in the U.S., regardless of citizenship, are entitled to the same protection of the law and the same procedures of law enforcement. This means that, with a few exceptions, you will be treated the same as an American citizen in your relationship with the law enforcement agencies. Those few exceptions involve immigration law. Consult the Office of the International Student Advisor for clarification of this issue.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

The possession, use, or sale of drugs or narcotics, including marijuana, hashish, amphetamines, hallucinogens, barbiturates, cocaine, heroin, and a wide range of other drugs, are serious offenses under Georgia law and immigration law. Those who choose to use illegal drugs run the risk of expulsion from the university, imprisonment, and/or deportation from the United States.

ALCOHOL

The minimum legal age for drinking alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor, etc.) in the State of Georgia is 21. You cannot be served alcoholic beverages unless you are 21 or older. You will be asked to present an identification card with your photograph and your date of birth before you can purchase alcohol from a store or enter a bar, nightclub, or other establishment that serves alcohol. Students who are over age 18 but under 21 will be admitted, but these students are not allowed to purchase alcohol. The police routinely search all nightclubs and bars in Albany for students under age 21 who have consumed alcoholic beverages or used false identification to enter the establishment. Students who are caught are arrested, taken to jail, and fined. They may also face university disciplinary measures.

Driving a car after drinking alcoholic beverages is also illegal in Georgia, regardless of age. Driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol carries severe penalties and can result in the loss of your driver's license, heavy fines, imprisonment, disciplinary action by the university, and/or deportation. NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE.

SMOKING

Smoking has become socially unacceptable in many places. Smoking is not permitted in Albany State University buildings (except dorm rooms). Smoking is also forbidden in hospitals, many restaurants, and other public places. Always ask permission of your companies before smoking. Never smoke in someone's home unless he or she smokes as well.

MAIL

CAMPUS MAIL

Campus mail is a service provided by the university for mail going between people and offices on the premises of the campus. To send a letter by campus mail, clearly mark the office and person it should go to and write CAMPUS MAIL in the upper right hand corner. No stamp is needed. Drop the letter in the collection point at the post office or in your Department Office.

POST OFFICES

The university post office can send materials in both domestic and overseas mail. Overseas mail must be weighed and stamped according to weight. Domestic mail requires standard postage of 44 cents per letter. Packages and letters containing more than five sheets of paper usually require extra postage. Any package weighing over 16 ounces may be mailed first class from the university post office. Domestic mail also requires a zip code for delivery. This is a five-letter code specific to the area the letter or package is being sent to. If you do not know the zip code of the area you are mailing to, ask for a zip code directory at the post office and look up the proper zip code.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Students who move off campus or leave ASU for a vacation should fill out a U.S. Postal Service Change of Address card, sign the card, and place it in a U.S. mailbox. By completing this card, you allow the postal service to automatically forward your mail to your new address. There is no charge for this service. Unfortunately, the Office of the International Student Advisor cannot forward mail to students who have moved off campus. Please do not have your mail sent to the Office of the International Student Advisor. You will also need to complete an AR-11 form which you obtain in the International Office.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

An electronic mail (e-mail) account is available to all ASU students, faculty, and staff free of charge. All ASI students are expected to use their ASU Ram Mail because that is the official mode of communication. If you need an account or would like to learn more about this service, call the Office of Information Technology at 229-430-4909. You can also use the Internet through [ASU](http://www.asurams.edu) website: www.asurams.edu. E-mail and the Internet are wonderful ways to communicate with friends around the world at no expense to you.

MONEY AND BANKING

BANKS

There are many banks located in Albany. Most of them have specially priced services for ASU students. The Bank of America has an automated teller machine

or ATM in the Reese Student Union building on lower campus. As with any other service, you should determine which banking services are most important to you and call the different banks to find out about prices and available services.

CHECKING AND SAVING ACCOUNTS

All students should open checking and/or saving accounts at a local bank. It is not wise to carry or keep large amounts of cash. Most local businesses will accept checks from local banks only.

It is important to know how much money is in your checking account at all times. Do not write checks for more money than you have in your checking account. Checks written for more than the amount in an account are returned unpaid. You will have to pay a fine to the bank, to the business where you wrote the check, and may be unable to write checks in the future. Writing checks when you do not have enough money to cover the check is called "bouncing checks." Bouncing checks is a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment. A checking account is a service. Charges for services vary from bank to bank. Savings accounts allow you to deposit money safely in a bank and receive a small amount of interest on the balance. Savings accounts require passbooks for depositing and withdrawing money. Keep both your checkbook and your passbook in a safe place and report it to the bank immediately if either document is lost or stolen.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are available through most banks. They have high interest rates, but are very easy to use. Credit cards can be used almost everywhere and are billed on a monthly basis. The best way to use a credit card is to pay the entire bill monthly; otherwise, your balance may get higher than you can pay. Many students find it helpful to carry an international credit card such as Visa or MasterCard. Purchases on these cards can be made in U.S. dollars while the bill is sent to your home and is denoted in your home currency. These cards can also be used at automated teller machines to withdraw cash. Be sure to inquire about the transaction fees before you obtain a credit card. Often the use of these cards is an inexpensive way to exchange currency. But the fees can become expensive. Your student fees can also be paid by credit card (MasterCard or Visa only).

OTHER BANKING SERVICES OFFERED FOR FEES

- Cashier's Check
- Money Orders
- Certified Checks
- Travelers Checks
- Safety deposit box rental for storing valuable items

MONEY EXCHANGE

Foreign currency must be taken to a bank to be exchanged. All currency (except Canadian) must be sent out of town by the local banks for exchange. There is a

charge of about \$10.00 for the transaction and a processing time of 3 to 6 weeks.

RECEIVING MONEY FROM HOME

1. By Mail
Tell your family to send numbered cashier's check in U.S. dollars, purchased from a bank in your country that has business arrangement with a well-known U.S. bank. Make sure that the check has a bank routing number on the bottom of the check.
2. By Telex
You may receive money from home by telex (wire). Wired money generally arrives 5-10 days after it is sent from overseas. It should be arranged through a local bank, and you should have a checking or savings account established at the bank. The receiving bank will charge about \$12.00 as handling fee. It is not possible to have money wired directly to your ASU student account.

Please be sure to request your funds from home well in advance of fee payment deadlines. International transfers can often experience unexpected delays, so you should plan ahead each semester. THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY IN FEE PAYMENT DEADLINES. Please do not request an extension of the set fee payment deadline. Failure to pay your student fees in a timely manner will result in your having to return home.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If English is not a student's native language, if the student did not attend high school in the United States, and if the student wishes to discuss taking the Regents' Test especially designed for International students, the student must contact the Regents' Test Director whose office is in 103 Simmons Hall (229-430-4735 – flo.hill@asurams.edu). The local International Students' Task Force Committee has suggested that a student be considered for a special form of the essay test after taking and failing the test at least once. There is no special test for reading at this time; however, students may be given more time and may be allowed to use their translation dictionaries.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religion is a very important part of South Georgia culture. People will probably invite you to visit their church and to take part in church sponsored social activities. While these church services and activities can be very meaningful to you, participation will not obligate you to join a church. Churches often attempt to bring students into their church families by asking students to change their belief to match the beliefs of the church members. If church members or clergy make you feel uncomfortable about your religious belief or your values, feel free tell them that you wish to maintain your own beliefs. If they cannot accept that, find another church group!

There are many churches located in the Albany area. Denominations include: African-Methodist Episcopal, Apostolic, Assembly of God, Bahai, Baptist, Catholic, Charismatic, Christian, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days, Episcopal (Anglican), Holiness, Interdenominational, Jehovah Witness, Lutheran, Nazarene, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, and Unitarian. All denominations are listed under "Churches" or "Synagogues" in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book.

SHOPPING

GROCERY STORES

All foods are located in one store. You will find fresh fruits, vegetables, canned (tinned) goods, baby foods, meats, bread, cleaning supplies, paper products, and frozen foods. Generally, grocery stores have lower prices than smaller stores. There are several large grocery stores in Albany and some of them are within walking distance of the University. You can order special items if you are looking for ingredients not readily available in Albany stores.

DRUGSTORES AND PHARMACIES

This is the only place where you can buy medicine that the doctor has ordered for you. You can often buy many other things there as well. The most convenient drugstore is CVS on Radium Springs Road, near the campus. Less expensive pharmacies are located in discount stores and some grocery stores.

DISCOUNT STORES

These are department stores where you find a large variety of things including clothing, pharmacies, garden supplies, small appliance, paper products, linens, and even some types of furniture. They often have lower prices and can be wonderful places to see American people and products. Some of the local discount stores include K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and Target.

RESTAURANTS

Unless you are buying food, restaurant owners do not like for you to sit and "take up space" from paying customers. You should leave money (a tip) on the table for the waiter or waitress when you eat at a restaurant. The tip is usually 15%-20% of the total bill, depending on the quality of the service. Fast food restaurants do not have waiters and waitresses. Do not leave a tip at this type of restaurant. There are a number of commercial fast food restaurants around the campus. Food can be ordered "for here" (to be eaten in the restaurant) or "to go" (to be eaten at home).

THE ALBANY MALL

The Albany Mall is a shopping center housing several dozen stores and restaurants. It is located some miles west of the campus on Dawson Road. You can buy almost anything you need in the Mall. Prices in these stores are usually higher than the prices at Discount Stores, but the Mall is a great place to meet people and experience American culture!

OUTLET MALL

A large mall containing only manufacturer's outlet stores is located many miles south of Albany on Interstate 75. This mall has over 100 stores and is a good place to shop because the prices are low while the quality of the merchandise is high.

Student Athlete

Best practices For International Athlete Recruits (NCAA)

F-1 Visa and Issuance of SEVIS Form I-20

International student-athletes who require an F-1 student visa are subject to specific requirements regarding their admissions eligibility, financial ability and academic status. Failure of students to follow appropriate regulations and guidelines can result in severe difficulties with their immigration status with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. To avoid difficulties, the NCAA strongly recommends that athletics staff meet with appropriate school officials (e.g., international admissions officers, international student advisors) to gain an understanding of the school's policies and procedures that are in place to protect international students and to maintain compliance with all immigration regulations.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATORS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

Under no circumstances should an international student athlete be issued a Form I-20 with the expectation of financial support from the athletics office before the student has been certified as a final qualifier by the NCAA Eligibility Center or is determined to be a partial qualifier in Division II.

- Doing so opens the possibility for an international student who might not be eligible for financial aid to obtain a visa and enter the United States without having the sufficient funds to cover tuition and living expenses, as required by immigration laws.

Financial Ability

- All F-1 visa students must submit appropriate documentation of financial support before the school can issue the SEVIS Form I-20 [certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant (F-1) student status].
- Generally the school's office of recruitment and admissions office will have information as to what constitutes appropriate documentation of financial support.
- Athletics department staff members must understand that withdrawal of athletics financial aid for an international student-athlete could result in severe economic hardship for the student and could result in a violation of the student's immigration status.

What Athletics Administrators Should Tell Student-Athletes

- Student-athletes who will be receiving financial aid from the athletics department must understand that if the amount of aid is less than the amount required for issuance of the I-20, then the student will need to provide additional documentation of financial support.
- Student-athletes should be informed of the true costs of attending the school and must understand the financial implications in the event of the loss of financial support from athletics.
- Although students athletes may receive some financial assistance through athletics students are responsible for purchasing their books for the duration of the academic tenure.
- Student-athletes must understand that if their scholarship is made unavailable for whatever reason (e.g., because the student-athlete did not meet initial-eligibility requirement, they must have other means of financial support. If sufficient finances are not available from other sources, the student risks violation of immigration status and possible deportation.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

A Social Security Number is a government identification number issued to all residents of the United States. Most residents receive this number as children. In the U.S., we do not carry passports or national ID cards. Instead, we use this number and a driver's license as our primary forms of identification for employment records, taxation, opening bank accounts, university records and

other business matters. All drivers' licenses contain a color photograph of the bearer as well as the current address and date of birth.

For your admission to ASU, you were issued a student identification number which has the same number of digits as the social security number. The university uses this ID number for all of your university records. The number also appears on your student identification card. While this number is sufficient for your academic records, you will need to obtain a Social Security number before you can work on campus. To obtain the number, you must complete an application form and deliver it, along with a letter of verification from the ISA and an offer letter from the person who is hiring you on letterhead, in person to the Social Security Administration in Albany. There is no charge for Social Security numbers. Call 1-800-772-1213 for more information.

TAXES

Federal Law requires that foreign students pay income tax from sources within the U.S. This income generally includes salary from any employment, on or off campus, as well as scholarship money. Tax return is due on April 15 for the previous year. In addition you may need to file a tax statement. If you have concern about your tax obligation, you may wish to consult a certified public accountant (CPA). The Internal Revenue Service is the branch of the federal government responsible for income tax collection. This agency is often simply called IRS. You can call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040 for additional information.

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAMS

TELEPHONE

Telephone service in the U.S. is divided into two types: local and long-distance (including international) service. Most people work with two different companies to obtain telephone services: a local carrier for local service and long distance carrier for long distance service. The local carrier for Albany is BellSouth. Contact the company by calling 229-780-2355. You may need to pay a deposit to begin your local service. For about \$30.00 a month, you may have unlimited telephone calls within the country. You will be billed monthly for this service.

There are several local and long distance services in the U.S. Each company lays claims to lowest telephone rates for long distance. You may want to talk to each company to learn who can offer you the best deal. Rates usually depend on where you call and when you call. To get the cheapest rate, you may find that all three companies have special plans with many restrictions. Be sure to read the details of the special plans. Be sure to ask for the rates for calling your country. You can contact these companies by calling the numbers listed in the local telephone book. Once you choose a company, they will provide you with direct dialing from your home and a calling card, which you can use from any phone.

INFORMATION

If you cannot find a number on-line, you may call "Information," also called "Directory Assistance" and the number is 1411. In order to use the information service, you must know the name of the person or organization you wish to call as well as the city they are located in. The number you dial for information depends upon the area you wish to call. The telephone book also contains useful information about how to use the telephone and place different kinds of calls. The Yellow Pages found on-line contain listings of local businesses and can help you locate services.

TOLL FREE CALLING

Most numbers with an area code of 1-800 or 1-888 are toll free calls. This means that there will be no charge for the call. Many businesses and services have toll free numbers for customer use. You should use toll free numbers whenever possible to keep your telephone bill low.

OTHER ASPECTS OF TELEPHONE SERVICES

If you live off-campus and share a telephone number, be sure to have an agreement about how the bill will be paid and whose name will appear on the bill. The names and numbers of all telephone subscribers are published in the BellSouth telephone book unless you request an unpublished number. Albany has several "local exchanges." This term refers to the first three digits of the telephone number. You will see prefixes listed as 430, 431, 434, and 435, for example. Be sure to give all seven digits of your number. If you are calling from one phone on campus to another, you only need to dial the last four digits of the number. Many students today buy pre-paid cell phones.

TELEGRAMS

Letters or money may be sent both within the U.S. and internationally through Western Union by calling their toll-free number 1-800-325-6000. Mailgram is also available through Western Union and is less expensive than telegrams. To send a Mailgram, call Western Union at 1-800-325-6000. MoneyGram provides similar services as Western Union. Their toll free number is 1-800-926-9400.

FAX

Faxes may be sent or received through the fax services offered by some companies in Albany. You will be charged for this service. For international faxes, students should use Mailboxes, etc. at 229-434-1133 or 229-432-2230. Unfortunately, the high cost of international and long distance faxes prohibits the Office of the International Student Advisor or the University from sending personal faxes for students.

TESTING

The Albany State University Computer-based Testing Center (Department of Counseling, Testing and Disability Services), located on the first floor in ACAD 195, administers and prepares students for several national computer-based tests periodically throughout the year. The GRE, GMAT, MAT, MCAT, LSAT, PCAT, and TOEFL are a few of the tests administered by the center. National test scores are required for admission to U.S. graduate schools. These tests have

standard fees and deadlines for enrollment. For information about a test, call the Computer-based Testing office at 229- 430-1631. To sign up for a test, visit the Division of Student Affairs and pick up an application.

TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION IN ALBANY

Albany has a public transportation system. In emergencies, you can hire a taxi (cab). Companies offering taxi services are listed under "Taxicabs" in the Albany telephone book. Be sure and ask how much you will be charged before hiring a taxi. Some students purchase bicycles for transportation. Cyclists must ride on the roadways, as there are no separate bicycle paths. If you choose to ride a bicycle, you must be very careful and watch out for cars. American drivers are not accustomed to cyclists on the road, be sure to lock up your bike when you are not using it. To travel outside Albany, you must go by bus or airplane.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Greyhound Bus Lines station in Albany is located at 300 Oglethorpe Blvd. Call 1-800-231-2222 for nation-wide information or 229-432-0511 for local terminal information.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Albany has an airport located south of town. Service is limited to several daily flights to Atlanta, where connecting flights are available to other cities. Call 229-430-5175 for schedules.

TRAVEL AGENTS

Travel agents will help you make travel arrangements for a small fee. They often save you money by finding the lowest rates available to your destination. Look in the Yellow Pages under "Travel Agencies". Or you may book your tickets online using a credit card at the airlines website. (e.g. www.delta.com)

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

If you know that you will return to your country during a school vacation, you should try to plan international travel 2 or 3 months in advance. The best rates for international travel are obtained by making reservations early. Also, all students are eligible for discounted airfares through an organization called Council Travel. To obtain these special fares, you must have an international student ID card. These cards can be purchased for \$20 from the Office of the International Student Advisor or local travel agents. These cards also qualify the bearer for discounts at museums and other tourist attractions. If you have questions about international travel, you should speak with the staff at the Office of the International Student Advisor or experienced travelers from your country.

CAMPUS CONTACTS

Quick Reference

<u>Information</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Advising and Immigration	Office of Int'l Student Advisor	229-430-7075
Meal Plan	Food Services	229-430-4750
General Info (Switchboard)	Facilities Management	229-430-4600
Graduate Studies	Graduate School	229-430-5118
Residence Life (Housing)	Student Affairs	229-430-4741
Mail delivery services for on-campus students	Post Office	229-430-4745
Parking Permits	Public Safety	229-430-4711
Personal & Counseling	Counseling, Testing & Disability Services	229- 430-4667
Reporting Theft or Crime	Public Safety	229-430-4711
Admission Status	Admissions Office	229-430-4646
Student Activities	Student Affairs	229-430-4739
Transcripts <i>(to be sent from ASU)</i>	Registrar's Office	229-430-4638
Tuition Payment	Business Office	229-430-4610

SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- * Orientation sessions and workshops for new students.
- * Liaison with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for all of your immigration documents. We will help you with filing for practical training, transfer of schools, and replacement of lost documents. WE are your source for maintaining your immigration status.
- * Counseling and referral services. Personal and cross-cultural counseling is available on a confidential basis to all students. If you would like to talk to someone, call the International Student Advisor (ISA) at 229-430-4721 to make an appointment. If necessary, you may be referred elsewhere for help.
- * Information. If you do not know what to do, to whom to talk, or where to find ANYTHING, the Office of the International Student Advisor can help.
- * Letters of certification for government loans, money exchange, re-entry into the U.S., invitations to visit the U.S., and other official documents are available at the office.
- * Information about Albany State University International Student Association (ASUISA): ASUISA annually elects new student officers, and sponsors activities throughout the year, by and for international students.
- * Other activities for all Global Programs students such as International Festival in November, picnics, coffee/tea hour, and the Cultural Exchange Club/Global Ambassadors.

CHECK LISTS

ANNUAL CHECKLIST

- Renew passport if necessary (six months before expiration).
- File income tax returns if necessary (between January 1 and April 15).
- Extend temporary stay with sponsor and with the International Advisor for an extended I-20 if necessary (30 days before expiration).

PERIODIC CHECKLIST

- Report changes of address (within 10 days) to the Office of the International Student Advisor and the Office of the Registrar. This is required by law. So is your email address and your telephone number.
- Report any change of marital status, or if your family has joined you in the U.S., to the International Student Advisor.
- Complete registration for Student Health Insurance every semester.
- If leaving the U.S. temporarily, have I-20 or DS-2019 signed by a Designated School Official and check visa validity.
- Check in with International Student Advisor at the beginning of each semester and schedule appointments periodically. Always bring all of your documents when you come.

Information from Handbook is from the following websites.

www.travel.state.gov/visa ([U.S. Department of State](#))

www.ice.gov ([Department of Homeland Security](#))

www.uscis.gov ([U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#))

www.ncaa.com ([National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\)](#))



Potential. Realized.

Office of the International Student Advisor

Sue Ann Balch, J.D.

205 Reese Hall Lower East Campus, 504 College Drive

(229) 430-7075 (Office)

(229) 434-7106 (Fax)

Sueann.balch@asurams.edu (email address)