



Welcome International Students 2024-2025

School of Social Work Building, Athens Campus



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Welcome from Director of Global Engagement

Dr. Jane McPherson



Welcome to the University of Georgia School of Social Work! We are so delighted that you have joined us here in Athens, Georgia. We are excited for you to get to know our School, our University, our local community, and our nation.

As Director of Global Engagement at the School, it is my special pleasure to welcome you. My own life has been hugely enriched by global experiences. I studied abroad in Salvador, Brazil, and lived for several years in Cairo, Egypt; now, I collaborate on research with scholars in Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.

At the School of Social Work, Global Engagement means collaborative engagement with international communities in the US and around the world. With us, you will discover a community of globally-minded students and scholars, and I hope that you will join our educational and social events. We help students design independent international research, study, and service opportunities; and we offer opportunities for StudyAway as well as local field trips. I look forward to getting to know you during your years here. Please feel free to reach out to me with your questions, suggestions, or concerns.

We look forward to being with you as deepen your knowledge of social work in the US, and to learning from you about social work and social solutions in your home countries.

Enjoy,

Jane McPherson, PhD, MPH, LCSW

Director of Global Engagement & Associate Professor

UGA School of Social Work

Welcome from the Global Engagement Graduate Assistants

Hello international friends!

Welcome to the University of Georgia School of Social Work! A lot of preparation, paperwork, traveling, and determination came to this moment, and now you are here! We commend your bravery and are excited to see you grow in this new season of life.

Over the next few weeks, possibly even months, you will be adjusting to this new community and program that will become your home and field for the next few years. You may feel homesick and face challenges, but please know that we want to help minimize these feelings as much as possible for you all. We want to serve and learn with you in any way we can.



Please don't hesitate to reach out to us and know that we are also committed to reaching out to you as a friend, colleague, and helping hand. We want nothing more than for you to feel comfortable in this transition and for you to successfully blossom as social workers in this program and beyond.

We are truly so excited that you have chosen to be a new member of this community. On behalf of the international students at the School of Social Work, welcome home!

Best wishes,
Annabel Bunton & John O. Adegboyega
SSW Global Engagement Graduate Assistants, 2023-2024

Preparation for UGA

Important Dates

SSW Program Orientations

MSW, MANML, & PhD
August 12 & 13

SSW International Student Orientation

All SSW International students
Thursday, August 15th, 3-6 pm

Visa and Immunizations

- You must have your visa and immunizations before registering.
- The School of Social Work cannot provide extensions on these dates.

Critical Information for International Students

- UGA's Office of Global Engagement has you covered with information on [visas](#), housing, transportation, etc.
- Please check out their resources and excellent videos: [HERE](#)

MSW Student Practicum Preparation

- Practicum is mandatory and integral to social work education.
- Practicum serves as social work's "signature pedagogy."
- Cultural discomfort may be experienced during the practicum.
- Students are responsible for their transportation to practicum placements.
 - Note: Athens lacks comprehensive public transportation, and placements may be outside the city. Many students rely on ride services or personal vehicles, which may add significant costs to your educational experience
- More information about Practicum Education: [HERE](#).



Classroom Preparation

- Class attendance is mandatory, and active participation is expected.
- Punctuality is key; classes begin promptly.
- Respect towards instructors is essential, but engaging in conversation is encouraged. You are not required to agree with everything your teachers may say.
- In class, you are expected to pay attention; distractions such as napping, using earphones, or attending to phones are discouraged.
- UGA enforces a strict academic honesty policy. Assignments must reflect your original work.
- While U.S. peers may offer assistance in adjusting to the U.S. academic system, sharing entire assignments is not permitted.
- Faculty members are accessible via email for appointments and assistance.



Advice & Encouragement

What advice do you have about participating in classes or meeting with professors?

"For meeting with professors always take an appointment and then go to meet with them. Have specific questions prepared so that you can better utilize your time.

Initially I struggled to participate in the class discussion and other activities. My advice is to talk to the professor about the challenges you are facing, they will help you to feel integrated in the class. For participating in the class discussion, I used to write down first what I wanted to say and then I used to say it. I was given this advice to write down my thoughts by a professor."

Fahmida Afroz
(she/her)
Current Ph.D.
Student



What should students think about or prepare for before leaving home?

"Getting used to having conversations in English is very important. If English is not your first language, always try to enhance your English skills. Find someone to talk with in English. Conversations in your classes will be much harder to understand than some audio files for English education you have listened to, so find resources that provide 'raw' conversations."

-Kyunghyun Ahn
MSW 2024

Why should students come to UGA?

"If you are a student who loves immersive and engaging classes, from role-playing to interactive discussions, imparting practical skills, and fostering profound personal growth, UGA is your best choice!

For a unique blend of academic rigor and societal relevance, UGA is the ideal nurturing ground for future leaders and change-makers like me and YOU – a place where each day enriches your knowledge and skills, preparing you for a significant impact in the world. Go Dawgs!"

- Emmanuel Abiodun Oke
(he/him)
MSW 2025



What should students think about or prepare for before leaving home?

"Accept the campus's cultural diversity. Engage with students from a variety of backgrounds to broaden your horizons and make new friends. Maintain an open mind and respect for cultural differences. What is considered normal or polite in your home country may not be the same in another."

-Demilade Vincent
(she/her)
MSW 2025



What should students bring from home?

"Scan of their identity documents. Take some pictures from their room, home, and their loved ones."

Mariam Fatehi
Current Ph.D.
Student

"I think UGA is one of the best schools where the students have support from the school. As an international student, I have benefited from this supportive school environment and community around the school in developing my academic and practice skills."

- Hyesu Yeo
Current Ph.D. Student



Off-Campus Housing

Georgia is a big state! Nearly all our international students choose to live in Athens, since the Atlanta area is more than one hour away. Please be aware of commute times.

[UGA Off-Campus Living Guide](#): Comprehensive list of apartment complexes and resources

[UGA/Athens Lease, Subleases, Roommates, Off-Campus Housing & Apartments](#): Facebook group

[Roomies.com - Athens, GA](#): offers rooms for rent by homeowners and apartment dwellers in search of roommates

[Zillow](#): platform for finding apartments to rent

[The Apartment Guide- Athens](#) or [Apartments.com- Athens](#)

- Refresh the page and confirm the public transportation filter has been applied to your search. Consult the apartment complex directly to determine the walking distance to bus stops.

Some Affordable, Furnished Apartment Complexes in Athens, GA.

- The Park at Lakeside
- The Park at Hillside
- The Redland
- Polo Club Apartments
- Rivermill
- Riverclub Apartments

On-Campus Housing

University Housing provides comfortable, affordable, and secure on-campus housing options for students.

Features:

- Furnishings, air conditioning, WiFi, high-speed Internet access, and cable television.
- Common areas include kitchens, laundry rooms, meeting rooms, computer labs, and lounges.

Graduate students should register immediately after their application to the graduate school has been submitted.

To register for on-campus housing and for more detailed information, please visit the [UGA Housing website](#).

"Housing is directly related to transport and one's budget. If you look for a place, it has to have reliable transport and within your budget. Remember to consider whether utilities are inclusive or exclusive of the rent. On campus housing is advantageous as there is a reliable source of transport, however off campus housing gives one freedom. Being in a different environment is mind freeing even if its 15 minutes away from campus. This comes in handy when experiencing expected stress and burn out from school activities.

The leases are usually one year binding, this commitment makes it harder for one to easily change their residence. For both off and on campus, applications should start at least two-three months before expected move in. If off campus, there is an Athens transit bus but slightly limited on weekends."



Joy Ndungu
(she/her)
MSW 2023

Transportation

UGA Transportation System

UGA is a large campus, and trying to find your way around can be intimidating at first. The best place to find this information would be to download the UGA app to your phone. This app is feasible for both Apple and Android products. The app provides students with walking directions to buildings, bus routes and stops, and bus schedules. If you have other questions, this link will connect you to the [UGA Transportation](#) website.

Athens Public Transit

For students living off-campus or wanting to venture away from campus, public transportation is free to UGA students who present a valid UGA ID. [Athens Transit routes](#) all over the city: M-F (6 AM-10 PM) and Sat. & Sun. (7AM - 10PM). Routes can be found on the UGA app.

*Uber and Lyft are ride-share services and can be accessed by downloading their apps. Prices tend to be higher on Saturdays during game days.

Transportation Challenges are Common

While UGA and Athens do offer transportation services, they are insufficient for many students' needs. As a result, transportation can add expensive additional costs and increase your overall educational expenses. Most importantly, the lack of efficient public transportation affects students' transportation to their mandatory practicum placements. Using public transportation (when it's available) may add an hour or more to your commute time; when public transportation is unavailable, using rideshare apps will be a significant expense. Please come prepared to face these challenges.

Owning Your Own Car

Some students choose to purchase a car to use while at UGA. Used cars are available. Registration, insurance, and gasoline all add to the expense; also, there is a fee to park on campus.

Transportation to ATL/Airport

Students can take the [Megabus](#) from the Athens Multi-Modal Transportation Center to the Civic Center MARTA Station in Atlanta for a nominal fee. Rates vary from \$1-\$20 each way, depending on how far in advance you purchase tickets.

[Groome Transportation](#) offers affordable and dependable shuttle service from Athens to the Atlanta Airport. Please check the schedule on their website for cost and departure times. The shuttle leaves from multiple locations in Athens, including the UGA Georgia Center located at 1197 S. Lumpkin St.

International Student Life (ISL)

[International Student Life | Student Affairs UGA](#) has a multitude of programs and services to assist international students with their experience at UGA.

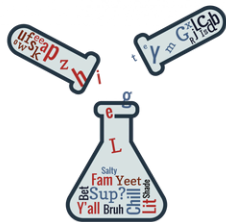
[International Student Orientation](#)

ISL hosts a new student orientation for incoming international students. Usually, the orientation requires registration and a fee, with campus housing available during registration.

What will students get out of attending UGA's international student orientation?

"I think this is the most direct way to meet other international students, and within a month of just arriving at this school, you may find surprises at the International Student Orientation. You will find students from the same country as your native country who have more experience at this school than you, so you can ask them for advice and make connections."

Ruijie Ma
(she/her)
MSW 2024



American-English
LANGUAGE LABS

Language Labs provides a comfortable and reoccurring space to help international students with language skills and culture

[CLICK HERE](#)



Global Buddies promotes cross-cultural relationships between international students with UGA students from the U.S.

[CLICK HERE](#)



International Coffee Hour a weekly meeting for all UGA students, faculty, staff, and community members to gather for coffee and cuisine.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Important Documentation



Social Security Card

Do I need this? This is important to have if you are receiving a graduate assistantship from UGA.

Access information here: [Obtaining a Social Security Number.](#)

ID & Driver's License

Information regarding obtaining a Georgia License: [Georgia Department of Driver Services](#)

For additional help contact [International Student Life \(ISL\).](#)

UGA OneCard

As a new student, utilize the [OneCard Photo Upload System](#) to obtain your UGA OneCard.

For any additional questions email the Tate Student Center at ugacard@uga.edu

Immigration Services

[Incoming International Students](#)
[J-1Scholar Pre-Arrival Information](#) (exchange students)
[Exchange Visitor Orientation](#)
[Current International Students](#)

For questions email: immigration@uga.edu

Banking & ATM Locations on Campus



ISL compiled a list of banks in the Athens area, and where you can find ATMs on the UGA campus.

To save you a trip to the bank, link your bank for mobile banking. Most banks have a corresponding application you can download on your phone.

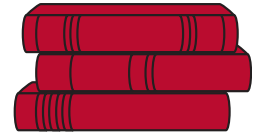
[CLICK HERE](#)



UGA Libraries

Many books and articles are available for free at the UGA Library for reading or download. Visit the website [here](#).

Textbooks



Textbooks can be a rather large expense for a student.

While our bookstore offers textbooks that are available for every class, we would like to point out that renting or purchasing your textbooks through an online outlet may be a better option if you are looking for a more economical alternative.

Below are a few reputable companies that students have used for textbook rentals and purchases.

amazon

You can find most textbooks and if you join Amazon Prime as a student, you receive orders in two days and have free returns.

Chegg

Reputable company for textbook rentals and purchases that students have used.

DIRECT TEXTBOOK

This online source shops over 200 online stores to find you the best price; however, some of the online stores have had complaints lodged against them and are not always reputable, so make sure you check out the specific store's online reviews before purchasing.

Health & Wellness

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

University Health Center

The UHC is UGA's central clinic that works to provide medical, dental, mental, eye care, and prevention services to all enrolled UGA students. Click [here](#) to access the UHC home page, where you can view their expansive list of services, upload important medical documentation upon enrollment, and book appointments when needed.

55 Carlton St., Athens, GA. 30602
(706) 542 - 1162
contact@uhs.uga.edu

Health Insurance

Health insurance for international students, and UGA provides a plan through United HealthCare or United Health Savings Fund. To access information on enrolling in health insurance, click [here](#). You can also access additional links for health insurance information here: [Mandatory Plan](#) and [UGA ISL Health and Wellness](#).

#BeWellUGA



Food & Dining



UGA Dining Halls & Restaurants

- Bolton
- The Village Summit
- Oglethorpe
- Snelling
- The Niche (Health Science Campus)



Grocery Stores

All around Athens, there are several grocery store chains:

- Kroger
- Walmart
- Publix
- Trader Joes
- Costco



Athens also has specialty stores that offer ethnic fare:

Fooks Food

2026 S.
Milledge Ave
706-208-8839
(Asian grocery store)

Los Compadres

1380 Prince Ave.
706-543-6777
(Hispanic grocery store)

Orient Mart

1055 Gaines
School Road
706-354-6762
(Asian Market)

Local Restaurants

You can find information about the local fare in Athens at Visit Athens, GA, Downton Athens, GA, and Flagpole. Flagpole publishes an annual list that comprises the "Best of Athens," where readers cast their votes on their favorite restaurants, bars, shops, and coffee. Access the 2023 list [here](#).

You can also download the app, Yelp, where you can the best recommendations based on your taste and preference!



UGA Resources & Opportunities

UGA Resources & Helpful Subscriptions

UGA offers an array of useful resources that can enhance academic achievement for all students. Some resources include:

- eLC
- Athena
- UGA Degreeworks
- UGA Writing Center
- Peer tutoring, academic coaching, and first-generation support
- Zoom
- Grammarly



UGA Study Away

The School of Social Work at UGA offers opportunities for study, research, and service in Ghana, Northern Ireland, and the Caribbean during the school's Maymester. Please check here for more information on these trips: [UGA SSW StudyAway](#)

For scholarships on the StudyAway opportunity, please see more [here](#).

For other UGA Study Away opportunities, click [here](#)



UGA Libraries and Technology Support

All [UGA libraries](#) offer an array of services that grant UGA students access to scholarly records, journals, books, and collections that help to advance our academic experience.

- Main Library
- Art Library
- McBay Science Library
- Curriculum Materials Library
- Miller Learning Center
- Music Collections
- Map & Government Information Library
- Owens Library
- Carnegie Library Learning Center
- Media Desk

If you need any assistance finding articles or navigating the online library services, you can contact the School of Social Work Librarian, Sandra Riggs. Her email is sriggs@uga.edu, and all students are able to schedule an appointment with her.



What to do in Athens



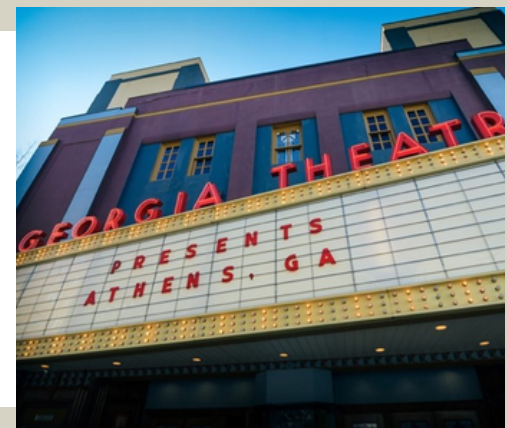
UGA Football and Sporting Events

UGA Football and sporting events largely contribute to Athens culture, and full-time UGA students are granted tickets to all sporting events. To attend football games, a link will be sent to each student in August to register for tickets. Each awarded ticket is \$10. All other sporting events are free when showing a valid UGA ID. Visit [Georgia Dogs](#) to see more information about all sporting events.

Music

Athens has a vibrant music scene and several venues throughout the city for live entertainment. Great places to catch music artists in town are:

- [Georgia Theatre](#)
- [The Classic Center](#)
- [UGA Performing Arts Center](#)
- [40 Watt Club](#)
- [Hendershots](#) (Jazz sessions)



Performing Arts and Theatre

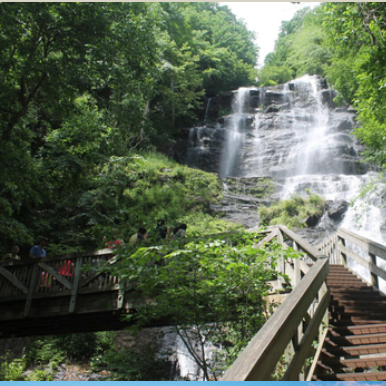
In addition to live music, Athens offers many opportunities to see live Broadway musicals and plays both at [The Classic Center Theatre](#) and [UGA Performing Arts Center](#). Their schedule can be found on their website. You can also experience local talent and theatre with the [Town & Gown Players](#), [Athens Creative Theatre](#), and [Morton Theatre](#).

Arts and Culture

The [Georgia Museum of Art](#) is located on the UGA Campus. The museum holds over 10,000 works of art and is free of charge. The museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.



Explore Georgia



Explore Georgia's Mountains

The state of Georgia has so many sites to see. Georgia is home to beautiful state parks and waterfalls, and many are within driving distance from Athens. You can access the [Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites](#) website to browse the parks and their locations. Below are some beautiful options:

- Tallulah Gorge
- Brasstown Bald
- Cloudland Canyon
- Mount Yonah
- Start of Appalachian Trail

Explore Georgia's Cities

There are several cities throughout Georgia that hold great richness to Georgia's history. Some of these include Macon, Columbus, Savannah, and our state capital, Atlanta. Each city offers an array of tourist-filled activities. Visit [Explore Georgia](#) to begin your city adventure. Below are some places to visit in Atlanta:

- The Georgia Aquarium
- MLK Jr. Memorial
- Zoo Atlanta
- High Museum of Art
- World of Coca Cola
- The Fox Theatre
- Ponce City Market

Explore Georgia's Beaches

Georgia is home to several barrier islands located 5 hours south of Athens. From riding bikes and fishing to swimming in the ocean, the islands are great weekend getaways. Visit [Explore Georgia](#) to learn about Georgia's beaches



Explore Georgia

EXPLORE
GEORGIA.

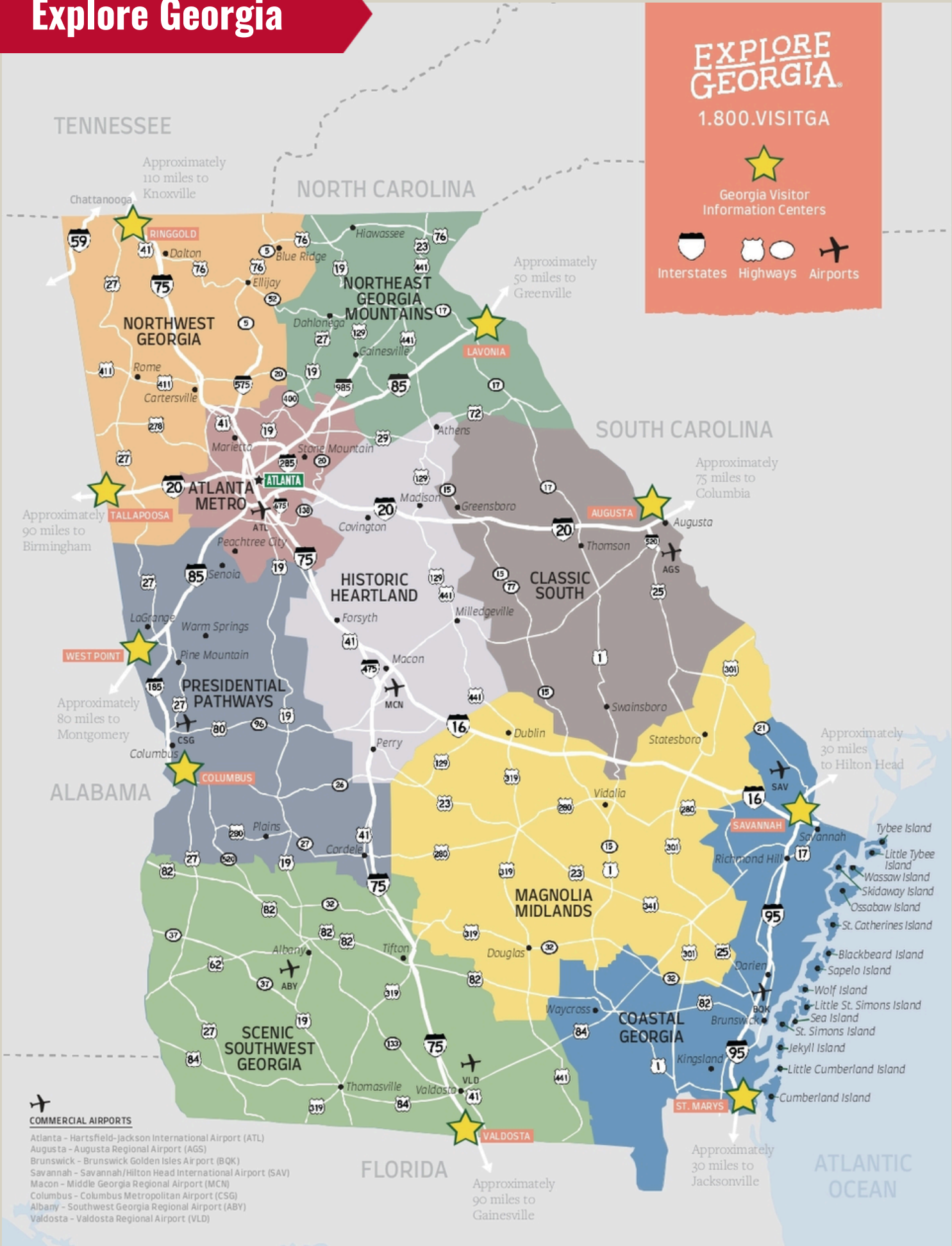
1.800.VISITGA



Georgia Visitor
Information Centers



Interstates Highways Airports



COMMERCIAL AIRPORTS

- Atlanta - Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (ATL)
- Augusta - Augusta Regional Airport (AGS)
- Brunswick - Brunswick Golden Isles Airport (BQK)
- Savannah - Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV)
- Macon - Middle Georgia Regional Airport (MCN)
- Columbus - Columbus Metropolitan Airport (CSG)
- Albany - Southwest Georgia Regional Airport (ABY)
- Valdosta - Valdosta Regional Airport (VLD)

Post Graduate Career



UGA Career Center

The University's Career Center contains several resources to help all students prepare for post-graduate ambitions. Some resources include career consulting, resume building, interview practice, and job searching. Visit the [Career Center's](#) website to learn more about their services. The career center also has [virtual resources](#) for international students.

Additionally, creating a [Handshake](#) and [LinkedIn](#) account is a great way to make connections and browse job opportunities.



SSW - Career Consultant

UGA's School of Social Work, in partnership with the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS), shares a career consultant who can assist students with applying for SW-related jobs, internships, PhD programs, resume building, and much more.

To schedule an in-person or virtual/online appointment, contact Jessica McLeod-Waddell through

- Your Handshake account
- calling 706-542-3375
- emailing jessica.mcleod25@uga.edu



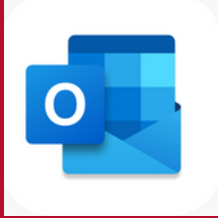
Optional Practice Training (OPT) for F-1 Status Students

OPT is a program that allows many international students to stay in the U.S. for an additional post-graduation year IF they can find employment AND their application is approved. The UGA Office of Global Engagement provides information on this and many other topics on their website: [Current International Students](#).

A PDF "workshop" on OPT is available [here](#).

Helpful Mobile Apps

University Communication



Outlook: UGA Mail



UGA Resources:
Campus Maps/
eLC



Money Management



Cash App: Mobile Payment Service to transfer money easily



Venmo: Mobile Payment Service to transfer money easily



Zelle: Mobile way to transfer money between U.S. bank accounts

Transportation



Lyft: Ride Share Service



Uber: Taxi Service



myStop: Real time bus information: Athens Clarke County Transit

Helpful Terminology

CHIP- Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provide no-cost or low-cost health coverage for eligible children in Georgia. These programs provide children with health coverage to get routine check-ups, immunizations, and dental care to keep them healthy.

DFCS- The Department of Family and Children Services in Georgia investigates reports of child abuse; finds foster and adoptive homes for abused and neglected children; issues SNAP, Medicaid, and TANF; helps out-of-work parents get back on their feet; and provides numerous support services and innovative programs to help families in need.

Mandated Reporter - A person required by law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse. This includes physicians, hospitals or medical personnel, dentists, RNs, LPNs, counselors, social workers, school teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, psychologists, child welfare agency personnel, child counseling personnel, law enforcement personnel, and child service organization personnel.

Medicaid- Medicaid is a program that provides health care services to individuals who meet income, resources, and citizenship requirements.

Medicare- a federal health insurance system for people over 65 and certain younger people with disabilities.

Social Security- In the United States, Social Security is the commonly used term for the federal Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program. It is administered by the Social Security Administration. The original Social Security Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935, and the current version of the Act, as amended, encompasses several social welfare and social insurance programs.

Social Security is funded primarily through payroll taxes called Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax (FICA) or Self Employed Contributions Act Tax (SECA).

SNAP- The Georgia Food Stamp Program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally-funded program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. A household may be one (1) person living alone, a family, or several unrelated individuals cohabitating who routinely purchase and prepare meals together.

TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a monthly cash assistance program with an employment services component for low-income families with children under age 18 and children age 18 who are attending school full-time.

You can find a comprehensive list of commonly used abbreviations and acronyms in Georgia here: [Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities List](#).

Helpful Links on U.S. History & Social Policy



Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) Library established the Social Welfare History Project to serve the public as an educational resource on American social welfare history.

For more information on the most significant events, click [here](#).

Click [here](#) to explore important topics and moments in U.S. history through primary historical sources from the Library of Congress.

LIBRARY LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS



The University of Texas at Austin
Department of History
College of Liberal Arts

The University of Texas at Austin's Department of History created an extensive timeline of U.S. Immigration History, click [here](#) to learn more.

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[Instagram](#)

UGA Global Social Work



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International Students at the School of Social Work



[Facebook](#)

