



GOLDEN GATE
UNIVERSITY

New International Student Pre-Arrival Checklist

Welcome to Golden Gate University (GGU)! We're excited to welcome you to our community. To help you prepare for your move to the U.S., please review this checklist before departure.

BEFORE YOU FLY

Check Passport Validity



- Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond your intended stay in the U.S.

Book Your Flight to the Bay Area



The closest international airports to the GGU campus are:

- San Francisco International Airport (SFO) - 23 kilometers
- Oakland International Airport (OAK) - 31 kilometers
- San Jose international Airport (SJC) - 76 kilometers

Important: Students entering the US on an Initial Attendance Form I-20 may enter the country **up to 30 days** before their program start date. For students transferring from another school, this 30-day entry rule does not apply.

Prepare Documents for U.S. Point of Entry



Keep the following in your carry-on bag:

- Valid passport with visa
- I-20 form from GGU
- SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt
- GGU admission letter
- Proof of finances

Do NOT pack these in your checked luggage. You will need to show them at the Port of Entry. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will inspect your documents, ask you to provide your fingerprints, and ask you questions about the purpose of your visit (to study), where you will live, etc. Remain calm and answer the questions honestly.

Your Housing Accommodations: Have the name, address, and phone number of where you will be staying (temporary or permanent).

BEFORE YOU FLY, CONTINUED

Plan Transportation to GGU



Public Transportation available in the Bay Area includes:

- **Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART):** BART is the local subway/metro public transportation and has stations at both SFO and OAK. You will need to plan additional transportation to get from the BART station to your housing.
- **Airport Shuttle:** Van pick-up services leave from major airports and will take you from the airport directly to campus area in downtown San Francisco. There are many different companies, and you can shop around for the best price. Reserve online ahead of time.
- **Caltrain:** Caltrain provides rail service along the San Francisco Peninsula, through the South Bay, San Jose, and Gilroy.
- **MUNI:** MUNI is San Francisco's bus, metro, and cable car system that runs throughout the city.
- **Ride-sharing Apps** (such as Uber or Lyft): Mobile phone applications require you to download their app to access services. You need Wi-Fi or cell service to use them, and payment is processed directly from your phone.

Get a [Clipper Card](#)! This is a reloadable smart card used to pay for fares on Bay Area transit services.

Tip: [Download a digital Clipper Card](#) on your phone via Apple/Google Pay to start using as soon as you land!

Complete Online Pre-Arrival Orientation



Watch the recordings of our previous International Student Orientation prior to arriving in the U.S. Then, complete the short quiz to test your understanding of the material covered.

The links to the recordings and the quiz will be sent to you via email. Please check your email regularly to complete these **required** parts of the International Student Orientation.

Register for the In-Person International Student Orientation



Attendance is **required** for all F-1 students! Please register for upcoming events [here](#).

IMMIGRATION & ORIENTATION

Complete SEVIS Check-In



All new international students — including transfer students — must complete the online [F-1 Student Check-in Form](#).

DEADLINE: You must submit this form before the in-person International Student Orientation with no exception.

You will be required to upload a copy of your:

- Passport
- F-1 Visa
- I-94 Admission Document (which you can download from the [CBP website](#))
- GGU I-20 (with your signature on page 1)

Important: You will receive an email from the Office of International Student Services with a link to form. Please check your email regularly and complete the form by the stated deadline to remain in proper immigration status.

IMMIGRATION & ORIENTATION, CONTINUED



Review the GGU Attendance Policy



As an F-1 student, maintaining your physical presence in the U.S. is part of your visa requirements. That's why it's very important to **attend all in-person class** sessions starting from the first day of the term. Most GGU programs include both online and in-person components. You **must** attend your in-person classes on campus. Make sure you know your class start dates and plan your travel accordingly.

Please read the official policy here:

[Academic Standards and Policies — Golden Gate University — Modern Campus Catalog™](#)



Attend the In-Person International Student Orientation



All new F-1 international students are required to attend the International Student Orientation in-person.

You will receive an email from the Office of International Student Services with the exact date, time, and location. Orientation is a great opportunity to meet other students, learn about important immigration and academic rules, and get helpful tips for settling into life at GGU and in San Francisco.

Don't miss it — attendance is mandatory!

HOUSING



Research Housing Options



GGU does not offer on-campus housing, but we provide helpful resources:

- [GGU Housing Website](#)
- [GGU Student Housing Handbook](#)

Try to secure temporary or long-term housing early!

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Research Health Insurance Options



Although GGU does not require F-1 visa holders to show proof of health insurance coverage, we very strongly recommend that F-1 students have health insurance. For more information, please check the Frequently Asked Questions section on [GGU's International Students Services webpage](#).

Tip: Many students take [ISO insurance](#), and some may be eligible for affordable options through the [Covered California Marketplace](#).



Access Free 24/7 Healthcare via TimelyCare



GGU students have **free, unlimited access** to TimelyCare (an on-demand virtual health and well-being platform). No insurance required.

Access TimelyCare from anywhere in U.S. the via [the MyGGU student portal](#) or [download the app](#) for your mobile device.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION



Review the Academic Calendar



Official academic term start and end dates and important deadlines are posted in the [GGU Academic Calendar](#).



Register for Courses



For questions about courses and registration, contact your [Academic Advisor](#) or the University Advising Center at uac@ggu.edu.



Learn More About Tuition Fees & Payments



Students should contact GGU Student Accounting Services (sas@ggu.edu) for assistance with tuition fees and payments questions. Students should visit the [GGU Payment Options page](#) for additional information.



Get Your GGU Student ID Card



Upload a photograph for your GGU Student ID Card in your MyGGU portal before requesting their GGU Student ID. To upload the photograph (of your head and shoulders only), please:

1. Log into the myGGU portal.
2. Click on your name on the top right corner of the MyGGU Portal homepage & select "Profile."
3. Click on the Edit button on the left side of the screen, then click the camera icon.
4. Upload your photograph (Tip: Save your photo as a .png instead of a .jpg as the file might be too big).
5. Click "Save All" in the upper right-hand corner.

Once you've uploaded your photo, email bsf@ggu.edu to request your ID.



Familiarize Yourself with Campus Resources



Learn more about:

- [Library Access](#)
- [Career Services](#)
- [Student Life & Student Organizations](#)
- [Tech Support Services](#)
- [Tutoring Services](#)

KNOW WHAT TO PACK



Clothing



Temperatures in San Francisco average between 46° - 74° Fahrenheit (7° - 23° Celsius). It can be warm during the day and chilly at night. September and October are the warmest months while December through February is considered the rainy season.

- Most people dress in layers with a light jacket for most days and a medium to heavy coat for the winter months. Depending on the climate you are most accustomed to, it may be advisable to bring some warm clothes.



Medications & Prescriptions



If you require any prescribed medications, eyeglasses, contact lenses, etc., make sure to have an extra supply. Review the [CBP website](#) for rules regarding traveling with medications.



Other Helpful Tips



- Most electronic devices in the U.S. use a 2-pronged plug or a 3-pronged plug. The standard voltage is 120. If you plan on bringing electronics, consider bringing an adapter/converter with you.
- Bringing photos of family and friends or anything meaningful that connects you to home may be helpful items to navigate homesickness and introduce yourself to others.

GETTING SETTLED



Explore Banking Options



You may be interested in setting up a U.S. bank account. A local account makes it easier to pay bills, receive payments, and avoid international transaction fees.

To open a bank account, you will typically need:

- 2 identification documents - such as your **passport** and your **student ID**
- Your F-1 visa and/or your I-20
- Proof of U.S. Address (such as your lease)

What you need to open a bank account often varies from bank to bank. You can contact financial institutions directly to clarify what documents you will need to provide. Some banks such as Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and Chase often offer student-friendly services.

GETTING SETTLED, CONTINUED

Choose a Cell Phone Plan



You will need a U.S. phone number for day-to-day communication, including university updates and emergency contacts.

There are two main options:

- **Prepaid Plans** — No contract required. Pay month-to-month. Great for short-term flexibility.
- **Postpaid Plans** — Often require a credit check or SSN but may offer better long-term rates and services.

Major U.S. carriers include **T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon,** and **Mint Mobile.** Some providers offer student discounts or bring-your-own-device (BYOD) plans if you already have an unlocked phone.

Tip: Consider purchasing an eSIM card and arranging a plan online before arrival to make communication easier as soon as you land.

SELF-CARE & CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Self-Care



Moving to a new country is exciting! But it can also feel overwhelming. It's normal to experience culture shock or emotional ups and downs as you adjust.

Remember to:

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat balanced meals.
- Stay active – even short walks can boost your mood!
- Talk to others – connect with fellow students through student clubs.

Adjusting takes time. Be kind to yourself — you're doing something brave and life-changing!

HELPFUL LINKS

Links



- [F-1 Student Handbook](#) — a handbook that has helpful information about F-1 visa rules and resources available to you during your studies at GGU.
- [eLearning](#) — an online course management system used to provide educational content. This is the platform where you can access your course content.
- [MyGGU Portal](#) — the official student portal for GGU students to connect to GGU resources (log into eLearning, Self Service where you can review your course schedule, check out FAQs, GGU social media, etc.).

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact Information



International Student Services is here to help you. Contact us at:

- **Email:** international@ggu.edu
- **Phone:** +1 (415) 442-7288
- **Address:** 536 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105