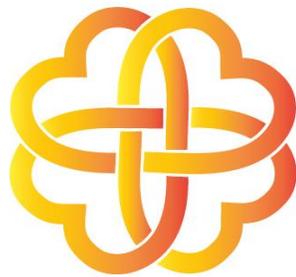


# Georgia Student Handbook

Summer 2014



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Georgia Iranian Student Organization

**GISO**

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## Introduction

“I wish I knew about this earlier!” It is not hard to imagine when you start a new life abroad there are numerous things you have no clue about, and sometimes it is too late! It takes time, cost, and energy to gain experience and familiarize yourself with a new environment. This handbook minimizes the steps and saves your precious time. Everybody is confused in the early days. Student life does not leave much time to explore the details of your daily routines in an optimum manner. As a newcomer you have not yet developed your own network to benefit from the experiences of others. This is the motivation of the people who generously decided to share their experiences and put this handbook together.

This handbook was created by the efforts of students from Georgia Tech, the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, SCAD, and members of the Iranian community of Georgia who all were brought together by Georgia Iranian Students Organization (GISO). We are very proud to congratulate you for your decision to join your future academic institution and welcome you to the State of Georgia. Wherever you are in Georgia, GISO is there to bring Iranian students and families together in one strong, supportive network. Our experiences teach us that we are far happier, healthier and more successful united together. We are more than happy to help you with your new life in Georgia, and if you are wondering what makes us do so, here is the answer: We have been helped by others who once were like you and so we are paying it forward.

So take what you need and remember to pay it forward!

# Chapter 1

## Before Arrival

Make sure that you have requested for an airport pick up through GISO or theISA website. Here is the direct link: <http://www.gisoweb.com/services/airport-pickup> .

### 1.1 What to Bring

Bring whatever that matters to you. Any nostalgic piece is highly recommended. Pack what you have, but buying new clothes in Iran is not recommended, as you can buy everything here at a lower price. Do not bring your old university books or lecture notes unless they are valuable and necessary for your future research.

### 1.2 What kind of weather should I expect in Georgia?!

Summer, most of Spring and Fall tend to be hot and humid. While it turns cold and windy for few weeks in Winter, we rarely get snow. It can rain quite a lot as well, so be prepared.. Be sure to pack summer clothes, rain clothes, and warm clothes for those occasional cold days.

### 1.3 How to arrange for the housing and find a roommate?

This topic is covered in the following chapter under subsection **Housing**.

## Chapter 2

### The First Few days

You are finally here! Welcome! You just stepped into the next stage of your life. Let's begin with what you need to know upon your arrival.

#### 2.1 At the airport

Hopefully you requested airport pick up through ISA or GISO (<http://www.gisoweb.com/services/airport-pickup> ). If so, once you are out of customs at the airport, the Welcome Committee members, students, or other Iranian community people will be waiting for you. Look for a placard that has your name written on it. These people are your ride to your temporary accommodation.

Make sure you have the phone number of some local people for emergency purposes. If you need to make a phone call, ask the information desk or the passenger guides. They are willing to help. Have some quarter coins to make these calls.. If none of these options works, find a person and try to explain the situation politely and ask if you can use their cell phone for a short call.

## 2.2 Accommodation

Try to arrange for your temporary accommodation before you arrive. Do not hesitate to contact the Iranian Student Association (ISA) of your school or Georgia Iranian Students Organization (GISO) and inform them about your date of arrival. There are many different options for temporary accommodation. You can stay at a hotel, at a volunteer's place, or possibly make arrangements with your university. If you contact ISA or GISO ahead of time, we can arrange for your temporary accommodation at a student's or a member of the Iranian community's place until you find your apartment. Find ISA and GISO on Facebook at:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/2261110195/10152530111415196/?comment\\_id=10152533141685196&notif\\_t=like](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2261110195/10152530111415196/?comment_id=10152533141685196&notif_t=like)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/giso1/>

## 2.3 Essential shopping

### 2.3.1 Cell phone

Your your SIMcard from Iran will not work in USA. However, you can bring your phone from Iran and purchase a USSIMcard here. With a SIM-only deal, you don't get a phone, just the SIM card. You'll usually get the same plans without paying extra for a mobile phone device. Alternatively you can buy SIM cards for specific networks by visiting the relevant stores.

If you do not have a mobile phone, there are plenty of places where you can buy one at the store or online. In the US, mobile phone services are offered in two different ways:

- **Pay As You Go (PAYG)**– With Pay As You Go you add credit for calls and texts. PAYG mobiles cost more than other mobiles but you're not tied down to a contract. AT&T Go Phone offers such a service (<http://www.att.com/shop/wireless/gophone.html>). An alternative to this is buying a monthly card, if you run out of airtime minutes or text before the end of the month you will have to get a new card. The cards can be either limited use (250 min air time and 200 text for instance) or unlimited text and talk. AT&T and

Straight Talk offer these services with various packages. (<http://www.straighttalk.com/wps/portal/home>).

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- **Contract** – With a traditional pay monthly contract, you'll be tied into a contract of between 12 and 24 months. You'll get a free or heavily reduced mobile and an allocation of inclusive minutes, text messages and data usage. Mobile purchase is not necessary if you already have your phone. Sometimes getting into a contract can reduce your bills but be careful before signing a contract and ask all your options from the store representative. Often, it is difficult or expensive to break the contract and move to another phone service.

## 2.3.2 Laptop

### How to purchase a Laptop:

Choosing a specific laptop mostly depends on your budget and your hardware/software requirements of the your course of study or use.

When you want to buy a laptop, you should ask yourself: what am I going to do with it?

- **All purpose Laptops**

If you want to do a little bit of everything, like watching movies, creating presentations, writing/editing texts, and at the same time browsing internet. you can find a cheap laptop with the price in the range of \$400 to \$800. You can find some options in the link below: <http://www.laptopmag.com/review/advsearch.aspx?pcid=1624&spcid=178>

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- **College Laptops**

If you plan to do coding with your laptop or to install engineering software, you need to pay a little more money (usually more than \$900). Here are some websites that can help you in selecting your laptop: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2389390,00.asp>

<http://www.phdstudent.com/Strategies-for-Grad-School/best-laptop-for-grad-school>

<http://www.themasterswitch.com/best-laptops-college-students-2014>

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/laptops-101-best-computer-for-your-college-major/#!b1jr3i>

## **Finding an Affordable Price Range**

There are a couple of ways that you can check for affordable price ranges:

- **BestBuy, Newegg, etc.**

These websites are highly recommended. Check out <http://www.bestbuy.com/> and <http://www.newegg.com/> and by selecting the “Computers & Tablets” tab, you can search through different brands to see which one satisfies the specifications you need. Sometimes, there are special deals on the website that you can know about by registering in the website.

- **Amazon, eBay, etc.**

The scenario is the same for these websites, you need to search the specific system you are looking for, and in case you found what you want, you can go ahead order it online. Just remember these sites are not as guaranteed as buying from a commercial vendor like BestBuy. The link of websites are provided here: <http://www.amazon.com/>  
<http://www.ebay.com/>

- **Your university website**

Some universities like Georgia Tech have a minimum system requirements for the laptops owned by students. This requirement is mostly for undergraduate students, but it’s a good idea to check these requirements in case you are choosing your laptop. Universities usually have discounts on some brands/models, which could be a good option to look out. If you are a student at

Georgia Tech, you can visit Barnes & Noble on campus to get more information about the models that include discount.

- Check the website of different laptop brands such as Apple, Dell, Lenovo, etc.

It's a good idea to check if your advisor provides you with a laptop especially when you are a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistance. So, you will only need to buy a laptop/Tablet for entertainment, which is much cheaper unless you are a GAMER, and you need good graphics!

## **2.4 University Registration**

### **2.4.1 Georgia Tech:**

If you arrive in Georgia Tech in the designated time frame, you will be able to catch the university orientation. Most of the items described below will be covered in your orientation. In case that you missed the orientations, below are some of the procedures you need to follow to get settled in Georgia Tech.

To register for the orientations, please visit:

[http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/orientation/orientation\\_registration.php](http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/orientation/orientation_registration.php)

To watch a video overview of the orientation, filtered by topics, please visit:

<http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/orientation/videos.php>

NOTE: While we make our best effort to provide you with the most useful and comprehensive information about your school, we do NOT guarantee that this information is precise or most up-to-date. We strongly recommend you confirm the details with a university official and direct your case-specific questions to a related Georgia Tech employee. The policies and details may change and the only person who can give you a confident update is somebody who can address your questions on behalf of the institute.

**First Day Essentials:****Internet Access:**

First and foremost, you need to be connected to internet to find out your next steps. In Georgia Tech, the best option is to visit the library or student center (you can find either location by asking anyone on campus for directions.)

There is abundance of computers in the first floor of the library and in the second floor of the Student Center, across from the food court and by the area where reclining chairs and TVs are. You will need your GT username and password to log in to these computers and use the internet.

**Check your status:**

First, check your status on the Georgia Tech system and find out if you have any outstanding requirements:

[https://www.applyweb.com/cgi-bin/ustat?app\\_code=gatechg](https://www.applyweb.com/cgi-bin/ustat?app_code=gatechg)

**Find your Surroundings:**

In most of the items below, you will need to visit various buildings at Georgia Tech. Here are few options to check the addresses and locations of various buildings that you will need to visit:

1. Google Maps: Check all GPS addresses on Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/>

2. Yahoo Maps: Check Yahoo's map of Georgia Tech [outhere](#). Yahoo has the names of most Georgia Tech buildings integrated into its maps. You shall be easily able to find the building you want to visit by looking at the names.

3. GT Alumni map: A searchable map on top of Google Maps is also available in GT Alumni website. Note that they may not have all the buildings by name in their map or some buildings may have informal names not included in their map: <http://map.gtalumni.org/>

**Submit your Transcripts and other final Documents:**

Visit The Office of Graduate Admissions and give them an official copy of your transcripts and other documents:

Graduate Admissions

Georgia Institute of Technology, Savant Building  
631 Cherry Street, Room 318, Atlanta, GA 30332-0321

### **I-20 Processing:**

Be sure to reply to the emails you will receive that ask you to confirm the information needed for the I-20 and scanned copies of the financial documents you will need. Check with OIE about anything you are not sure about. OIE is located in the second floor of Savant building on campus.

### **Health Forms and Immunization**

All students are required to meet immunization and health requirements specified by the Board of Regents. Please go to the Health Center and complete the required forms. Please read the instructions carefully and follow them completely. A hold will be placed on your class registration until this is completed.

### **Get Your Buzzcard**

All students at Georgia Tech have an identification card known as the “BuzzCard.” The BuzzCard office is located on the second floor of Barnes and Noble, corner of Spring Street and Fifth Street in Technology Square. This is your campus ID and your access card.

### **Get Your Social Security:**

Social security card is like “karte melli” in Iran. You will need the social security number (SSN) for many employment needs, renting houses, buying cars, getting credit cards, etc. Never give your social security number to a person that you do not know or trust. Be very suspicious of anyone who asks for such number.

Georgia Tech usually provides services to obtain your social security card on the orientation day. If you missed that, you will need to follow up and get the card yourself. Please follow the procedures in the link below about the documentation you will need and the place you will need to visit:

[http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/orientation/new\\_hire/apply\\_for\\_ssc.php](http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/orientation/new_hire/apply_for_ssc.php)

More information about SSN is further in this booklet.

## **Register for Classes**

New Graduate Students will be able to register for Fall 2014 classes beginning August 9 following the submission of all outstanding documents and can continue to do so (or make schedule changes) through 4 pm on Friday, August 22.

To access the online registration, go to the [BuzzPort student tab](#).

To ask registration specific questions, visit the office of the registrar at Tech Tower.

## **Registration Holds**

Several categories of holds may be placed on your registration. These must be cleared before you will be allowed to register for classes. Holds you may see include:

- **Graduate Admission Hold** – When documents are missing from your admissions file, a hold will be placed on your registration. Go to Status Checking to see what documents are missing.
- **Health Hold** – If you have not turned in the appropriate forms to Health Services, you will have a hold placed on registration. Other health holds may be placed for failure to comply with the TB screening requirements or for lack of appropriate immunizations. You should contact Health Services and follow their instructions in order to have your health hold lifted.
- **SEVIS Hold** – All international students will have a SEVIS hold placed on their registration. Once you arrive in Atlanta, complete OIE's International Student Check-In by using your GT credentials to log into iStart and upload your immigration documents. Please read the International Student Check-in page carefully for full instructions. After your immigration documents have been uploaded and verified by an advisor, your registration hold will be removed.
- **Lawful Presence Hold** - We must verify that you are lawfully present in the United States prior to being able to register. To clear a lawful presence hold, you should bring a copy of their Visa to Graduate Admissions; and have a Georgia Tech issued I-20.

- **Departmental Holds** - Your home department may also place holds, such as Major Holds or Advising Holds. Check with your department about how to get these holds removed.

## 2.4.2 University of Georgia

Welcome to UGA! The University of Georgia referred as UGA was founded in 1785 and is ranked 20th overall among all public national universities by the 2014 US News & World Report News ranking. The university includes 18 schools and colleges and has three campuses including Athens, Tifton and Griffin, all located in Georgia. UGA sports' team is known as the Georgia Bulldogs and had 27 athletes compete in the 2012 Olympic games!

The earliest step towards your registration is participating in the university orientation as well as your own department orientation. This walks you through many details step-by-step and shows you how to start your studies at UGA including registration, courses, health immunization and campus tours. We strongly recommend you do not miss it. Even if you missed the orientation, don't worry! This document will help you to know primary steps. GISO is doing its best to provide you with comprehensive details in-line with the Georgia Universities, but since the policies and statistics are dynamic, we highly recommend you check and confirm important details with your own university officials and employees. A good starting point is the [UGA website](#) to give you the latest updates.

The following links connect you to UGA International Student Life office, known as "ISL," where you will find virtual orientation, registration for the orientations and other important information as you begin your life as a student at UGA. Please visit: <http://isl.uga.edu/students/orientation.html>

### **First Day Essentials:**

**Internet Access:**

First and foremost you will need to be connected to internet to find out your next steps. The best option is to visit the library or Tate student center (you can find either location by literally asking anybody on campus.) You will be surprised how nice they will answer you!

Either at the Tate center or library (you can find all detail about libraries [here](#)) there are many computers waiting for you to get connected and help you register and find everything easier.

You will need your UGA MyID and password to log in to these computers and use the internet. Librarians are always helpful to answer all of your questions, so don't worry if you have problem with accessing your MyID. Also you might have your own laptop or tablet so look for Paws-Secure Network and use your MyID and Password to connect to it. Paws-Secure will be accessible in most places on the UGA campus.

**Status checking:**

First, check your status on My UGA portal and find out if you have any outstanding requirements: <https://my.uga.edu>

**Transit and location finding:**

In most of the items below, you will need to visit various buildings in UGA. Here are few options to check the addresses and locations of various buildings that you will need to visit:

1. Google Maps: Check all GPS addresses on Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/>

2. UGA Maps: UGA provided all maps in this link

<https://www.architects.uga.edu/maps/current> . It includes interactive map which help you to find all buildings by name.

3. I also recommend you to look at the UGA transit map here:

<http://www.transit.uga.edu/routes> .

**Transit:**

Athens campus is big and you need to get a bus to move faster specially during the summer when it is humid and hot! You can use all UGA buses for free all the time

but be sure to check the bus schedule to ensure you have a ride. Note that there are two types of buses: UGA buses which are recognizable with the G logo on them and Athens buses which have bike racks in front of them. During the first days before getting your UGA card you need to pay ~\$3 per ride to use Athens transit but UGA transit is always free. You can download UGA app from the Apples store to get more info about UGA transit bus lines and schedules.

**Check with your department:**

Visit your department secretary and ask for any required steps you need to follow to make sure you are on the right track. There are some unique steps you need to follow with your department, and the only way to know is to ask them directly.

**Submitting your Transcripts and other final Documents:**

Visit The Office of Graduate Admissions and give them an official copy of your transcripts and other documents if you haven't sent an official copy before. It is a good idea to have extra copies with you during the first few days.

Graduate School:

The University of Georgia Graduate School

279 Williams St. | Athens, Georgia 30602-1777

Phone: 706-542-1739

Website: <http://www.grad.uga.edu/>

**I-20 Processing:**

Reply to the emails you will receive which ask you to confirm the information needed for the I-20 and scanned copies of the financial documents you will need. Check with Office of International Education (OIE) about anything that you are not sure about. The OIE is located at 1324 S. Lumpkin Street | Athens, GA 30602. Phone: 706-542-2900

**Health Forms and Immunizations**

All students are required to meet immunization and health requirements specified by the Board of Regents. Please go to the Health Center and complete the required forms.

Please read the instructions carefully and follow them completely. A hold will be placed on registration until this is done. You can find more details in next chapters.

### **UGA Card:**

All UGA students must have an identification card known as the “UGA Card.” The office is located on the print and copy office located at first floor of the Tate Student Center. They will scan your fingers, take a nice picture of you and your card will be ready in a second. You need your card for almost everything on campus so always carry it. It works as your wallet with school money credits, your access card to buildings, your transit access card and your campus identification card. It costs you \$20 in general to get your card. Keep it safe and take good care to protect it.

### **Social Security:**

Social security card is like “karte melli” in Iran. You will need the social security number (SSN) for many employment needs, for renting houses, buying cars, getting credit cards, etc. Never give your social security number to a person that you do not know or trust.

UGA usually provides services to obtain the social security card on the university orientation day. If you missed that, you will need to follow up and get the card yourself. Please follow the procedures in the link below about the documentation you will need and the place you will need to visit:

**[http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student\\_Section/Obtaining\\_a\\_Social\\_Security\\_Number.pdf](http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student_Section/Obtaining_a_Social_Security_Number.pdf)**

More information about SSN is further in the booklet.

### **Class registration**

New Graduate Students will be able to register for fall 2014 classes. Please check the academic calendar and your department to make sure about deadline.

Academic Calendar: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/academicCalendar2014-2015>

You can also access registration instructions at

Office of registrar website: <http://reg.uga.edu/registration>. It gives you a perfect overview of what you need to do.

To ask registration specific questions, visit the office of the registrar at Holmes/Hunter Academic Building |Athens, GA 30602-6113. Phone:706.542.4040

### **Registration Holds**

Several f holds may be placed on your registration. These must be cleared before you will be allowed to register. You need to contact the office that has placed the flag or hold; only that office can remove the flag/hold that was placed on your record. On Athena you can view information about the flag or hold on your account. The name of the office and contact telephone number should be visible.

### **2.4.3 Georgia State University**

Welcome to Georgia State University! GSU is a major public research institutions in the Southeast. GSU was founded in 1913. Each year nearly 32,000 undergraduate and graduate students enroll at GSU. In recent years, an increasing number of Iranian students have been entering GSU. This growing number includes not only international Iranians but Iranians from Georgia as well.

Now that you are here, you need to do your preparations. It is very likely that you know already that you should participate in the orientations, through which you will have a brief tour of campus, and will get familiar with the most important offices and people that you will be in contact with during your education. So, try not to miss the orientation!

However, even if you missed the orientation don't worry! This document will help you know the primary steps. While this document is doing its best to provide you detailed information about Georgia Universities, we highly recommend you to check and confirm important details with university officials and employees to have the most update news and information. A good starting point is GSU website to give you the latest update.

### **First Day Essentials**

## **GSU Campus**

The GSU campus is located in downtown Atlanta, and is spread out through many different buildings. The easiest way to get to campus is by MARTA trains. Both Five-Point Station and the Georgia State Station are located around the campus. If you plan use MARTA, you can get a discounted cost MARTA card as a student. To do this, first obtain your PantherCard (described later in this document), and then visit the customer service area at Auxiliary and Support Service.

With your MARTA card, known as a “Breeze card,” you can charge it online for the months. Find additional information at: <http://transit.gsu.edu/marta/>

Inside the campus, you can use Panther-Express, the university’s bus system for transportation, which works from 7:00 am until midnight. You can find the routes and schedules from its website: <http://www.nextbus.com/displays/lcd/georgia-state/>.

If you need a map of campus to know which building is located where, just use this map: <http://map.gsu.edu/>.

## **Check in ISSS**

As an international student, you need to inform the international student office that you have arrived in United States. They will provide you with information for your next steps and let you know about orientation. Find the International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS) in the Sparks Hall building. Find that building in the campus map!

## **Get Your Panther Card**

As the panther is the symbol of Georgia State University, your student card is called PantherCard. This card will help you enter libraries, Recreation center, etc. To get a PantherCard, registered students should bring a valid government ID (Such as your passport) to the PantherCard Office, located on the second floor of the University Bookstore Building (above Panther Pizza). They will take an instant photo of you there and give you the card right then and there. So, be prepared for the photo shoot!

## **Check in your department**

Visit your department secretary and ask for required steps you need to follow to make sure you are on the right track. If you are awarded some kind of scholarships or assistantships, there may be paperwork to complete. The secretary of department will help you!

### **Internet Accounts**

As a student, you should be familiar with three different accounts and web portals and the different services offered with them. Here is a brief introduction:

**Campus ID:** Your campus ID is your key ID in the university system, and you should probably have received it already. If you don't know your campus ID or password, contact either the secretary of your department or the university's help system: [help@gsu.edu](mailto:help@gsu.edu). This campus ID is also your student email with the domain [@student.gsu.edu](mailto:@student.gsu.edu).

**PAWS:** PAWS is the university's major online system through which you can register for classes, see your grades, order transcripts, etc. You will use your campus ID and password to log in.

**Desire2learn:** This is the online system used for your courses. Professors might use this system to put up assignments, lecture notes, etc. Again, you will use your campus ID and password to log in that.

**Free Software:** Several softwares, such as SAS, EndNote, McAfee antivirus, etc. are provided for free to GSU students. Find additional information in: <http://technology.gsu.edu/>

### **Health Forms and Immunization**

All students are required to meet immunization and health requirements specified by the Board of Regents. Visit the Health Center and fill the required forms. If you are reading these lines while still in Iran, try to do all the required immunizations in Iran which will be probably much cheaper. Find additional information on requirements in <http://health.gsu.edu>.

### **Social Security Card:**

Every employee in the United States needs a Social Security number (SSN) in order to be allowed to work in the US. As an F or J student, you are eligible for a SSN ONLY if you have an offer of employment on campus. When you check in with the ISSS office, they should provide you the Social Security letter that is proof of your job offer. Also, your department will provide you another letter called an employee letter. If you did not get any of these items, just contact them.

After that, you need to visit a Social Security Administration office, which is a government office and is not located on campus. You should bring your passport, I-20, I-94, ISSS letter, your employer letter, and a completed SS-5 form. To get a copy of your I-94, visit this website: <http://goo.gl/cQd7iS>.

To get a SS-5 form, visit this address: [http://iss.gsu.edu/files/2013/02/SSN-Request\\_website-version1.pdf](http://iss.gsu.edu/files/2013/02/SSN-Request_website-version1.pdf). For more information, visit the ISSS website: <http://iss.gsu.edu/current-students/f-1-status/>.

### **Class registration**

New Graduate Students will be able to register for fall 2014. Please check the academic calendar and your department to make sure about deadlines. You will register through the PAWS system. A complete guide on registration is found in <http://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/registration-guide/>.

Remember if you are offered any kind of assistantship, you need to register for a certain minimum number of courses each semester. Contact your department secretary to know the exact rules and requirements. It is always a good idea to consult with your professors or senior students before registering for courses.

### **Registration Holds**

Sometimes there are some holds on your account which prevent you from registering. This might occur because of some missing document or information. To view your holds, access student records menu in your GoSolar account and view your holds. Contact the related offices if you need any help in removing the holds.

## **2.5 Banking**

### **2.5.1 Opening Bank Accounts**

You've just arrived from Iran! You have probably thousands of dollars in cash in your pocket, and you need to put it somewhere safe as soon as possible. Well, obviously, the best place is a bank account! If you are receiving scholarships from your university, you also need to provide your bank account information to your university in order to receive your monthly stipend.

There are many banks in the United States. Consider the location branches and the ATMs when you want to open a bank account. Unlike Iran, if you use the ATM of a bank other than your own, you will be charged some painful fee!

Remember to have your university documents, your passport and I-20, and other identification documents with you when you want to open a bank account. Sometimes banks request more than one identification card (with photo) to open an account. So, other than your passport, it is wise to bring your international drivers license (if you have it) with you.

According to the law, you do not need a Social Security Number for opening an account. If the bank asks you for a SSN number, simply tell them you do not have one yet. Your university will assist you in getting a SSN. Remember to announce your SSN to the bank once you receive it. Some banks reward you and the person who referred you to the bank with cash bonus (e.g. \$25.00 each with Bank of America). When you are going to open an account, go with someone that already has an account with the same bank for help.

Online banking can save you much time. Virtually, you can do anything with online banking: deposit a check, transfer money, monitor your transactions, pay your bills, etc. Remember to ask the bank about their online banking system.

### **2.5.2 Credit Cards**

Credit cards are type of cards that you are probably not familiar with from Iran. These cards work as short-term debts: The bank gives you some credit limit; you spend

during the month and will receive a statement at the end of the month and pay back your debt.

### **Why do you need a credit card?**

For one reason, it helps you build your credit score. Once you get your Social Security number, special agencies track and save your financial behavior. All of these information are recorded in a score named credit score. You do not have to worry about your credit score now, but, in future, when you want to get big loans, a solid credit score will help you getting better offers from banks. Some students also decide to get a loan when they want to purchase a vehicle. Having a solid credit score also will help you in that case.

Another reason for getting a credit card is the benefit that you will earn. Some credit cards give you awards like discounts on air ticket purchases, pays you cash backs, etc.

### **When to get a credit card?**

You cannot have a credit card until you get your Social Security Card number. The first step is to get your SSN. After that, you will need some credit history to get a card. As a newcomer, your credit history is empty, so you cannot get a credit card. The solution is to get **asecured** credit card. A secured credit card is just like a debit: you deposit some money and spend from the card, but, unlike debit cards, secured cards will help you build your credit score. After a few months having a secured credit card, you should be able to apply for a credit card. Always search online and ask the credit card issuers for more detailed information before getting a card.

### **How to choose a credit card?**

There are hundreds of credit cards available. Other than banks, many merchants also offer different kinds of credit cards. Consider these features when you want to apply for a credit card:

- **APR:** this is the interest rate that you will be charged for your debt if you do not pay all of your debt at the end of the month. Usually, if you pay the whole

amount of the statement, you will not pay any interest. Read the instructions carefully and make sure that you fully understand the rules.

- **Annual Fee:** Some credit cards charge you an annual fee. Some are free.
- **Benefits:** Some credit cards offer you cash back on your spending. Some other will offer you discounts when you want to purchase a ticket or book a hotel. Compare the benefits of different cards to get the best one.

Remember that you do not need to have an account with a bank to get your credit card from that special bank. For example, you might have your bank account in Chase, but get your credit card from Bank of America. However, some banks give extra benefits for their customers to encourage them to use their credit cards.

After getting a credit card, follow these simple tips to keep building up your credit score:

- Always pay back before the payment due. Try to pay back more than the minimum payment required. To avoid paying interest, it is wise to pay back the entire amount in debt.
- Keep your usage low. Aim to spend 30 percent of your credit limit in each statement period. If you use more than 50 percent, you will probably hurt your credit score.
- Never exceed your credit limit.

### **Be Careful!**

Banks and lenders want you to spend more to increase their revenues and encourage you constantly by offering exciting promotions and plans. Also, the credit limit that the bank gives you is usually more than your monthly income which might tempt you to spend more. As a student, you do not earn much and is not wise to swamp yourself in debt. Be cautious in your spending and, at least for the first few months, keep track of your income and costs to get an idea for budgeting. Do not change your spending behavior because of those tricky promotions!

## **2.6Getting SSN no.**

## **International Students and Social Security Numbers**

If you are temporarily in the United States to attend a college, language, vocational or nonacademic school with a nonimmigrant F-1, M-1 or J-1 visa, your school may ask you for your Social Security number. Some colleges and schools use Social Security numbers as student identification numbers. If you do not have a Social Security number, the college or school should be able to give you another identification number.

Social Security numbers generally are assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security will not assign you a number just to enroll in a college or school.

## **What do you have to do to work in the United States?**

If you want to get a job on campus, you should contact your designated school official for international students. This official can tell you if you are eligible to work on campus and give you information about available jobs. Also, your school may approve certain limited off-campus employment, as permitted under Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations. If your school has authorized you to work either on or off campus, and you meet Social Security's eligibility requirements described below, you can get a Social Security number.

## **How can you apply for a Social Security number?**

In general, only noncitizens who have permission to work from DHS can apply for a Social Security number. Social Security Administration (SSA) suggests you wait until you are in the United States for at least 10 days before you apply for a Social Security number. Also, you should report to your school before applying for a number. Taking these actions will ensure SSA can verify your immigration status with the DHS.

To apply for a Social Security number:

- Complete an Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5); and
- Show the SSA your original documents proving your:
  - Work-authorized immigration status;
  - Age;

- Identity; and
- 

Then take your completed application and original documents to your local Social Security office.

### **Immigration status**

To prove your immigration status, you must show Social Security Administration the current U.S. immigration document, I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, issued to you when you arrived in the United States. If you are an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show your I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status. If you are a J-1 exchange visitor, you must show your DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status.

### **Work eligibility**

If you are an F-1 student and eligible to work on campus, you must provide a letter from your designated school official that:

- Identifies you;
- Confirms your current school status; and
- Identifies your employer and the type of work you are, or will be, doing.

The Social Security Administration also needs to see evidence of your employment, such as a recent pay slip or a letter from your employer. Your supervisor must sign and date the employment letter.

This letter must describe:

- Your job;
- Your employment start date;
- The number of hours you work, or will be working; and
- Your supervisor's name and telephone number.

If you are an F-1 student authorized to work in curricular practical training (CPT), you must provide your Form I-20 with the employment page (page 3) completed and signed by your school's designated official.

If you are an F-1 or M-1 student and have a work permit (Form I-766) from DHS, you must present it.

If you are a J-1 student, student intern or international visitor, you must provide a letter from your sponsor. The letter should be on sponsor letterhead with an original signature that authorizes your employment.

Social Security Administration (SSA) cannot process your application if:

- Your on-campus or CPT work begins more than 30 days from your application date; or
- The employment start date on your work permit from DHS (Form I-766) is a future date.

## **Age**

Social Security Administration can consider documents, such as your passport or a document issued by DHS, as evidence of your age.

## **Identity**

The Social Security Administration can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information and preferably a recent photograph. The Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable immigration documents include your:

- Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- Form I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- Form I-766 (work permit from DHS).

***All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. Social Security Administration cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents.*** Social Security Administration also cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. Social Security Administration may use one document for two purposes. For example, Social Security Administration may use your DHS work permit as proof of both work eligibility and identity. However, ***you must provide at least two separate documents.***

### **Do you need a Social Security number before you start working?**

The Social Security Administration does not require you to have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires employers to report wages using a Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from Social Security Administration stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the United States. Employers can find more information on the Internet at ***[www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm)***.

### **Contacting Social Security**

For more information and to find copies of our publications, visit website at ***[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)*** or call, ***1-800-772-1213***. Social Security Administration (SSA) can answer specific questions from ***7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday***.

## **2.7 Housing**

Finding the proper house and roommates is one of the most difficult issues that newly arrived students face. Remember that your house is where you must feel comfortable and at ease. You want a warm atmosphere that resembles what you have just left. There are many important factors you need to consider when looking for your future housing. The two most important factors are finding the right house and finding the right roommates. Take a moment to read the sections below to get an idea.

## 2.7.1 Find the Right House

To find the right house, you need to consider the followings carefully:

- **Distance from the school**

The answer to this part depends on whether you have a car or not. If you do, then you can look for places near or far. If no, you need to stick with close neighborhoods or choose the places which have access to public transportations. With a car, do not forget to consider traffic and your daily commute time.

- **Safety of the neighborhood**

This is one factor you cannot neglect. Break-ins happen all the time and most probably as a grad student you don't want to lose your laptop and precious belongings as you don't afford to replace. Try to buy insurance for your apartment. It is not expensive and makes you feel safe for any possible hazard. Consider buying a small safe and keeping your important documents like your passport, social security card, and cash and jewelry, etc., is highly recommended. Look for crime maps. They show you the history of crimes in the chosen neighborhood and you can have a good comparison between the places you have in your short list. Here are some examples: <http://spotcrime.com/ga/atlanta>, <http://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ga/atlanta/>.

- **Your budget**

You are the judge for this part and most of the times the budget is the main limiting factor. You need to consider that on top of your monthly rent you must pay for utilities too, such as water, sewer, trash, electricity, and possibly gas and other fees. Sometimes utilities, or portions of them, may be included in your monthly rent.

- **Condition of the place**

When you are looking for an apartment be careful about the cleanliness of the carpets. Open the closets and all the cabinets in the kitchen and bathrooms and check if they are in good shape. Ask about the pest control. Ask about the washer/dryer connections and how you can do your laundry. Ask all questions you have. Don't be shy. The agents are paid to assist you.

### **Where to look?**

Your future housing falls into two different categories based on your choice to live on or off campus. On campus dorms can be very different based on your school. You need to check this part through the housing department of your school and decide.

The link below is information gathered by students in Atlanta, Athens and Savannah for housing in these cities. You can compare your options and prices based on student factors:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1D5zPKowvyEpo5HzWziJ5tRXUGpnNU4oiVglLEOF\\_A3WU/pubhtml](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1D5zPKowvyEpo5HzWziJ5tRXUGpnNU4oiVglLEOF_A3WU/pubhtml)

If you are going to live off campus there are websites that can help you in this regard. Here is a list:

- **Promove:** They help you find your apartment based on the criteria you provide them with (<http://www.promove.com/> ).
- **Zillow:** It is a very good database (<http://www.zillow.com/> ).
- **Craigslist:** While it is a very good resource, you may find too many scams in it. Be careful! (<http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites> ).

If you are looking for a place in Atlanta here is a list of places that students live in:

### **Atlanta:**

If you don't have a car:

- <http://www.theflatsatlanticstation.com/>

- <http://westmarlofts.com/>
- <http://solaceonpeachtree.myaptportal.com/living-at/>

If you have a car:

- <http://www.villageatlakepark.com/>
- <http://www.columbiares.com/>
- <http://www.mqbriarcliff.com/>

### **Athens:**

- <https://housing.uga.edu/family-graduate>
- [www.carouselvillage.net](http://www.carouselvillage.net)
- [www.mooseclubcondos.com](http://www.mooseclubcondos.com)
- [www.theuathens.com](http://www.theuathens.com)
- [www.lakesideathens.com](http://www.lakesideathens.com)<http://www.mqbriarcliff.com/>
- [www.joinermanagement.com/?p=187](http://www.joinermanagement.com/?p=187)

## **2.7.2 Find the Roommates**

### **Who is a good roommate?**

Again this is one of those issues that if you are not careful, you may end up uncomfortable in your own house. To find a good roommate you need to check if you match well. Ask as many questions as you wish. You will not regret it. Try to find a roommate in category similar circumstance. If you are a grad student, it is best to find a grad student. You should make agreements with your roommate on some things. For instance, cleanings, grocery shopping, common area rules, guests, when you sleep, when you wake up, who writes the checks for utilities and rent and so on. Do not hesitate to ask for the bills if your roommate has the accounts on his/her name. Do not hesitate to talk to your landlord if you have problems with your roommate.

## Where to look for a roommate?

Here are some good sources:

- **Craigslist:** a very good resource. Just be careful about the scams (<http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>).
- Iranian Student Associations websites and facebook pages. Here is a list:

### Georgia Tech:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2261110195/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/qiso1/>

<http://www.gtiran.org/forum.html#/>

### University of Georgia:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/qiso1/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/279025905506603/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2203863037/>

## 2.8 Buying Furniture

In the US rental houses come with furnished kitchens so don't worry about buying an expensive refrigerator. Also most houses either have a washing machine and dryer in the house or somewhere on site so no need to buy a washer/dryer as well. Some houses are rented as "Furnished." This furniture usually includes sofa, dining table, bed and drawer. The furniture options vary from house to house, but a furnished house will include the initial things you would need to live in a house. Getting a furnished house is a good option for those who are going to live in the house for a short time and do not want to get into the trouble of moving or selling their furniture. The rent of a furnished house can be \$100 to 400 more expensive than the same unfurnished house.

If you go with an unfurnished house, there are several options to buy affordable furniture. IKEA is a well-known brand for furniture across the world. There is a big IKEA in Atlanta; you can find a variety of prices there. If you are looking for cheap but new furniture IKEA would be your best option. The other option to buy affordable furniture is

Wal-Mart. There are Wal-Mart stores in most cities in Georgia. If you buy your furniture online from Wal-Mart, they may provide free shipping to your house. Amazon is also an online store, you might find items even cheaper than what you see in stores! If you have a car, pay a visit to outlet stores like Rooms To Go or Ashley furniture. The price is comparable to IKEA, but quality is far better. Do not forget to bargain!

Buying used furniture is very typical in the US especially for the students, you can look for yard sales (garage sales) around your neighborhood, and you can find very good furniture at a cheap price. Yard Sales are on Saturdays and Sundays in early fall and late spring, look for the signs with balloons or in the local newspaper ads. Another option for buying used furniture (or new!) is Craigslist. Craigslist is like an online yellow page (“Niazmandiha”) that has all sorts of ads in it. Just click on your city and look around for anything you need. Be aware of the scams that you might encounter. A very good resource for used furniture is StateSales (<http://www.estatesales.net/>). Of course if you have enough time, and if you are interested, you may want to go and hunt for antiques!

## **2.9 Driver’s License**

### **Getting a Georgia Driver’s License**

One of the first things a new F or J student wants to do after entering the United States is to get a driver’s license. Like many things, however, correct timing is everything.

- Wait 10 days after you arrive in the United States. You may want to apply for a driver’s license or SSN right away, but be patient. The 10-day wait allows time for all the government databases to update your arrival information.
- Make sure your SEVIS record is up-to-date and in active status. SEVIS is the database that contains information for all F and J students in the United States. If

you have not checked in with our office, or if you have failed to maintain status you may not have an active SEVIS record.

- Check your forms. Check all your forms to make sure your information is correct. It is very important that all information matches and is correct. If you have different information on different forms, it will cause delays.
- Wait 10 days after Office of International Education activates your record in SEVIS. This gives all the databases time to update with your new information.
- Bring all your paperwork. When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), remember to bring all your paper work:
  - Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
  - Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record"
  - Passport with a valid U.S. visa
  - Social security card (or denial letter if not eligible for a card)
  - Proof of legal presence or residence (bank statement showing GA address, current lease agreement, employer verification, current utility bill like water or electric bill)

***\*\*Remember, you can only use your unexpired international driver's license to drive in the U.S. for the first 30 Days of your residence in Georgia. \*\****

For more information, please visit Georgia Department of Driver Services at <http://www.dds.ga.gov> or call them at **866-754-3687**.

## **2.10 Buying a Car**

Having a car is a necessity in the U.S. Unlike in Iran, It is not considered a luxury item. While there are many luxury cars available for those who can afford them, buying at

least a basic car is still a good idea. Having a car gives you the freedom to move around easily. At the same time, you are also responsible for car payments, insurance, registration, gas, and any required repairs.

### **2.9.1 Lack of Credit History**

Unless you brought a lot of money with you when you moved to the U.S., you will have to finance the car (get a loan). It is very difficult to get a loan without having any credit history. Credit history is a way of determining the risk in giving you a loan by seeing whether you've repaid loans or bills timely in the past. Therefore, you may have to provide other means of proving yourself. You can show an employment or a university letter with salary mentioned, pay stubs, and whatever money you already have for a down payment. It may still be possible to get a car loan without credit history, but your interest rate will be higher. Also, the interest rate for dealer financing is generally higher than other third party banks or financial institutions. Be sure to get a loan with no more than 48 installments (4 years). Otherwise, you may be buying something you can't afford. If possible, pay at least 20% of the purchase price as a down payment.

### **2.9.2 Choosing a Car**

There are many varieties of cars available in the U.S. and prices vary widely. Prioritize what you would like in a car and take your budget into account. With this information, you should make a short list of cars you both want and can afford. Many people prefer Japanese cars over American cars because they require less maintenance and have a higher resell value. The most popular Japanese car manufacturers are Honda and Toyota. Among these are the Honda Accord, Honda Civic, Toyota Camry, and Toyota Corolla. Most cars generally have four doors. However, some cars have only two doors, one on each side. Even though two-door cars are cheaper, it is harder to seat many people in them. As well, if you have children and require car seat, it is very inconvenient to use a car seat with two-door cars. Some two-door cars have higher insurance rates, as they're considered sportier. Cars can be either automatic transmission (gear) or manual (stick shift). Most people, unlike Iran, drive automatic cars and it is recommended that you buy an automatic car, as well. In an automatic car, there are

only two pedals - the accelerator and brake. You use only one foot and you don't have to manually change gears. Taking into account all conveniences and benefits, an automatic car is much better. Be sure to make a list of items that you would and wouldn't like in the car. Keep in mind that it is very necessary to have at least the minimum features of air conditioning, etc., for easier resale of the car.

If you can afford it and are planning to keep the same car for a long time, it is generally better to buy a new car. You will be able to take proper care of the car from the beginning. If you buy the right car and maintain it well, it will be less expensive in the long run and will have good resale value. New cars come with a warranty. However, the terms may vary between 3 years/36,000 miles, 5 years/60,000 miles, or 7 years/100,000 miles.

You can research automobile magazines, consumer reports, and online to figure what kind of car you would like to purchase. Once you have short-listed the type of car you want to buy, finding an authorized dealer is very easy. Just go to the car companies' web site and locate a dealer. Car dealers and salesmen can be less than honest and may play tricks to sell a car. Even though there may be several car dealers in your area that sell the same makes and models, prices can vary. You may want to ask your friends, relatives, or colleagues for recommendations. The price of the car should not be your only consideration when choosing a dealer. Look at the size of the dealership, the post-purchase services they provide, and what type of service department they have. After you have chosen the car you want, you should be careful to not select too many unnecessary options.

New cars have an MSRP, the maximum price you are expected to pay. Then there is the dealer invoice price, the price the dealer paid the manufacturer. Ideally, if the dealer sold you the car at invoice price, he would make no money on it. However, many times there are factory-to-dealer incentives, which can be up to several thousand dollars. Therefore, they still make plenty of money when they sell these cars at invoice price. Also, you can sign up with websites like <http://www.fightingchance.com> to find all sorts of

deals. If the salesman says a particular vehicle is in great demand and everyone pays MSRP on it, it is rarely true, especially if you see cars of that make/model sitting in the showroom or lot. When buying a new car, if you have an older car that you would like to trade in, don't mention that until you have finalized the deal for new car. Otherwise, he may give you a good deal on the new car, but offer you much less for the old car.

When leaving a deposit for the new car, make sure to pay with a credit card rather than a check. If a particular dealer demands a check, you should walk away. Also, don't leave more than \$500 as a deposit. If the dealer you go to does not have the exact car you want and they say that they will get it from another dealer for you, walk away. Go directly to the dealer that has the car to avoid all sorts of problems. If you are newcomer to the U.S. and you have no other car, you may have to buy a car immediately. Otherwise, the fall season (around August to October) is a good time to buy that year's model, as dealers want to liquidate them to make room for the next year's model. Another good time to buy is around Christmas.

Many car dealers ask for your driver's license when you go for a test drive, and they will make a photocopy of it. They claim it is required for insurance purposes. That is simply not true. The truth is that they want to run a credit check. They may pass this information to four or five local banks that will run your credit history. Every time your credit history is run, your credit score may go down by 5 to 10 points. Don't let them make a photocopy of your driver's license. It might be a good idea to carry a photocopy of your driver's license and write on that copy that dealers **MUST NOT** run unauthorized credit checks. Be sure to remind them that the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) charges \$2,500 for unauthorized credit checks.

### **2.9.3 Used Car Buying Tips**

If you can't get a loan or prefer not to make installment payments, then purchasing a used car outright may be a good option. However, when buying a used car, you have to be much more careful than when you buy a new car. In addition to the cost of the car, you will have to consider the cost of unexpected repairs. You may be able to get a

better model with lower monthly payments if you buy a used car. Make sure to buy a car you can afford and leave some reserve money for emergencies. Most used cars don't come with warranties. Even if the car had warranty, it may not be transferable to new owner. Even if there is warranty, it may not cover the things you need to get repaired. If you are buying a used car from a dealer for the first time, the salesman may give you hard time. Lenders generally will not approve car loans for used cars that are older than 5 years.

#### **2.9.4 Finding a Used Car**

There are many places where you can find used cars, including:

<http://www.usedcars.com>

<http://www.edmunds.com>

<http://www.cars.com>

<http://www.autobytel.com>

<http://autos.msn.com>

<http://www.carsdirect.com>

<http://www.craigslist.org>

Many local newspapers also advertise cars for sale. Some sellers display a sign on the car itself. It may be a good idea buying a used car from a rental car company. They usually sell their cars once they reach the age of 2 years, and they generally take good care of the cars. Even though the body might have some minor scratches, those cars are maintained well. They may not want to negotiate the price, and their prices may be little higher. After looking at various ads, short-list the cars you're interested in. Call the seller as early in the day as possible and set up an appointment to look at the car. Make sure to go during the day, as it's difficult to check out the car in the dark. After you've looked at the car, take a test drive.

If you like the car and are fine with the price, you should tell the seller that you would like to have it checked by a mechanic. Don't take the seller's words for truth. There is no

reason to feel shy about having the car looked at by a professional. You are making a big purchase decision. This will help you avoid mechanical problems and save you money later. Remember, once you buy the car, there is no return or money back. If the seller doesn't let you test drive (make sure to take your driver's license with you), you have no reason to buy the car. Also, check their driveway or parking space to see if there are any signs of leaks. Also, check the car's A/C and heater. Typically, the best deals will be cars that are two or three years old, as they are still in relatively good condition and most of the depreciation (reduction in the value of the car) has already occurred.

### **2.9.5 Certified used car dealers**

This title does not really mean anything unless you are buying a certified pre-owned luxury car that includes at least a 3-month warranty. Never sign papers that indicate the car is AS IS, as you will be responsible for all repairs and broken parts. The phrase "AS IS" means you purchase the vehicle with no warranty and with no promise or guarantee the car and its parts work properly.

### **2.9.6 Mileage**

You should consider the current mileage when purchasing a used car. Of course, the fewer miles driven, the better. An average of 12,000 miles per year is considered the norm. Of course, some cars are driven less than that, but many are driven much more due to long commuting distance. For example, a car manufactured in 2008 with a mileage of about 60,000 is considered fine in 2013. If a car has 110,000 miles or more, it is better to avoid purchasing it. Also, miles driven on highways are better than city miles.

### **2.9.7 Price**

It may be difficult to find the true market value of a used car. Fortunately, there are various tools available to determine this. Kelley's Blue Book (<http://www.kbb.com>) is an excellent place to find used car values. The easiest way is to check online. However, many libraries, bookstores, and other similar places may have it available. It lists car

models, year of make, variations, and the current value of the car. Of course, you may want to add or subtract the appropriate amount for features added later or those that do not work. Also, there is a cost deduction for additional mileage driven above the standard mileage. All of this information is mentioned in the Blue Book. The Blue Book gives a rough idea of a used car's value. If you have a used car checked by a mechanic, they may also be able to tell you the approximate value of the car. When you have a car checked by a mechanic and they find it needs repairs, ask the seller to have them fixed or discount the price of the car by the amount required for the repairs. You may also be able to negotiate the price of a used car. Often, it is more expensive to buy a used car from a dealer than from a private owner.

### **2.9.8 Having a Car Checked**

Before buying a used car, it is absolutely necessary to have it first checked by a mechanic. Check the local Yellow Pages, search online, or ask a friend or colleague to recommend one. Mechanics may charge you \$50 to \$100 (it really varies). He/she will check the car thoroughly and tell you the current or potential problems, if any. Even though most mechanics know their job, make sure to have the following things checked: All safety features, such as brakes, headlights, indicator lights, horn, and wipers are working correctly. Check the brake cylinder and drum to see if there are any worn out pads. Check transmission and engine. They are usually the most expensive parts in a car. Automatic cars may have either 4 speed or 5 speed gears, but you should consider buying only the 5 speed gear car. Check for any rust at the car bottom, exhaust, radiators, and muffler.

Is there an oil leak? You can easily tell if there are any oil spots where the car was parked. Does the car have enough power and pick up when accelerating? Apply the brakes at around 40mph and check for any vibrations without downshifting. If there are, either brake pads or steering pinion may not be in good shape. If possible, have four people sit in the car and take a sharp turn. This is a good way to find out if the suspension is in working order. If the emission is black and thick, it means oil is burning with the gas and the car is beyond its life. You should strongly consider NOT buying this

car. If the piston rings leave a gap in the cylinders, you shouldn't buy the car. You will have to change the cylinder, piston, and rings, which. Ask the seller if they have records of maintenance or other work performed on the car, such as replacing and/or rotating tires, etc. Don't buy the car if it has already been sold by two or three prior sellers. Why is the car changing hand frequently? Is there something seriously wrong with it? Check that the air filter, valves, etc., are fine. Check that the interior is not too worn out. Sellers may just put new floor mats in, which are very cheap to replace. Underneath them, though, there may be worn out carpets.

### **2.9.9 Vehicle History Report**

Before you finally decide to buy a car, check the car's history with <http://www.carfax.com> or <http://www.autocheck.com>. It reveals whether the car has been in any accidents or whether the car was totaled or salvaged. It is not very expensive and is really worth it. You need a 17-digit VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) located on the metal strip on the dashboard to run the vehicle history. The VIN may also be located in other places, such as the engine, passenger door, driver side door, trunk, or hood. Make sure the VIN matches in every place. When you buy the car, you must collect the title. If the seller doesn't have the title or promises to give you later, don't buy the car. Every car and car owner must have a title. If the seller still has an outstanding loan on the car, you may go to the lender, pay them the outstanding balance, and they will give you the title right away. Check the seller's driver's license and match it with the title to make sure that the seller is really the owner of the car. If the car has any wheel locks, make sure to collect the key for them. Otherwise, you can't change tires. Remember to collect all the keys, maintenance records, owner's manuals, and any spare parts the seller may have. If the seller has receipts for batteries or alternators, make sure to collect them as well. Also, buy a pair of good quality jumper cables as soon as possible, just in case the battery dies.

### **2.9.10 Car Insurance**

Car insurance rates for single males under the age of 25 are more expensive. Insurance rates also depend upon the part of the city, town or county you live in, what the local

population is and how many miles you drive annually. If you keep your cars in a garage, or if you have safety features like security alarm or airbags, your insurance premiums may be lower. When buying car insurance, make sure to get uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage. If some other car hits your car, and if it is the fault of the other party, that other party's car liability insurance is supposed to pay for the damages to your car and also if you have any bodily injuries. If the other party who is in fault does not have car insurance or doesn't have enough car insurance, your insurance company will pay for your costs if you have uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage. Some insurance companies will help you find the person who hits your car and runs away. However, keep in mind, in case your car insurance is paying your claim in such cases, it would be counted as a claim against your policy and your insurance premiums may go up in future, even if it was not your fault. In many states, it is mandatory to get car insurance in order to register the cars. However, some people may get the insurance, register the car and then cancel the insurance. After purchasing the car, you must have car insurance before you can drive the car. Georgia law requires drivers to carry car insurance.

### **2.9.11 Safety and Emission Inspections**

Before you can register your car, you will have to have safety and emissions inspections performed. This can be done at any state authorized locations. Many gas stations and repair facilities have such authorized locations. If you are buying a new car, this will automatically be done for you.

### **2.9.12 Safety Inspection**

The safety inspection includes checking the essential safety features of the brakes, horn, tires, turn indicators, headlights, wipers, etc. When you pass your safety inspection, the inspector will put a sticker on your car windshield with the expiration date on it (usually one year). If it fails, you will get a slip indicating which portions failed. You will have to repair them and take the inspection again. If you go back to the same place, they will usually re-inspect for a discount, rather than full charge. You can have your repairs done anywhere you choose.

### **2.9. 13Emissions Inspection:**

An emissions inspection checks whether your car is more harmful to the environment than the allowed level. If your inspection passes, you will be given a passed test document, and they may also electronically transmit the data to the DMV. Additionally, the inspector may put a sticker on the windshield of the car. Bring all papers when you register your car. The emissions test is usually a quick 10 minute process and is required for cars registered in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

### **2.9.14 Title Registration**

You will have to register the car in your name before you can drive it. Many dealers take care of this for you when you buy a new car. Some dealers even have a stock of authorized license plates that they can fix for you right away. To register your car at the DMV, take the title of the vehicle (that you received from the seller), proof of insurance and safety/emissions inspection papers along with the fee amount. You can visit <http://www.dmv.org/ga-georgia/> for more information.

If you bought the car from a private party, you will have to pay sales tax to the DMV before they can register your vehicle. You can choose vanity license plates, on which you can have printed a special word or name. This costs extra money and delays your receipt of the license plate, as they will have to make special plates for you. After checking all the papers, the DMV will issue a temporary registration that is usually valid for one month. In Georgia, permanent license plates are issued right away. License plates already have the numbers and letters printed on them; you can't paint them yourself. You can drive your car after you have mounted your license plates on it. In Georgia, like Pennsylvania and Florida, you hang the license plate only on the rear of the car. In most states, though, both the front and rear of the car must have a license plate.

### **2.9.15 Leasing VS Financing**

## **Leasing**

If you're someone who likes a new car every few years, leasing might be for you. Leasing is like renting an apartment: Your monthly payments give you right to drive the car, just as rent gets you a place to live. Unlike an apartment, there's a set time period for how long you'll have use of the car. Auto leasing is available through banks, credit unions, finance companies and even automakers themselves. With a lease, your car will likely always be under warranty, so any mechanical problems should be covered. Also, monthly lease payments are typically cheaper than monthly payments for a car that you're buying outright. In addition, lease payments can be deducted from your taxes if you use your car for business more than 50 percent of the time; check with your accountant for details.

There are also tax deductions for financing a business vehicle, but they're not as great as lease deductions, especially for more expensive vehicles. That's because you can deduct a certain percentage of your lease payments no matter how high those payments are. Deductions for a financed car have limits. Experts say that people who lease typically drive away without making a down payment, whereas financing typically requires a 10 percent to 15 percent down payment. Also, you won't ever have to worry about selling or trading in the car when you're done: Just return it to your dealer. On the downside, once you return the car you've got no equity left, and you'll have to start over, leasing or buying a new one. Frequently, if you liked your leased vehicle, you can pay off its remaining value, but that can cost a lot. Leasing companies set your lease payments based on the car's residual value, which is the value that the firm believes your car will have when the lease ends. Those are often higher than what the car is actually worth on the market, experts say, so you should beware.

For many leases, the annual mileage allotment on a leased vehicle is typically limited to a range of 10,000 to 15,000 miles a year, so make sure you know your driving habits before committing. Exceeding the limit typically results in stiff fines, so if you drive more than 15,000 miles a year, leasing probably won't make economic sense. Additionally, a lease agreement may also require you to carry more than basic car insurance; lessors

(like finance companies) usually want you to have a comprehensive policy. Lease payments allow for basic wear and tear, but if there are any scrapes or excessive wear on your leased vehicle, you'll have to pay for those fixes yourself. If you fail to do so before the lease ends, penalties await you. Leases usually forbid any sort of vehicle modification, so if you're dead set on installing fancy 20-inch wheels or a 1,000-watt stereo, leasing isn't a good option for you.

## **Financing**

Most Americans choose to pay for their car through financing, or making monthly payments for a set number of months. Like leasing, financing is available through credit unions, automakers, banks and financial companies. The great thing about financing is that you're using someone else's money to pay for your car, freeing up your cash for whatever other needs (or desires) you may have. Unlike a lease, once you've made all of the payments, you own the car for good. There are even some zero-percent loan deals out there, typically from automakers and their financing arms that can make financing almost the same as paying with cash. Of course, the availability of attractive loans depends on your credit rating; the better your score, the higher your chances of getting the best financing terms from a lender. If you have too low a score, typically below 600, you may find it hard to get a loan on terms that you find acceptable.

If you want to buy a new car before you've paid off your old one, your options may be limited, especially if you're upside down on your existing car loan (meaning you owe more than the car is worth). Check with potential lenders to see what's feasible before you search for a car. Once you've been approved for financing, you should realize that you won't actually own the car until you're done making your payments. If you decide to sell your car while someone else still holds the title, the process can be difficult and will require your creditor's involvement. Unlike lease deals, where it's common to make no down payment, financing deals often require a substantial down payment: Creditors often ask for 10 percent to 15 percent down. Financing typically takes more per month out of your budget than leasing does. Remember though, unlike a lease you'll still have your car at the end of a financing deal. Many lenders are offering longer loan periods as

a way to bring monthly payments down; the average new-car loan now exceeds 60 months. Because any car purchase is a big investment, remember you need to shop around for that perfect payment plan with the right terms.

### **2.9.16 Total Loss**

If your vehicle is damaged in an accident, you must file an insurance claim with your car insurance company. A “total loss” claim is filed when the vehicle is damaged beyond repair, or when it would cost more to repair the vehicle than what the vehicle is worth.

### **2.9.17 Bumper to bumper warranty VS Power train warranty**

A “bumper-to-bumper” warranty means everything, between the front to the rear bumper - that goes wrong (unless caused by an accident or other abuse of the vehicle) the warranty will cover the repair. A “power train” warranty only covers the engine, transmission, and drivetrain. Some warranties only cover internally lubricated parts, meaning that it does not cover things like the starter and alternator. The warranty of the vehicle is a very important decision both for financial reasons and peace of mind.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The New Life**

#### **3.1 University Health Center**

##### **3.1.1 Georgia Tech**

###### **Health Insurance and Health Center**

Medical costs in US are generally high and you shall always make sure that you are covered by proper insurance or you might face high expenses on even a simple cold.

Georgia Tech offers health insurance for its students. The fees for the insurance are covered in your tuitions and the insurance card will be mailed to your address early in the semester.

The following notes are worthy to go through about health-related issues:

- As much as possible, visit Georgia Tech health center for non-important issues like having a cold, headache, stomachache, etc. The Health center is adjacent to Campus Recreation Center (CRC). Most of the times, your visit to the health

center is free. You will need to make an appointment online though (<https://www.myappointment.health.gatech.edu/>)

- For Medicine, if you visit the health center, you will be referred to their pharmacy on the lobby and they will provide you with your medication for free or little cost. The Georgia Tech pharmacy also offers free self-service medication for common problems like colds, headaches, etc. All you need is to visit the pharmacy and fill out a form, and they will give you the common medications for your problem. For more serious problems, follow the appointment procedure above and visit a doctor.
- For dental needs, you can visit Georgia Tech's Tech Dentistry (<http://www.techdentistry.com/>). Note that dental costs in US are generally very high and your Georgia Tech insurance does NOT cover most of dental procedures. Only simple cleanings and fillings are covered. Good news is that Dr Bahareh Emadzadeh, one of our very own GISO's advisors is in Tech dentistry.
- Health center also provides Women's clinic, Psychiatry, and laboratory/X-ray services.
- Only visit the emergency room of a hospital for real emergencies. If you have a simple cold or headache and you need help after-hours, check with a local pharmacy (CVS, Walgreens, etc.), and they will tell you what type of medicine you can buy for the need. Check with the health center the day after.

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### **Mental Health**

•If the stress of research, coursework and living abroad is becoming overwhelming, or you just feel the need to talk to a professional counselor, Georgia Tech has a counseling center located on campus. They provide free counseling sessions for students.

•They are located on the second floor of the Flag building. You can contact them at 353 Ferst Dr.

Atlanta, GA 30332-3333

Phone: 404-894-2575

Fax: 404-894-1804

<http://www.counseling.gatech.edu/index.php>

•The Counseling Center offers a variety of services to help students succeed academically and personally. To access any of their services for the first time, please schedule an Initial Consultation appointment. Their services to currently enrolled Georgia Tech students include:

- o Assessment, including screenings for ADHD and LD
- o Brief Consultation (i.e., 1 to 3 meetings with a counselor)

Career Counseling

- o Couple's Counseling
- o Group Counseling
- o Individual Counseling
- o Life Skills Workshops
- o Referrals
- o Self-Help Resources

•In addition to the Georgia Tech Counseling Center if you need to talk to an Iranian Psychologists, you can contact Dr. Hamid Mirsalimi at 404-579-1987 or visit his website at <http://www.drmirsalimi.com/Welcome.php>

•If you are a PhD student on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia health insurance that Georgia Tech offers, you may be able to re-cover some of your costs for seeing an outside Psychologist.

•Go to <https://www.bcbsga.com> and click on Find a Doctor, then choose, psychiatrist or psychologist

•The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Here are seven tell-tale signs of depression that will help you determine if your friend or loved-one is developing depression:

1. Loss of interest in things that was previously pleasurable.
2. Sleep difficulties.
3. Eating changes
4. Anger and irritability.
5. Expressing negative thoughts.
6. Suicidal ideas.
7. Loss of confidence in oneself

### **3.1.2 UGA**

#### **Health Insurance**

International students are covered by a mandatory health insurance (currently United Healthcare insurance company). If you are a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant, the insurance will be deducted from your salary every month (~\$150 per month in Fall, and \$207 per month in Spring). The plan details are found in <http://www.hrdocs.uga.edu/mandatory-studentins-summary-fall2014.pdf>

The instructions on how to get your insurance card will be emailed to you. Please make sure you carefully read all of your emails.

You can use your health insurance in UGA Health Center and any other place outside UGA who accepts it (inside and outside Georgia).

#### **Immunization**

As part of your registration, you were supposed to fill out immunization forms. You should submit the form to the health center through fax or mail (or email). Some of the vaccinations can be done in Iran (In most of the big cities there are authorized places that issue an international vaccination card). Some parts of the form should be signed by a physician with American or Canadian License (e.g. TB test). You may be able to do this in places such as Pasteur Institute of Iran. Otherwise, you should do it in the Health Center (not a big deal at all and it is not expensive either).

#### **Health Center**

University Health Center provides a variety of services including Urgent Care, Women clinic, Dental Clinic, Vision Clinic, Counseling and Psychiatric Services, Physical and Massage therapy, pharmacy, Flu shot, lab testing, and much more. For more information please visit <http://www.uhs.uga.edu/>.

Most of these services are free of charge or inexpensive for students and using your health insurance (Please note that Dental service is not covered by the health insurance. However, you may want to purchase a separate dental insurance. Please visit <http://www.hr.uga.edu/dental-insurance> for more information).

Please note that women of age 21 and higher are highly recommended to get an annual exam (every year), which is free of charge for students. For more information, please visit [http://www.uhs.uga.edu/sexualhealth/women/annual\\_exam.html](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/sexualhealth/women/annual_exam.html) or visit the Health Center located at 55 Carlton Street, Athens, GA 30602.

## **Mental Health**

It is very important to maintain our mental health, and it is always good to talk to an expert! Many of us would like to know how to deal with our anxiety, stress, fear, relationship, trauma, time management issues, etc. Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), located on the second floor of UGA Health Center, provides a variety of services dedicated to students' mental health. CAPS services are inexpensive for students using health insurance. For more information, and to make an appointment visit <http://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/>

## **3.2 University Dining Halls**

### **3.2.1 Georgia Tech Dining Options**

For dining locations inside Georgia Tech campus, useful information can be found here: <http://mealplan.gatech.edu/pages/locations.aspx>

There are five categories of dining options for Georgia Tech students:

- A. Locations:

1) **Dining Halls:** Look for "Brittain Dining Hall", "Woodruff Dining Hall" and "North Avenue Dining Hall" in the link above. You pay a nominal fee to enter and it's all you can eat.

2) **Georgia Tech Food Court:** The food court is located on the second floor of student center, you can go to various food booths and pick up food from them and you will pay to a cashier while exiting the area. There are variety of options from Indian, Asian, Mediterranean, etc. in the food court

3) **On Campus Locations:** Notable to mention are Subway, Taco Bell, Chick-Fil-A, and Burger Bites in Student Center and Highland Bakery near Tech Tower (<http://highlandbakery.com/contact.html>). You can also eat at La Petit Cafe in ibb (<http://ibb.gatech.edu/le-petit-cafe>). There are other places that you can find around tech for dining

4) **Tech Square Area:** There are good eating options around Tech Square. Moe's [Mexican] (<http://www.moes.com>)

- TinDrum [Thai] (<http://tindrumcafe.com/catering/gatech>)
- Ray's Pizza
- Waffle House (<http://www.wafflehouse.com/>)
- Chuck's Famous (<http://www.chucksfamous.com/>)
- Gyro Bros [Greek and Mediterranean] (<http://www.gyrobros.net/>)

For upper class dining in walking distance visit:

- The Spence (<http://www.thespenceatl.com/p/menus.html>)
- Satto [Thai and Sushi] (<http://www.sattothaiatlanta.com/home-page/>)
- Boacdo (<http://bocadoatlanta.com/>)

5) **Coffee Shops:**

- Starbucks at Clough (<http://clough.gatech.edu/starbucks.html>)
- Starbucks at Tech Square (<http://www.starbucks.com/store/12939/us/georgia-tech-student-union-b-n-48-fifth-st-nw-atlanta-ga-303081067>)
- La Petit Cafe (<http://ibb.gatech.edu/le-petit-cafe>)
- Coffee Shops at College of Computing Building (CCB), basement level
- Coffee shop at Architecture Building, first level

- Octane (<http://octanecoffee.com/westside/>)

\*\* Other suggestions and place are found here:

<http://www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=6> Or by searching on yelp ([www.yelp.com/](http://www.yelp.com/))

B. **Meal Plans:** You can always use cash or credit card or the Buzz funds to buy food at any Georgia Tech campus locations. You can also apply for a meal plan if you dine a lot on campus. Information are found here:

<http://mealplan.gatech.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

Most popular meal plan for graduate students are Ramblin' meal plans. You pay an amount of money (usually \$200 - \$400) upfront for the semester and then you can use this money toward eating in campus locations throughout the semester. This money will be exempt from 8% tax and sometimes there are bonuses of \$25 to \$75 given on top. Note about this plan that:

- You should spend all the money in one semester, it won't transfer to the next semester
- Most off-campus locations (category 4) do not accept buzz card and meal plans

### 3.2.2 UGA dining Options

There are several locations on campus for dining that can be categorized into two groups; Food court and dining halls.

- 1) The university food court is located in Tate Student Center. There are numerous dining opportunities in the Tate Student Center, with six restaurants operated by UGA's department of Food Services. The Bulldog Café serves lunch daily and contains Chick-fil-A® Express as well as Bulldog Grille and Giorgio's Pizza & Pasta. The new Tate Café food court contains franchises of the regional chains Barberitos Southwestern Grille and Larry's Giant Subs as well as Hotei's Asian Grill. The mezzanine level of Tate includes the Taste of Home Café, with a menu that includes signature recipes submitted by the families of UGA students over the past decade. Check Tate's website to see the hours, menu, and other information.

- 2) There are several dining halls scattered all around campus. You do not need to be on a meal plan to go to these places to eat. If you are not on a plan you pay the meal fee (\$10- 15) to enter the dining hall and you can eat as much as you want, and there is a large variety of food and fruits and desserts. They serve food three times a day, breakfast, lunch and dinner, each time you will have to pay the meal fee to enter the hall. Another option is to get a meal plan for the whole semester, so you won't need to pay each time you want to enter the dining halls. More information can be found at: <http://foodservice.uga.edu/> .
- 3) Downtown Athens has many restaurants with all sorts of price ranges and food, and since it is very close to campus, it is a great option to eat in Downtown.

### **3.3 University Sports Center**

#### **UGA Recreational Sports**

As a registered student, you have access to Ramsey Center where you can work out, and play a variety of sports including basketball, volleyball, badminton, kickboxing, swimming, etc. You can also register for personal and group training sessions, yoga, etc. with extra charges. Please visit <http://www.recsports.uga.edu/> for more information. You can also use outdoor tennis courts, golf course, soccer fields, running tracks, etc.

### **3.4 Iran Interest Section in Embassy of Pakistan**

As you know, because of the conflict between Iran and US government, Iran does not have any embassy in US, so the interest section of Iran, which is located in the Embassy of Pakistan, serves Iranian citizens. The services “daftar” gives you, as an Iran citizen, are;

\* Passport Affairs, includes passport renewal, temporary military drafts exemption request, national card, duplicate of lost passport.

\* Vital Record, includes registration of marriage and divorce, birth and death certificate, and some document verification.

\* Student Affairs, contains verification of college and university records, J-1 visa services.

For each of these services, you need to fill corresponded form which can be found at [www.daftar.org](http://www.daftar.org). After filling each form, you need to post the form to “2209 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007” or you can fill the forms online.

\* Passport renewal for students is free but you’ll need certificate of attendance from your college or university

\* College or university verification fee is 15\$

Tel: (202) 965-4990

Fax: (202) 965-1073

### **3.5 Grocery Shopping**

Everyone needs to eat and for that reason there is a plethora of food stores in the United States. Similar to other stores, grocery stores are either nationally or locally owned and offer a variety of products to their customers. Nationally or regionally owned stores typically have a broader selection of foods while locally owned stores typically have more specialty items. Basic necessities like fruits, vegetables, meats and grains can be found at both nationally and locally owned stores. Organic foods are also available in most stores at a more expensive price yet still affordable. Most grocery stores will have everything you need—from food and beverages to toilet paper and cold medicines—under one roof and pharmacies, bakeries and delis are typically found in larger grocery stores. There are also a couple of Iranian stores in Atlanta that have Iranian goods, bread, desert, Halal Meat and etc. You can also find some Arab markets in Athens that have similar Iranian goods.

If you want to buy fresh and cheap grocery, ask for local farmers market. Quality and price are far better than what you find in chain stores.

Many stores in the U.S. have committed to reducing their use of plastic bags. Consider bringing or buying re-useable cloth bags and bringing them with you when you shop. Many stores offer a small discount if you use your own bag and most are grateful that you are doing your part to protect the planet's resources.

Keep in mind that most stores in the United States have limited hours during which they're open. Plan ahead, make sure you have the items you need most in stock and enjoy shopping while you're attending school in the United States! The table below shows a list of grocery shops available in your city with their price ranges.

**Athens:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sells</b>	<b>Price Class</b>
<b>Publix</b>	Fruit Vegetable , drugstore	Medium-High
<b>Traders Joes</b>	Organic meat, Fruit Vegetable	Medium- High
<b>Earth fare</b>	Organic food, Vegetable	High
<b>Fresh Market</b>	Organic food, Vegetable	Medium-High
<b>Target</b>	Food , Furniture, household , clothes, drugstore, electronics	Medium
<b>Kroger</b>	Food, Vegetables, Fruits, drugstore	Medium
<b>Walmart</b>	Food , Furniture, household , clothes, drugstore, electronics	Medium-low
<b>Aldi</b>	Food, Vegetables	low
<b>Sams</b>	WholeSale	
<b>CostCo</b>	WholeSale	

**Atlanta:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sells</b>	<b>Price Class</b>
<b>Publix</b>	Fruit Vegetable , drugstore	Medium-High
<b>Traders Joes</b>	Organic meat, Fruit Vegetable	Medium- High

<b>Target</b>	Food , Furniture, household , clothes, drugstore, electronics	Medium
<b>Kroger</b>	Food, Vegetables, Fruits, drugstore	Medium
<b>Walmart</b>	Food , Furniture, household , clothes, drugstore, electronics	Medium-low
<b>Aldi</b>	Food, Vegetables	low
<b>Sams</b>	WholeSale	
<b>CostCo</b>	WholeSale	
<b>Your Dekalb Farmers Market</b>	Meat, Vegetable, Dairy food	Medium-Low
<b>Buford Farmers Market</b>	Meat, Vegetable, Dairy food	Medium-Low

### 3.6 Entertainment

#### 3.5.1 UGA

You need to take a break and have fun? You have plenty of options!

Note: some of the options are seasonal

- restaurants and bars: <http://www.visitathensga.com/restaurants/dining-listings/>
- Movie Theaters:
  - Tate student center has a movie theater and the student tickets are only 1\$ (you can check the schedule here
  - <http://tate.uga.edu/movies/>
  - off campus theaters:
  - [http://www.fandango.com/athens\\_+ga\\_movietimes](http://www.fandango.com/athens_+ga_movietimes)
- Shopping centers:
  - In Athens: Georgia Square Mall, Epps Bridge Shopping Center, Beachwood Shopping Center
  - 1 hour from Athens: Mall of Georgia, Commerce outlet Mall

- Camping, hiking, scuba diving, etc.
  - Ask GISO people about their experiences. Ramsey Student Center will also give you some information.
- Football season: you can buy student tickets and watch the football games in Sanford Stadium. You will receive emails about purchasing the ticket. Go Dawgs!
- Concerts, festivals, parties and other events: These events could be in Athens, Atlanta or elsewhere. Don't have a car yet? No worries! We carpool and make sure everyone has ride.
- Six flags: rides, roller coasters <https://www.sixflags.com/overgeorgia>