



School of Mathematics
Atlanta, GA 30332 USA

Pre-Arrival Information for Incoming PhD Students

May 2022

Dear Incoming PhD Students,

I hope that you are well, and off to a productive Summer! The purpose of this letter is to convey important information and dates about your arrival in Atlanta, our orientation program, and the start of your PhD studies in the [School of Math](#). Please let us know if we can be of any assistance, and **keep us informed of any changes in your postal address, telephone number, or email**.

You may reach me at yu@math.gatech.edu and our graduate program coordinator Mr. [Malcom Emerson](#) may be reached at memerson9@gatech.edu. Both of us will also see emails sent to dgs@math.gatech.edu. In addition to this document, you might find the following useful [Checklist for New Graduate Students](#).

The [Office of Graduate Studies](#) may have already pointed you to this checklist. It reiterates, and expands on, some of the general information below.

I. Practical Information

I.1. Immunization and Health Insurance

Georgia Tech requires documentation of a tuberculosis screening and various immunizations. You can see the required health forms at the [Immunization Requirements](#) site. No student is allowed to register until the immunization and the medical entrance forms are accepted by the [Student Health Service](#). In addition, all students must have medical insurance. Please look carefully at the [Student Insurance](#) site for details on the mandatory plan. If you already have adequate medical coverage, for example through your parents' insurance, most likely you will not want (nor need) to purchase the "mandatory plan".

I.2. The Office of International Education (OIE)

International students should refer to the [OIE website](#). In particular, browse the links at [International Students and Scholars](#). All international students will check in and attend OIE

mandatory sessions. The following topics are covered in detail on the website or will be discussed during orientation:

- Obtaining a U.S. visa and entering the United States;
- F-1 transferring from another institution in the US to Georgia Tech.
- Medical entrance form and certificate of immunizations.
- Health and accident insurance.
- Housing and climate.

I.3. Institute-Wide Orientation Programs

Before the beginning of the Fall term there will be several [Institute-wide orientation programs](#) for new graduate students, some of which you will be required to attend. Participation in these programs will save you a great deal of time and effort in doing the many preliminary tasks that you must complete before classes begin.

I.4. School of Math Workshops and TA Training

The first day of class is **August 22**. School of Math requires **all new domestic PhD students** to be in Atlanta no later than **August 15** and will provide **extra stipend** to help cover your expense for the additional week you need to be on campus. During the week of **August 15-19**, there will be Campus-wide orientation activities, as well as orientation specifically related to School of Mathematics. This includes topics such as: TA training for all new students, graduate course selection, registration, scheduling issues, and many other topics that are relevant to beginning your degree program. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am- 4:00pm each day.

If you are an **international PhD student** (you hold a Visa), you will be required to be on campus during the weeks of **August 8-12** and **August 15-19** to participate in the School of Math's orientation program for international students. We will provide **extra stipend** to help cover your expenses for the two additional weeks you need to be on campus. You must arrive in Atlanta no later than **August 8**. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am-4:00pm each day of these two weeks. International PhD students will need to complete an **Online Interview** with Dr. Burke (see section II.6. Oral English Instruction).

Attending this orientation program will give you a head start on academic and TA issues and will give you a chance to socialize with other new and current graduate students. During the week of **August 15-19**, Ms. [Grodzinsky](#), the School's Director of TAs, will be facilitating the TA training workshops. In addition, during the week of **August 8-12**, Dr. [Burke](#), the School's Director of International Instructor Training & Language Specialist, will coordinate various activities and workshops designed for the international students. Dr. Burke will continue as the principal coordinator of the school's orientation program during the second week. If you have questions

specifically about the orientation program, please feel free to contact these two faculty members directly (klarag@math.gatech.edu and burke@math.gatech.edu)

I.5. Your Arrival Information

As soon as you know your arrival date and time, airline, and flight number please email that to memerson9@gatech.edu. We can arrange a pick-up for you at the airport by one of our current grad students, if you are flying into Atlanta.

On Monday, August 8, at 9:00am, international students will meet in Skiles for the orientation. We will provide the needed practical support to make sure that your documents are in order, thus facilitating your check in with OIE. You should bring the following documents with you on Monday, August 8:

- Passport
- Original degree(s)
- Original transcript in your language AND English translations
- Laptop computer

I.6. Housing and Transportation

Please make sure to check information on housing ahead of arrival. For on-campus housing, contact the [Georgia Tech Housing Office](#). For off-campus housing, you may want to look at the information at apartmentguide.com. The Housing Office also maintains a list of [off-campus housing](#). Finally, your best resource might be our current [graduate students](#). Please contact them for advice; you can find their names and email addresses on [the School of Math website](#).

Long-term parking on campus requires a permit, see the [Parking Office](#). Most graduate students live close to campus, and walk or bike to the School. Further, if you find a place to live near a MARTA station, it will not be necessary to own a car. I encourage you to try to live close to campus or MARTA, as traffic in Atlanta can be daunting. There are several [bike shops](#) around campus where you may purchase a bike. See also the [Atlanta Bicycle Coalition](#) website.

II. Academic Information

II.1. Schedule of Classes

I will be here when you arrive, and will be available to discuss appropriate classes to take in the Fall Semester. At the same time, shortly before your arrival, you will be assigned a Faculty mentor. The mentor will be your future reference point for all questions of academic concern. All graduate students who are supported as either Research or Teaching Assistants, or are on a

Fellowship program, or hold a Visa, must be enrolled Full Time at all times. The Fall 2022 schedule will be posted on our [Courses and Registration Page](#). More information about registration will be discussed during the School's orientation.

II.2. Math Comprehensive Exams

If you are coming to study for the PhD in Math ([ACO](#) and [CSE](#) students should see the corresponding websites for details about their comprehensive exams), and have had prior graduate level coursework, you are encouraged to consider taking the [Written Math Comprehensive Exams](#) in August/September 2022. You may attempt the Math exams as many times as you want, during the first two years of your studies. A description of the examination and the dates is available on the exam page where you can also find past exams and syllabi. You will have the opportunity to register for these exams in the Fall.

II.3. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

All incoming PhD students must complete [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) training. This will consist of an online component and an in-person component. Graduate Admission will send you more information about this shortly. For the in-person training, the School of Math has its own in-house RCR training course, [Math 6001](#), which we strongly recommend all incoming PhD students register for in their first semester in the program. You can find a detailed syllabus for a recent offering of Math 6001 [here](#).

II.4. Grad Groups

All incoming PhD students are required to register for [Grad Groups](#), which is a one credit hour course for the first eight weeks of Fall 2022. All of the activities are designed to provide guidance, support, development, and/or time for reflection. We hope that this course will set a foundation for your time as a graduate student at Georgia Tech. You can find a detailed syllabus for a recent offering of Grad Groups [here](#).

II.5. Teaching Assistants

If you are going to be a Teaching Assistant (TA), once you have registered, you will report your course schedule to Ms. Klara Grodzinsky. She will use this information to assign your teaching duties. We will discuss this in detail during the orientation. Ms. Grodzinsky's email is klarag@math.gatech.edu. Typical duties for new PhD students in Fall 2022 are:

- Teaching 1 Studio Section (1 hr per week in class)*
- Tutoring 1 hr/week in the Math-Lab

- Preparing for class, grading papers, communicating/meeting with students, and attending meetings with the course instructor(s)
- Enrolling in and participating in CETL 8000, the teacher training course for Math TAs.

Alternate duties may be assigned at the discretion of the TA training team and will total the same number of weekly hours. The CETL 8000 course is mandatory for all new Teaching Assistants who are teaching a Studio class and is required during the first semester you teach for the School of Math.

*Please note that during your first semester, you will receive a teaching reduction of 1.5 studio class (3 hours per week). Beginning in your second semester, your duties will revert to the standard teaching duties of two studio sections per semester (4 hrs per week of classroom teaching). Standard TA responsibilities typically total approximately 13 hours per week. .

II.6. Oral English Instruction

Non-native English speakers are required to attend communication courses targeting aural/oral English used for teaching. These courses are taught in the School of Math during the Fall and Spring semesters. In some cases, students may be exempt from these courses, as determined by Dr. Burke.

- *Math 8305* – (Fall 2022) Academic Spoken English for International Graduate Students (2 hrs/week)
- *Math 8306* – (Spring 2023) Communication Strategies for International Teaching Assistants (2 hrs/week)

Online Interview

If you are a non-native English speaker, Dr. Burke will contact you to arrange an online interview to determine your language skills and communication ability for instructional purposes. Her email is burke@math.gatech.edu.

Please contact us if we can be of further assistance. We look forward to your arrival!

Best wishes,



Xingxing Yu

Professor & Director of Graduate Studies