WELCOME TO

A look at the campus, community, and culture of the George Washington University

Alumni Association
Dear GW students and parents,

On behalf of the GW China Alumni Network Committee, welcome to the George Washington University! The GW China Alumni Network is composed of nearly 500 university alumni living in China as well as parents of current and past GW students. Together, we create “a community of Colonials”—an expression used by the university to describe a group of people connected to the success of GW!

To new students, you will soon find your home in the heart of Washington, D.C. Whether you plan to spend two years, four years, or more in D.C., we wish you only the best during your academic endeavors! Remember, we are here for you whether you’re on campus at Foggy Bottom, traveling with a professor to another country during spring break, or spending the summer interning in China. We can offer general support and academic and career advice. Finally, no matter what your interest or passion, we can help you expand your network of Colonials.

To the parents of new students, we hope you will join us for activities and events hosted by the GW China Alumni Network. Not only will you find support through current parents, but we also hope you will take an active role in our GW community in China.

You may already know that GW’s official school colors are buff and blue, the colors of the military uniform worn by our school’s namesake, President George Washington. Thus, in closing, “Raise High the Buff and Blue!”

Congratulations,
The GW China Alumni Network

The George Washington University was created in 1821 through an Act of Congress, fulfilling George Washington’s vision of an institution in the nation’s capital dedicated to educating and preparing future leaders. Today, GW is the largest institution of higher education in the District of Columbia. We have more than 20,000 students from all 50 states, the District, and more than 130 countries studying a range of disciplines—from forensic science and creative writing to international affairs and computer engineering, as well as medicine, public health, law, and public policy.

GW comprises three campuses—Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon in Washington, D.C., and the GW Virginia Science and Technology Campus in Ashburn, Va.—as well as several graduate education centers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and Hampton Roads, Virginia.

We strive to provide an environment where knowledge is created and acquired and where creative endeavors seek to enrich the experiences of the global society. With 10 schools and colleges and nearly 100 research centers and institutes, our students receive hands-on experience as they explore nearly any avenue of personal interest.
Acquiring a Visa

As part of the admissions packet sent to you by GW, you should have received an I-20 or DS-2019.

To obtain your U.S. visa, contact the U.S. Embassy or consulate in your country for information on application requirements, procedures, and processing time. The U.S. Department of State is responsible for issuing student visas. Requirements and procedures vary from country to country. However, to be prepared to present the following documents to your U.S. Embassy or consulate:

- The I-20 (for F-1 visa) issued by GW, or the DS-2019 (for J-1 visa) issued by GW or your sponsoring agency
- Your valid passport
- An original letter of admission to GW
- Original financial documentation in English, referring to U.S. dollars (for example: scholarship awards, bank statements, etc.) matching the funding section on your I-20 or DS-2019
- Evidence of strong ties to your home country, such as cultural, social, professional, or any other aspects of your life that have a binding effect between you and your country of residence (for example: family members, a job, a steady source of income, a house, an investment, and/or bank accounts)

Remember to contact the U.S. Embassy or consulate or review its website to accurately determine all of the necessary documents you will need to apply for your visa.

When & How to Arrive

F-1 and J-1 visa holders are permitted to enter the United States no more than 30 days prior to the report date listed on their I-20 or DS-2019. This report date is located in item No. 5 on your immigration document. We recommend you arrive in Washington, D.C., two to three weeks before classes start to settle into new housing and attend orientation programs.

It is important that you enter the country with the proper visa type (F-1 or J-1). To do so you must present the following to an immigration officer at the port of entry:

- Your passport
- Your U.S. F-1 or J-1 visa stamp for the George Washington University
- Your I-20 or DS-2019

If you enter as a B-1 (business visitor) or as a B-2 (tourist), you will not be able to study until your immigration status changes. If you enter on the Visa Waiver Program (with no visa), you will not be able to study; and you will not be able to change your status to that of a student while in the United States.

The International Services Office

The mission of the International Services Office, also known as the ISO, is to provide advising, support services, advocacy, training, and cross-cultural educational experiences to facilitate and enhance the experience of GW international students, scholars, and their families. The ISO is committed to being an active collaborator and resource to the university community and stakeholders while liaising with relevant government agencies to ensure individual and university compliance with federal laws and immigration regulations.

At the ISO Welcome Center, our team of student ambassadors and office staff will provide you with information to help you prepare for your life as a GW student and answer questions you may have about settling into campus. During your visit, we will also review your immigration documents to ensure you are legally ready to begin your studies and to help you complete the required check-in process.
A diverse and international city, Washington, D.C., is full of opportunities to explore, learn, and connect. As a GW student living in D.C. or in surrounding neighborhoods, you will be able to take advantage of the many events and activities offered on and off campus. On weekdays and weekends, GW’s campuses at Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon are full of fun events hosted by professors, student offices, and student organizations.

Off campus, you will find that D.C. offers more social, historical, and cultural activities than you could ever imagine! For example, there are free nightly musical and historical events like the Late Night Pops at the National Gallery of Art and other historic sites located around the National Mall. During spring and summer, you might find yourself enjoying an American-style barbecue at the Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, or other historic sites.

No matter where you live, GW is the perfect place to grow emotionally and intellectually and find a community of Colonials!

**LIVING IN THE NATION’S CAPITAL**

**Undergraduates**

GW requires all first- and second-year students to reside on campus unless they are approved for a Residency Exemption. Beginning with the Class of 2018, students are required to live on campus for their third year as well.

GW’s housing experience contributes to overall academic success, provides greater opportunities for campus involvement, and offers safe and convenient services to residents. Incoming first-year students have a variety of residential living choices located on our Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses. Below are the first-year housing options for the 2015-2016 Academic Year:

- Clark Hall
- Cole Hall
- Hensley Hall
- Madison Hall
- Merriweather Hall
- Mitchell Hall
- Potomac House
- Somers Hall
- Thurstoon Hall
- West Hall

**Graduates**

Graduate students have a number of different options for on- and off-campus housing. Graduate students are encouraged to visit Off Campus Student Affairs within the Center for Student Engagement to learn more about off-campus housing options.

The Columbia Plaza Housing Program is an attractive housing option for graduate students at GW. The university serves as a referral agent for participants in the Columbia Plaza Housing Program, allowing students to secure competitively priced housing in a convenient location. GW students seeking off-campus housing through this program do not have to demonstrate the minimum income requirements that are necessary from non-GW students when applying to live in the building.

The Columbia Plaza Housing Program is not available to undergraduate students. Students interested in leasing with Columbia Plaza should email gwhouse@gwu.edu no earlier than 30–35 days prior to their desired move-in date as current tenants are required to provide a 30-day vacate notice.

**Getting around D.C.**

One of the reasons why D.C. is a great city is that there are many forms of public transportation:

- **Metro:** The subway system, referred to as the Metro, is a safe and inexpensive method of transportation in the city. The Orange, Blue, and Silver Line trains lead directly to the Foggy Bottom/GWU metro station, the heart of GW’s downtown campus.

- **Metrorobus and the Circulator:** The Metrorobus and the Circulator are both public bus systems.

- **Taxi and Uber:** D.C. has many taxi options, and depending on where you want to go, using either a taxi or calling an Uber using the mobile app called “Uber” can be a convenient way to get around the city.

- **Campus Shuttles:** The university maintains three shuttles that go in between GW’s campuses:
  - Vern Express: Runs between Foggy Bottom and the Mount Vernon campuses.
  - VSTC Express: Runs between the Foggy Bottom and Virginia Science and Technology campuses.
  - Wiehle Express: Stops at several points in Loudoun County, the Wiehle-Reston East Metro station, and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus.

**English for Academic Purposes Program**

The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program serves enrolled international graduate and undergraduate GW students who are speakers of English as a second or additional language. The program’s highly qualified faculty members teach the research, writing, and communication skills that form the basis of success in the academic and professional worlds. The program serves as an important resource for international students at the university.

The George Washington University is an institution where you will learn both in and out of the classroom. Students interact with their professors and fellow students regularly through conversations and discussions. Together, students, faculty, and staff members create a diverse campus environment that incorporates perspectives from more than 130 countries around the world. Class participation, independent thinking, academic honesty, and group work are all important aspects of the academic culture at GW.

**Libraries**

The libraries at GW provide many services to students, including study space options in quiet areas, group areas, group study rooms, and individual desks. Gelman Library is the main library, located at the Foggy Bottom Campus and open 24/7 to all GW students. You can also:

- Chat with a librarian via instant message/chat, in-person, and by appointment
- Get research and technology assistance at the “Ask Us Desk”
- Meet with advisors at the GW Writing Center – an open, welcoming, professional environment where students can receive dedicated attention to their writing and research projects

Please note that the libraries at GW do not have textbooks. You'll need to buy those by yourself — so budget accordingly!

In addition to offering for-credit courses, the EAP program offers additional programs for international students, including:

- **EAP Writing Support Program:** Free, one-on-one service for GW students with non-English-speaking backgrounds.
- **Monthly Language Café at Eckles Library:** Free language conversation hours led by GW language faculty members on the Mount Vernon Campus.
- **Resource Lab:** Equipped with computers to enable students to work on language assignments or use language-specific software.
- **Language Exchange:** Offers an opportunity to connect with others in the GW community for language practice and cultural discovery.

**Student Organizations**

Student organizations are a vibrant part of GW. Assembled under a variety of causes and interests, student organizations exist to provide GW students the opportunity to enrich their co-curricular experience by producing a diverse array of student activities that benefit and enlighten the GW community.

With more than 400 registered student organizations, there are endless opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to get involved around common causes, interests, and experiences. Just to name a few:

- **International Student Community (ISC)**
  - The ISC is a student-led organization with the goal of bringing together international students at GW in order to engage them in different cultural, social, and leadership experiences on campus.
  - [http://gwisc.com](http://gwisc.com)

- **Chinese Cultural Association (CCA)**
  - [gwucca@gmail.com](mailto:gwucca@gmail.com)

- **Chinese Student and Scholar Association (CSSA)**
  - [http://hellogwu.com](http://hellogwu.com)
The George Washington University serves all GW students and alumni through a comprehensive centralized career center and specialized school-based career centers that provide career and employment resources, connections, and individualized career services. All workshops and events of the Center for Career Services (CCS) are open to GW undergraduate and graduate students.

The CCS supports international students’ career and employment goals through its programs and services, including targeted initiatives that assist students in identifying their career interests and building job search skills to successfully pursue U.S. or home country employment. To do this, the center works with international students seeking internships, co-op, and employment, within the limitations of U.S. immigration and labor regulations. The job search experience for international students may present unexpected challenges. Visit the CCS to meet with a Career Coach and enhance your career and employment options.

The George Washington University
School of Business, Fowler Career Center
http://business.gwu.edu/careercenter/

GW Law
http://www.law.gwu.edu/careers

School of Business, Fowler Career Center
http://business.gwu.edu/careercenter/

School of Engineering and Applied Science, Graduate Career Center
http://www.seas.gwu.edu/recruiting-career-services

Milken Institute School of Public Health
http://sphhs.gwu.edu/services/career-center

Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration
http://tsspopa.gwu.edu/career-advancement

The center provides individualized career services and resources for:
- Undergraduate degree-seeking students from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, including the School of Media and Public Affairs; Elliott School of International Affairs; School of Engineering and Applied Science; School of Medicine and Health Sciences; School of Nursing; and the Milken Institute School of Public Health
- Graduate degree-seeking students from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, including the School of Media and Public Affairs; School of Medicine and Health Sciences; and the School of Nursing

On-Campus Employment
GW hires more than 5,600 students to work on campus each year. Working on campus is a great way to build relationships at GW with faculty and staff and gain career-enhancing experiences.

F-1 students may work 20 hours or less per week on campus while school is in session. If multiple jobs are held on campus, students must make sure that the total number of hours does not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session. During official school breaks, students can work 40 hours per week.

In order to work, students must be enrolled as full-time students and must be making satisfactory progress toward a degree. Students participating in a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) may not participate in any on-campus employment other than their GTA or GRA. Graduate students receiving tuition and stipend from GW must receive permission from the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships before working on-campus.

You can search for an on-campus position by visiting the Center for Career Services website at careerservices.gwu.edu or by searching for positions at gwork.gwu.edu.

If interested, apply early—most students find their jobs in September and October. Positions are not guaranteed for all students, so make sure to prepare your résumé and cover letter to accurately reflect your experiences!

Off-Campus Employment
In order to work off-campus, you will require authorization from the International Services Office. You must be in valid F-1 or J-1 status for at least one full academic year (there are some exceptions to this requirement), and you must be recommended by your International Student Advisor before employment starts. There are a few options available to students who wish to work off-campus.

Students are limited to working 20 hours or fewer per week during the fall and spring semesters. During official school breaks, students can work up to 40 hours per week. To discuss your legal off-campus employment options, consult with an ISO advisor. Working without proper authorization is considered a violation of your legal status.

For school-based, specialized career services, contact your career center for more information:

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<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
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<tr>
<td>College of Professional Studies</td>
<td><a href="http://cps.gwu.edu/career-services">http://cps.gwu.edu/career-services</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elliott School of International Affairs, Graduate Career Center</td>
<td><a href="http://elliott.gwu.edu/gscd">http://elliott.gwu.edu/gscd</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate School of Education and Human Development</td>
<td><a href="http://gsehd.gwu.edu/career">http://gsehd.gwu.edu/career</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School of Political Management</td>
<td><a href="http://gspm.gwu.edu/career-resources">http://gspm.gwu.edu/career-resources</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>GW Law</td>
<td><a href="http://www.law.gwu.edu/careers">http://www.law.gwu.edu/careers</a></td>
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<td>School of Business, Fowler Career Center</td>
<td><a href="http://business.gwu.edu/careercenter/">http://business.gwu.edu/careercenter/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering and Applied Science, Graduate Career Center</td>
<td><a href="http://www.seas.gwu.edu/recruiting-career-services">http://www.seas.gwu.edu/recruiting-career-services</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milken Institute School of Public Health</td>
<td><a href="http://sphhs.gwu.edu/services/career-center">http://sphhs.gwu.edu/services/career-center</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://tsspopa.gwu.edu/career-advancement">http://tsspopa.gwu.edu/career-advancement</a></td>
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TOP CAREER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

1. Visit the Center for Career Services website to schedule an appointment with a Career Coach to discuss your career and job search plan. Visit about U.S. internships, the job search, interviews, and networking strategies.
2. To prepare to be successful in the U.S. workplace, practice English with native speakers daily. U.S. employers rate “the ability to verbally communicate” as the top skill for new employee hires.
3. Engage in GW student life and American culture. Join student organizations and co-curricular activities, volunteer in the community.
5. Obtain an on- or off-campus experience in the American workplace. Learn about U.S. professional standards.
6. Start your career and employment research early.
7. Identify your skills and strengths using skills assessment tools and techniques; market yourself to employers.
8. Build relationships and network with others who will support your professional goals. More than 80 percent of Americans find employment from networking. Create new connections in the United States.
9. Research employer options, identify employers with jobs that match your skills, and target employers who will hire international students or have hired international students previously.
MAINTAINING YOUR HEALTH

The Colonial Health Center provides high-quality, affordable care and resources to students. The Center offers a range of confidential health services to support medical and mental health needs, as well as promotion and prevention services to guide students in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It also houses the GW Parenting Initiative, which strives to create a model program of parent education, support, and research.

The Colonial Health Center provides easy access to medical care and is staffed by medical providers with training, experience, and commitment to college health. Encouraging patients to become active participants in their own care, it promotes habits to help enhance students’ quality of life. Through education and involvement of the patient in the decision-making process, the Colonial Health Center helps to ensure a positive transition to independence.

University Counseling Center

The University Counseling Center (UCC) serves as the primary mental health agency for GW students and the entire campus community. The mission of UCC is to support students’ mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome difficulties and challenges that may interfere with their academic, emotional, and personal success.

The UCC strives to provide students with ample opportunities to develop greater insight and self-understanding; to identify and solve problems; to reduce emotional distress; and to improve cognitive, emotional, academic, and interpersonal functioning. The following services are offered to all international students at GW:

International Student Support Group: Many international students face special challenges due to cross-cultural adjustment. Some experience homesickness, loneliness, language issues, different levels of social and academic success than what they are used to, and even discrimination. If you are an international student who is experiencing any of these issues or just want to share your experience, we invite you to join our group!

Individual Counseling: Individual counseling is intended to assist students with a wide variety of concerns. Professional counselors provide a safe and nonjudgmental environment for students to discuss their concerns.

Group Counseling: Group counseling is often helpful for students who feel alone and isolated, and for those who don’t think anyone else at GW is experiencing the same feelings. Students who want to improve their relationships are also excellent candidates for the group. Meeting other people who share one’s feelings and concerns can reduce isolation and give students renewed hope that things can get better.

Consultation: The UCC is available to consult with faculty, staff, family members, or students concerning issues affecting student welfare and development, student crises, or any of our services.

The following services are offered to all international students at GW:

SUPPORT SERVICES WEBSITE ADDRESS

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<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Center for Career Services</td>
<td><a href="http://careerservices.gwu.edu">http://careerservices.gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>Cloyd Heck Marvin Center, 800 21st Street, NW, Suite 505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Health Center: Medical Services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gwu.edu/health-services">http://www.gwu.edu/health-services</a></td>
<td>Cloyd Heck Marvin Center, 800 21st Street, NW, Ground Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program</td>
<td><a href="http://eap.columbian.gwu.edu">http://eap.columbian.gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>2142 G Street, NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW Housing</td>
<td><a href="http://living.gwu.edu">http://living.gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>Philip Amsterdam Residence Hall, 2350 H Street, NW, Suite 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Services Office</td>
<td><a href="http://international">http://international</a> services.gwu.edu</td>
<td>Old Main, 1922 F Street, NW, Suite 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus Student Affairs</td>
<td><a href="http://offcampus.students.gwu.edu">http://offcampus.students.gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>Cloyd Heck Marvin Center, 800 21st Street, NW, Suite 505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Counseling Center (UCC)</td>
<td><a href="http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu">http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>Cloyd Heck Marvin Center, 800 21st Street, NW, Ground Floor</td>
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MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Ten events, activities, and traditions to take part in during your first year at GW:

1. Get Active
Active and healthy lifestyles have a positive effect on the minds, bodies, and spirits of GW students. Be sure to play basketball on the courts in the Lerner Health & Wellness Center, play volleyball on the Lincoln Memorial sand courts, and ride a bike through the beautiful trails of Rock Creek Park. Find out more at: campusrecreation.gwu.edu.

2. Meet an Alumnus or Alumna
There are more than 270,000 GW alumni living all over the world. These alumni can serve as valuable members of your network. Meet an alumnus or alumna by attending a Dinner with Alumni event, a “How Do I Become A...” lecture, or Speed Networking Night. Find out more at: alumni.gwu.edu/alumni-groups (click on Students).

3. Celebrate a New Holiday
As an international student, learning about your host country and teaching others about your own culture will take time. During the process, celebrate a new holiday such as American Thanksgiving by attending the GW International Student Thanksgiving Celebration hosted at Alumni House in November.

4. Be a Tourist
You may live in D.C. now, but you can still be a tourist! Take advantage of a sunny day to study on the National Mall, walk through the monuments, visit the museums, take a paddleboat out on the Potomac River, or go on a White House garden tour.

5. Cheer for the Colonials
As a new student, wear your school colors (buff and blue) with pride as you watch your fellow students represent GW. Watch the crew team from the Washington Harbor and go to the Charles E. Smith Center to watch a basketball game. Find out more at: gwsports.com.

6. Try New Food
Although there are many international restaurants and food options around Foggy Bottom, make sure to try new foods—especially those famous to D.C. For example, eat at Ben’s Chili Bowl on U Street, or get some tater tots while playing trivia at Tonic Restaurant.

7. Get Involved
Join at least one student organization. Through extracurricular activities, GW students meet new friends and expand their GW networks. There are more than 400 student organizations—no matter if you’re an undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral student, you will certainly find something that interests you. Find out more at: studentengagement.gwu.edu/student-organizations.

8. Get a Warm Coat
During winter, D.C. is cold—but that should not deter you from getting outside and enjoying the many winter activities the city offers. Make sure to build a snowman in front of the Lincoln Memorial, go ice-skating at the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden, watch the lighting of the National Christmas Tree and Menorah on The Ellipse, and see the ZooLights at the National Zoo!

9. Volunteer in the Community
The time you spend out of the classroom is important to help you reach your personal and career goals. Whether you are an incoming freshman or a graduate student, the Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service can help you find volunteer opportunities in areas such as arts and culture, LGBT service, environmental sustainability, educational tutoring, and many more. Find out more at: serve.gwu.edu/community-service.

10. Become a Leader
The Center for Student Engagement at GW offers a wide array of opportunities for students to get involved and develop their leadership skills. By becoming involved with the TRAILs adventure program and the SUMMIT Outdoor Challenge Course, you can learn leadership skills while exploring the outdoors in and around the D.C. area. Find out more at: studentengagement.gwu.edu/leadership-programs.