



Global & Experiential Education



Newsletter Two: Pre-Arrival Information

This newsletter covers topics related to immigration to the U.S., arrival to Washington D.C. and required orientations for international students:

- **Preparing to enter the U.S.**
 - Obtaining your student visa
 - Important terms to know
 - When and how to arrive
 - Immigration videos to watch
- **Arrival and public transportation**
 - Checking-in at ISO
 - Getting to Foggy Bottom
- **Mandatory orientations for international GMBA students**

With questions, please email me at sbglobal@gwu.edu. I look forward to meeting you all in August!

Best,

Jeff DeLaitch
Program Associate



Preparing to enter the U.S

Obtaining Your Student Visa

After you have received your I-20 from GW, you must obtain your U.S. visa. To obtain your U.S. visa, contact the nearest 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, be prepared to present at least the following documents to your U.S. embassy or consulate:

- The I-20 (for F-1 visa) issued by GW
- 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
- Evidence of strong ties to your home country: cultural, social, professional, or any other aspect of your life that has 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. consulate or embassy or review their website to accurately determine all of the necessary documents you will need to apply for your visa. Please be prepared for longer than normal wait times given COVID closures and delays so it is highly recommended to plan accordingly. **If you run into extensive delays that could interfere with your timely arrival to the US, please contact sbglobal@gwu.edu to keep us updated.**

For detailed information on obtaining your U.S. visa, please visit Education USA. Education USA also has centers around the world that you can visit while going through the visa acquisition process.

Important Terms to Know

- Form I-20: To acquire F-1 Status, a student needs to receive an I-20 form, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student, produced by SEVIS and signed by a DSO (Designated School Official) at GW. The I-20 issued should have a completion date, which is the estimated time it should take for the student to complete the degree. The I-20 is retained by the student and should be signed by the student prior to the student's departure to the U.S.
- SEVIS Number: Your SEVIS ID number is on in the left-hand corner on the first page. It is the number beginning with an "N".
- I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record): The ISO at GW advises all new incoming international students to go to the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) website 24 hours following arrival and print off a hard copy of the I-94 form. You can access your I-94 form by visiting the CBP website: www.cbp.gov/I94. This form officially determines how long an international student can remain in the U.S. Students with an F-1 visa usually have their I-94 stamped "D/S" (Duration of Status) which means that the student can remain in this country for the time required to complete his/her studies as long as the student follows all regulations in accordance with their student visa.

When and How to Arrive

F-1 visa holders are permitted to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the report date listed on their I-20. This report date is located in item number five on your immigration document. We recommend that you arrive in Washington, D.C. two to three weeks before classes (if vaccinated) and as soon as possible within this 30 day window (if not vaccinated to begin vaccine compliance) to start to settle into new housing and attend orientation programs.

Vaccine requirements should have already been communicated to you by the university so if you do not recall how to comply with GW's policy then please [visit our website](#) for more information. Additionally your country may be subject to certain entry requirements by the US government due to the pandemic. Please be sure you check your embassy's webpage for any extra entry requirements before you board your flight! The airline you choose should also be communicating any requirements for you as well.

It is important that you enter the country in the proper visa type (F-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 visa stamp for GW*
- 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 U.S.

If you forget an immigration document, the immigration officer may issue you a form I-515 (A), which is a temporary 30-day admission. If this occurs, please go to the International Services Office (ISO) as soon as possible during normal business hours. When you go to the ISO, please bring all of your immigration documents, including the form I-515 (A) issued at the port of entry.

Immigration Videos to Watch

As incoming international students, you are required to watch several videos related to maintaining your immigration status before orientation in August. If you have not already, please view the videos below:

- All students should view: [Welcome to GW Introduction Video](#)
- F-1 international students should view:
 - [F-1 Important Documents](#)
 - [F-1 Maintaining your Status](#)
 - [F-1 Benefits Video](#)

Mandatory Orientations for International GMBA Students

Arriving in the States

We recommend that you arrive in the US as early as possible but no earlier than 30 days prior to your program start date listed on your I-20. Arriving as early as possible will give you time to acclimate to the US and Washington DC and adhere to all CDC and [GWU quarantine and vaccination guidelines](#).

Orientations

*These **mandatory orientations** will provide pertinent information for international students. You **MUST** attend these orientations.*

- **[GMBA International Student Institute](#)**

All international GMBA students studying on F-1 or J-1 visas are *required to attend this virtual orientation*.

Dates: Monday, August 2nd - Friday, August 6th, 2021. Please plan on attending orientations every day this week.

[Register Here!](#)

- **[GMBA Runway](#)**

All GMBA students are *required to attend this virtual orientation*.

Dates: Monday, August 9th – Friday, August 27th, 2021

See additional details [here](#)

REGISTER NOW!



Arrival & Public Transportation

Checking-in at ISO

Your first step when you arrive at GW should be to check-in with the ISO. ISO has a two part check in. The first step is the [Online Check In](#), which can be completed before you arrive. After you land in the US you will need to complete the [second step](#) of your check in.

Getting to Foggy Bottom

Washington, D.C. is served by three major airports: Ronald Reagan National Airport, Washington Dulles International Airport, and Baltimore Washington International Airport. Please read the following information to help determine which airport you wish to fly to. Below is an overview of airports near GW and the most economical transportation options from each location. Remember, Travelers Aid or information desks located within the airports are extremely helpful in providing information on-site after you pass the port of entry.

Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA)

- DCA is the closest airport to GW's campus, about 6 miles (9 km) away from campus Metro (Blue Line: exit at the Foggy Bottom/GWU station)
- Taxi

Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)

- IAD is located in Virginia, about 20 miles (30 km) from downtown Washington
- Washington Flyer: The Coach Service will take you to the West Fall Church Metro Station (Orange Line)
- Super Shuttle: It can be used for transportation to your place of residence

- MetroBus 5A: It operates between the L'Enfant Plaza Station (Blue, Orange and Silver Lines) and Dulles, with stops at the Rosslyn Station (Orange/Silver Lines) and Herndon-Monroe Park and Ride
- Taxi (costs between \$50 and \$100)

Baltimore Washington International Airport (BWI)

BWI is located in Maryland, about 33 miles (53 km) from Washington. For transportation to DC, the following are available:

- The MARC Train: Take the Penn Line to Union Station, located on the Red Line of the Metro. MARC Train service operates on Monday through Friday only
- Amtrak Train
- The B30 MetroBus from BWI to Greenbelt Metro Station (Green Line)
- Taxi (costs between \$50 and \$100)

Getting around Washington D.C.

One of the many 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.
- MetroBus and the Circulator: The MetroBus 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 Metrorail station, and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus.
- Capital Bikeshare: Capital Bikeshare is a program in the district that allows customers to rent bikes throughout the district and surrounding areas.



Click Below For Previous Pre-Arrival Newsletters

Newsletter one: [Orientation Dates & Housing](#)

Newsletter two: Immigration, Arrival and Transportation (today)

Coming to Your Email Soon

Newsletter three: Health Insurance & Campus Life

Newsletter four: Finances

Newsletter five: Checking in & Adjustment to the US

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