

# Pre-arrival Information for International Students



# WELCOME TO FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Congratulations on your admission to Florida State University (FSU)! We at the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) are pleased that you will soon join our university community. This brochure provides you with essential information regarding your arrival at FSU. Please read it carefully and bring it with you to FSU.

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#### **ORIENTATIONS**

#### **Undergraduate Students:**

• CGE Pre-Arrival Online Immigration Session (OIS):

Watch before traveling to the U.S. Visit <u>fla.st/1T55SWX</u> or see the orientation website below.

International Student Check-In at CGE:

Complete as soon as you arrive at FSU.

• CGE International In-Person Orientation:

cge.fsu.edu/international-students/new-students/new-international-student-orientation

• FSU Undergraduate Student Orientation:

For registration, see dos.fsu.edu/nsfp/

#### Graduate Students:

• CGE Pre-Arrival Online Immigration Session (OIS):

Watch before traveling to the U.S. Visit <u>fla.st/1T55SWX</u> or see the orientation website below.

International Student Check-In at CGE:

Complete as soon as you arrive at FSU.

• CGE International In-Person Orientation:

cge.fsu.edu/international-students/new-students/new-international-student-orientation

• Academic Department Orientation:

Check with your department for details.

Graduate School Orientation:

For registration, see <u>gradschool.fsu.edu/New-Current-Students/The-Graduate-School-s-New-Graduate-Student-Orientation</u>

Teaching Assistant Orientation:

The Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) sponsors University-wide graduate student teaching assistant orientations each fall and spring semester. For registration, see <a href="mailto:pie.fsu.edu/TA-Orientations-Teaching-Conference-Trainings">pie.fsu.edu/TA-Orientations-Teaching-Conference-Trainings</a>. Some departments require their own TA orientation.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES – Fall 2017**

#### Class registration

New Graduate Students August 21 – 27, 2017

New Undergraduate Students: During FSU Student Orientation

First days of Classes: Monday, August 29, 2017 Late registration (\$100 fee): August 27 – 31, 2017

#### STEP ONE - Getting Your Visa

**Note**: If you are already in F-1 visa status and transferring from another U.S. educational institution to Florida State University, you do NOT need to obtain a new visa unless you are traveling abroad and do not have a valid F-1 visa.

**Note:** If you are a citizen of Canada, you do not need a visa to enter the United States. However, you still need to present a SEVIS I-20 form and a valid passport when you enter the U.S. You must also present proof of payment of the SEVIS fee (I-901) paid at least three days before arriving at the Port of Entry.

Verify the information on your I-20. It is very important that all of the personal information listed on your and your dependents' (if any) I-20s matches personal information on the passport. If any personal information, particularly your name, on your I-20 is incorrect and/or does not match the information on your passport, email CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu as soon as possible with scans of the I-20 and passport, and an explanation of the correction needed. We will send you a corrected I-20 as soon as possible. After you verify the information is correct, keep all documents in a safe place. If you lose your I-20 before your visa appointment, contact the Center for Global Engagement immediately to make arrangements for a replacement.

Take note of the "PROGRAM START DATE" indicated on your I-20. If you cannot schedule an interview with a consular officer until after the program start date on your I-20 or have other difficulties in obtaining your visa, please contact the Student Services Coordinator at the Center for Global Engagement at <a href="CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu">CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu</a> or 850-645-1424 as soon as possible. You may need to have a new I-20 issued and, possibly, defer beginning your program of study until the following semester.

Pay the SEVIS fee (I-901 fee). At least three days before your visa interview, you must pay the required Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee at <a href="mailto:fmjfee.com">fmjfee.com</a>. You will submit the I-901 form electronically and can pay with a credit or debit card. Print the receipt generated after completing the online payment and bring it to your visa appointment. For more information about the SEVIS fee, see <a href="mailto:studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee">studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee</a> Note: F-2 dependents are not required to pay this fee. Transfer or change-of-level students do not need to pay this fee again.

**Visit** travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html for detailed information about the F-1 visa and application and appointment processes, required documentation, processing times etc. **Note:** Starting November 1, 2016, eye glasses will no longer be allowed in visa photos.

Visit the website of the U.S. consulate where you will apply for your visa for information about your visa application process. To find your local consulate, see <a href="mailto:usembassy.gov/">usembassy.gov/</a>

Make a visa appointment with the embassy or consulate responsible for issuing nonimmigrant visas for your area as soon as you receive your I-20 form. Visa applications may be accepted by the consulate at any time and visas may be issued up to 90 days before your program start date. Federal policy requires all applicants for initial visas to the U.S. to have a personal interview with a consular officer. Certain categories of applicants must undergo a security clearance. Most security clearances take fewer than 90 days to complete, but some can take longer. These may be held due to the commonness of your name, any changes to the spelling or order of your name on previous visas or passports, your academic major, and/or your country of origin or nationality. If given any questionnaires or additional forms to complete, return these as soon as possible.

Pay any visa application fees. U.S. embassies and consular offices have this information on their websites.

Attend your visa appointment and interview. Take all the documents specified on the consulate's website. Most interviews take less than five minutes, so be prepared and organized:

- Answer all questions truthfully. Permanent resident relatives and previous arrest records will not necessarily lead to a denial, but misrepresentation of any facts can lead to a permanent bar from the U.S.
- Dress professionally.
- Bring translated copies of your academic records and be prepared to talk about your academic plans and aspirations in detail.
- Be prepared to speak about your future career goals and how a U.S. degree is important in meeting those career and personal goals. Keep in mind that these should be consistent with ties to your home country and with your intent to return home.
- Take any documentation that may help you provide evidence of ties to your home country.
- Be knowledgeable about Florida State University, about your academic department, and about your chosen field of study.
- Have all documents in order and well organized. You have a very short time to make the best impression on the consular officer.
- Before you leave the interview, make sure you receive all of your original academic and funding documents back from the consular officer.

Check your visa for accuracy. When you receive your visa, make sure you have received the correct (F-1, F-2 for dependents) visa type and that the notation, if any, on the visa indicates the correct institution: "Florida State University." Be sure you have received your I-20 form back from the consulate.

#### STEP TWO - Preparing for Travel

**Note:** To avoid unnecessary expense and difficulties, do not make unchangeable travel arrangements until you have received your visa from the U.S. consulate. There may be unanticipated delays in the processing of your documents.

#### **Make Travel Arrangements**

**Schedule your flight** to allow at least four hours between your arrival at the initial Port of Entry into the U.S. and your connecting flight to Tallahassee. You will need sufficient time to pass through immigration and customs inspection and to change currency, if needed.

**Note:** When making travel plans and when transiting through airports, be aware that the U.S. has four different time zones: Pacific, Mountain, Central, and Eastern. Tallahassee, Florida is in the Eastern Time Zone. Make sure to consult a time zone converter that takes into account Daylight Savings Time, such as <u>timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html</u>.

**Plan to exchange money** before arriving in Tallahassee. The Tallahassee International Airport does not have currency exchange services but does have an ATM.

#### Prepare transportation from the Tallahassee International Airport.

A taxi into the city costs \$20-\$30. Some hotels offer free transportation from the airport, which is a 15-minute drive from campus and the downtown area. If you plan to stay at a hotel, ask about an airport shuttle when you make your reservation. Taxis are available at the airport and usually waiting outside for customers (look for the "Ground Transportation" sign near the baggage claim area). If you need to call a taxi, contact information for some Tallahassee taxi companies is below:

City Taxi 850-575-7575 Yellow Cab 850-999-9999

The information above on taxis and rentals is for your convenience and is not an endorsement of these companies.

Vehicle rentals are available at the airport from major companies such as Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar Rent-A-Car, Enterprise, Hertz, and National. You must make reservations in advance to ensure availability of vehicles. Don't forget to inquire about the age restriction for rentals. You must also have an international driver's permit as well as a foreign driver's license, your passport, and a major credit card in your own name. Rental agencies generally require the primary driver to be at least 25 years of age.

#### Important Items to Bring with You

#### This brochure!

**Legal and medical documents.** In your carry-on luggage you should bring: immigration documents, marriage and birth certificates, academic records, medical records, proof of immunizations, and a list of any medications you are taking and/or carrying with you. Certain medications, including vitamins, may be confiscated if you do not have proper documentation. Do not pack these documents in your check-in luggage, which may be lost or delayed.

**Travel health insurance.** We recommend you purchase travel insurance to cover you until your U.S. health insurance begins. If you purchase FSU health insurance, it does not take effect until a few days before the start of the semester. For exact coverage dates of the University plan, please see the insurance policy booklet on the University Health Services website at <a href="studentinsurance.fsu.edu">studentinsurance.fsu.edu</a>. Travel insurance will not meet the university requirements for insurance coverage required in order to enroll in classes.

**Money**. During the first few weeks, you will have many expenses, particularly if you live off-campus and need to pay deposits and fees and purchase furnishings.

- Bring a debit or credit card that can be used in the U.S.
- It is a good idea to bring some cash in small bills (no more than \$300 in \$20, \$10, and \$5 bills.)
- Traveler's checks in U.S. dollars are also recommended in case of emergency or a lost credit card. Be sure to keep the receipts in a separate, safe location.
- Make sure you have money available to you in the U.S. to pay tuition on time.
- FSU accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, and American Express cards for tuition payments. Tuition will be due within two weeks after classes start. See the section on Financial Matters for additional money information.
- ☐ U.S. residential address (even if temporary). While traveling to the U.S., you will be required to report a U.S. residential address to U.S.

Immigration at the Port of Entry. If you are temporarily staying at a hotel or with a friend until you are able to make your own housing arrangements, be sure you have the address of your hotel or friend available to you.

#### Important Notes:

#### Do not take prohibited items on flights or into the U.S.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) lists items that are prohibited on airline flights for security reasons: <u>tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/prohibited-items</u>.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection website has information about the items you can bring with you to the U.S. and which items are prohibited: <a href="mailto:cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/prohibited-and-restricted-items">cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/prohibited-and-restricted-items</a>.

Place all valuables in carry-on bags. If you choose to lock your luggage, you must use TSA-approved locks only, as TSA screeners will then have a special tool to open and re-lock your luggage. If you do not have TSA-approved locks, the TSA screeners will break your locks to open your luggage for inspection, and your luggage will not be locked for the remainder of the trip.

# STEP THREE – Entering the U.S.

#### Entering the U.S.

At the U.S. Port of Entry (POE). The Port of Entry is the international airport or land border crossing where you first enter the United States. When you pass through the immigration and customs checkpoint, you will be asked to present the following:

- Valid passport with valid F-1 visa (visa not required for Canadian citizens)
- Original, signed I-20
- I-94 Arrival/Departure Record (if crossing a land border only)
- SEVIS I-901 fee receipt
- Funding information (to support the amount documented on your I-20 form)
- Destination address in the U.S. (even if temporary). Do not use the address of your academic department or the Center for Global Engagement
- Customs Declaration form

**I-94** Arrival/Departure Record. The I-94 Arrival/Departure Record is an electronic record that you will retrieve online after you enter the United States. U.S. Custom and Border Protection (CBP) issues paper I-94 forms to anyone entering the U.S. by land.

Retrieve your I-94 soon after arrival at <a href="mailto:cbp.gov/194">cbp.gov/194</a>. Save it as a PDF file or print out a hard copy for your records. Your I-94 is proof of lawful admission to the United States.

**Questions to Expect.** The CBP officer will ask you the purpose of your trip to the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination (i.e., your school). It is important to tell the CBP officer that you will be a student. You must also travel with proof of financial resources and your academic records, in case CBP asks for this documentation.

**Document Inspection.** The officers will inspect your documents and stamp the date of entry and write your visa status ("F-1," "F-2"), and "D/S" (duration of status) in your passport.

These documents, taken together along with the I-94, constitute proof of your legal status in the United States. If there are any errors in the notations, let the CBP officer know right away. It is much easier to correct the problem at the Port of Entry than it is later.

#### Additional Situations at the POE

Secondary Inspection. If the CBP officer at the Port of Entry cannot initially verify your information, or if you do not have all of the required documentation, the officer may direct you to an interview area known as "secondary inspection." Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research to verify information without causing delays for other arriving passengers. If the CBP officer asks to contact the Center for Global Engagement, the main phone number is 850.644.1702. Business hours are Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you are asked to contact the Center for Global Engagement after business hours, call the Center for Global Engagement main line for after-hours emergency instructions.

**Form I-515.** If the CBP officer believes your immigration documents are incomplete or erroneous, you may receive a form I-515 with an instruction sheet. If you do, come to the Center for Global Engagement as soon as you arrive. **Do not send** any documents anywhere before consulting with one of our staff members, as the address provided for mailing the I-515 varies. The form I-515 gives you *only* 30 days to remain in the U.S. legally and provide proof of your visa status, so do not delay.

#### STEP FOUR – Arriving in Tallahassee

#### After Arriving in Tallahassee

- ☐ International Student Check-In at the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) as soon as you are able. We look forward to meeting you! At check-in, we will scan your important immigration documents. To complete your mandatory check-in, you must bring all of the following documents with you to the CGE (and the same documents for dependents, if any):
  - Your I-20
  - Passport with valid U.S. visa inside
  - **I-94** printout (if available)
  - Your local address and phone number in Tallahassee, even if only temporary (e.g., hotel, friend's house, etc.)
  - Emergency contact information for a relative or friend You will not be able to register for classes until you have completed International Student Check-In. You can find our location on FSU's online map here: campus.map.fsu.edu/index.aspx?GME.
- □ Attend the CGE International In-Person Orientation. You will learn about FSU's campus resources, maintaining your immigration status, succeeding as a student at FSU, and living in Tallahassee at this mandatory orientation. You must attend this orientation before you can register for classes. For more dates, times, location, and registration, see our orientation page at cge.fsu.edu/international-students/new-students/new-international-student-orientation.

# Attend other required and recommended orientations.

See page 4 of this brochure for more information.

Register for classes. Undergraduate students will register for classes during the FSU Undergraduate Student Orientation. Graduate students should check with their departments about class registration. See page 4 of this brochure for new graduate student registration windows.

Make sure to register for a full course load. You can find the definition of a "full course of study" for international students at <u>cge.fsu.edu</u> (under <u>International Students</u> then <u>Current F-1 Students</u>, and then <u>Enrollment</u>).

To avoid the \$100 Late Registration fee, make sure to register for at least one course before the first day of the semester.

☐ If you will be employed at FSU, obtain your Social Security number (SSN). The U.S. government uses this number to identify wage earners for tax purposes. You are only eligible for an SSN if you already have an offer of employment. For more information about the SSN, please request the

Social Security brochure from the Center for Global Engagement or view our website: <a href="mailto:cge.fsu.edu/about-us/resources">cge.fsu.edu/about-us/resources</a>. When you apply, be sure you get a receipt or letter from Social Security and provide a copy of this letter to your department so they can process your employment paperwork. (Students not receiving income are not eligible for a SSN.)

**IMPORTANT:** Students admitted to the U.S. in F visa status may not work off-campus for a wage, or engage in business, unless specifically authorized to do so by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or an F-1 advisor.

#### In the Community

#### Utilities

If you are responsible for connecting the utilities for your apartment or house, there are many ways to initiate service. Information on the options is available at <a href="talgov.com/you/you-customer-request-connet.aspx">talgov.com/you/you-customer-request-connet.aspx</a>. If you do not have a Social Security number (SSN), you can use the fax/email or inperson options. In place of the normally-required SSN or driver's license, you can use a copy of your passport information page. To initiate new utility service in person, go to the Customer Account Services office on the first floor of the Frenchtown Renaissance Center, 435 North Macomb Street, from 8 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. If you already have a SSN, a valid U.S. driver's license, a credit card, and know the address where you will reside, you can activate your City of Tallahassee utility account before you arrive in Tallahassee and pay a deposit online.

If you will live off-campus, you may need to have your utilities turned on before you can move in to your apartment. Make sure you plan your arrival accordingly to give you time to initiate utility service. For more information on initiating new utility service, please visit the link above.

#### Transportation

You will probably need to use the Tallahassee bus system (Star Metro), particularly during your first days in Tallahassee. FSU students can use the city buses at no charge by showing the FSUCard to the bus driver (but only while FSU classes are in session).

City bus maps, schedules and mobile app are at <u>starmetro.transloc.com</u>. If you do not yet have your FSU Card, you will pay \$1.25 in exact change as you get on the bus.

**NOTE**: Buses do not operate from the airport.

The bus system also operates campus shuttles. FSU has several different routes through campus and two night bus services. "Night 'Nole" provides transport from campus and nearby apartments to nightlife areas in town. SAFE Connection provides transport on campus and to nearby on-campus locations. For more information, visit transportation.fsu.edu/other-services.

#### Parking

Parking on campus is very limited and you will need a parking permit in order to use the student parking lots. Parking and transportation fees are included in the required tuition/fees and there is no additional charge for parking permits. For more information about how to obtain a parking permit, as well as links to campus parking maps, visit transportation.fsu.edu/.

#### **Health & Medical Information**

Unlike many countries, the United States does not have a national health care system. Healthcare costs, even for minor illnesses or accidents, can amount to tens of thousands of dollars. In the U.S., it is customary for individuals to buy insurance, paying a fee to "insure" oneself against having to spend a great deal of money in the event of illness or accident. Even then, most U.S. insurance plans do not provide 100% coverage for an accident or illness. These plans typically require you to pay both a deductible (an initial amount from the bill) and a percentage of the remaining cost. Some insurance will only pay "usual and customary" charges, so bills which seem excessive to the insurer will not be fully paid.

#### Mandatory Health Insurance Registration Hold

The State of Florida requires all students to have adequate health and accident insurance before registering for courses. You will not be able to register for classes each semester if you do not purchase insurance. The Insurance Office at the University Health Services coordinates all insurance matters for students. For more information about insurance and to view the insurance brochure, please visit the Insurance Office website at <a href="studentinsurance.fsu.edu">studentinsurance.fsu.edu</a>. This website provides information about the university insurance policy benefits, rates, dates of coverage, and enrollment deadlines, as well as contact information for the Insurance Office. In order to remove your registration hold for insurance, follow these steps:

- Go to <u>studentinsurance.fsu.edu</u>, click on either the flashing "Purchase Insurance" or "Waive Insurance" link. You may only waive insurance if you have alternative U.S. insurance that meets the strict Florida requirements.
- Login with your FSUID and password;
- 3. If purchasing insurance, choose the appropriate period of coverage for your academic program. Government-funded students should purchase the entire year.

**NOTE:** We strongly recommend purchasing the insurance offered through the FSU University Health Services.

**Government-funded students** will also submit a third-party billing form and copy of their award letter to Student Business Services (University Center A) in order for an invoice for insurance, tuition, and fees to be sent to their

government sponsor. If the sponsor already provides insurance, please have University Health Services review the policy provisions to ensure that it meets or exceeds state requirements. Most U.S. government-funded students will have insurance which DOES NOT meet the state requirements.

**Graduate Assistants**. If you are appointed as a Graduate Assistant, the University will provide a subsidy toward the cost of your insurance if you purchase the FSU plan. This subsidy is generated automatically once you have enrolled in the university insurance plan, enrolled in classes, and completed the required Glacier tax deduction profile. An email regarding Glacier will come from <a href="mailto:support@online-tax.net">support@online-tax.net</a> for you to set up the required profile.

Third-Party Bill Payment. Students whose parents will pay their bills with a credit card should first enroll in the insurance plan and then allow the responsible party access to your financial information and fee payments by following the instructions at <a href="mailto:sc.my.fsu.edu/Students/How-To/Assign-Delegated-Access-to-a-Third-Party">sc.my.fsu.edu/Students/How-To/Assign-Delegated-Access-to-a-Third-Party</a>. Government-sponsored students may also choose this option, but keep in mind that all payments must be made by the fee payment deadline, unless you have also requested third-party billing from both University Health Services and Student Financial Services.

#### Immunizations Registration Hold

All students must meet immunization requirements established by the Florida Board of Governors prior to class registration. The mandatory Student Immunization Record is used to verify your immunizations. Complete and submit this form to University Health Services as soon as possible. The form is available at studentinsurance.fsu.edu/immunizations.html

**NOTE:** The Student Immunization Record must be signed by a medical professional and include the medical license number or office stamp. Bring translated medical records with you.

You will not be allowed to register for classes until you have shown proof of valid health insurance (see Mandatory Health Insurance section) and submitted the Student Immunization Record to show compliance with required immunizations. If you need immunizations, you can get them at University Health Services for a fee. If you have purchased the insurance policy offered by FSU first, the immunizations are provided at University Health Services at no cost. However, it is advisable to obtain all required vaccinations before leaving home in order to save time in removing your registration holds and registering for classes.

Be sure to complete the Student Immunization Record in its entirety, including the statement regarding obtaining or waiving Hepatitis and Meningitis vaccinations. An incomplete form will cause your registration hold to remain in place.

Note that **two MMR vaccinations are required** of all university students in the State of Florida. There is **no waiver** of this requirement. You will be required to get **two MMR vaccinations** if:

- you have not received any MMR shot or,
- if the first vaccination was given **before** 01/01/1968 and/or before your first birthday (i.e., 12 months after your date of birth).

If you obtain the MMR shots before you leave for the U.S., these two vaccinations must be given to you at least 28 days apart; otherwise, a second vaccination will still be required. You will be required to obtain only the second MMR vaccination if you received only one shot and it was administered after your first birthday (i.e., 12 months from your date of birth), or if your previous MMR vaccinations were not 28 days apart.

For more information on immunization requirements, visit studentinsurance.fsu.edu/

#### **Financial Matters**

As a condition of receiving your student visa from the U.S. embassy or consulate, you had to provide proof of funding for the first year of your academic program, and verify that these funds are available for the duration of your program. Your I-20 was created based on funding information you provided to meet the financial requirements set forth by the University.

The FSU cost of attendance listed on your I-20 is the minimum amount of money that you should expect to need for your tuition, fees, books, insurance, and living expenses for one year. Depending upon your personal needs and lifestyle, you may require more funds than estimated. Tuition and fees are subject to increase each year up to 15%, further increasing your monetary needs. You should never anticipate needing less than the amount listed on your I-20, even if you live much more economically at home. The normal cost of living in the U.S. may be significantly more than what you are accustomed to at home. International student employment is restricted so there are limited opportunities to supplement your funds.

You are restricted to 20 hours per week of on-campus work (if available) during the regular semester, and off-campus work is prohibited without authorization and allowed only in very limited circumstances.

#### Financial Assistance

Other than graduate and research assistantships that academic departments may grant to some graduate students prior to admission, the university offers little financial assistance to international students. Several financial assistance programs that are available on a competitive basis are listed below and more information is on our website at cge.fsu.edu/international-students/funding.

**Undergraduate Tuition Waivers.** Undergraduate students with a high GPA are encouraged to apply after their first semester at FSU. The program enables selected students to pay for credit hours at the in-state tuition rate for the semester awarded. Students must reapply each semester and selection is highly competitive.

**Linkage Institute Waivers.** If you are from one of the eligible countries for which a Linkage Institute agreement exists, you are eligible to apply for this waiver program which allows recipients to pay for tuition at the in-state rate.

**An additional resource** for funding opportunities in the United States is the Institute of International Education's website at fundingusstudy.org/

#### Financial Needs upon Arrival

Housing deposits, rent, household necessities, tuition, books, and supplies will require major expenditures immediately after your arrival. Even if you are receiving university funding, your salary will not start for approximately one month, while your paperwork is processing.

We recommend you have access to at least \$6,000 in personal funds to cover initial expenses during your first few months. If you choose to bring a bank draft or a check to deposit to an account at a local bank, please be aware that some banks will take several weeks to process the deposit and the money may not be quickly withdrawn. Wire transfers often incur fees of \$40-\$100 per transfer. If you have a bank account with a debit card or credit account at home, you should be able to withdraw money from an ATM in the U.S. Be sure to check on available ATM locations and on the fees assessed with withdrawals and currency conversion, and know your PIN number.

Below is a fairly accurate assessment of the money you will need to spend immediately upon arrival:

- Off-campus housing first month's rent, last month's rent, and deposit all due at time of rental: \$1,500 (on-campus payments vary)
- Utility deposit: \$325.50
- Internet/TV/Phone Deposit: \$25-\$50
- Food: \$300-\$500

- Toiletries (soap, shampoo) and cleaning supplies (dish soap, clothing detergent): \$100
- Bed linens, towels, paper supplies (not provided in on- or off-campus housing): \$100-\$300
- Pots, pans, dishes, utensils (not provided in on- or off-campus housing): \$100-\$300
- Bed, if living in an unfurnished off-campus unit: \$100-\$600
- Books and supplies (paper, pens): \$500
- Fees not paid by teaching or research assistantships: \$1,000
- Initial transportation costs (airport taxi, bus rides before obtaining FSU Card): \$40

Do not bring money in the form of a bank draft or check made payable to Florida State University. If you are sponsored by an outside agency or government, FSU will make arrangements to send a bill for tuition and fees to the sponsoring agency based upon your award letter from the sponsoring agency. Be sure you have an award letter, and that any stipend you receive is sent to you separately (not to FSU). If your tuition and stipend are combined in one check, FSU *cannot* refund the difference.

Customs declaration for large sums. If you bring more than US\$10,000 of currency or in the form of traveler's checks in currency (U.S. dollars), money orders, bank drafts, etc., you will need to submit a Customs form to report this upon entry into the United States. The form is called the "Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments," or FinCEN Form 105, and is available from your flight attendant, at the Port of Entry (airport or land border crossing) or online at <a href="mailto:fincen.gov/forms/files/fin105">fincen.gov/forms/files/fin105</a> cmir.pdf.

**Banking.** The FSUCard, which is your student identification card, also offers a banking option through SunTrust Bank; however, *you must go to the bank in person* to open an account. The SunTrust Bank is located next to the FSUCard center. Some local banks in the area that do not require a U.S. social security number

SSN) to open an account are (in alphabetical order): Bank of America, SunTrust Bank, and Wells Fargo Bank.

#### Tuition

Tuition is based on the number of credit hours for which a student enrolls. As an international student, you are considered a non-Florida resident and are assessed out-of-state tuition rates. Tuition rates, information regarding how tuition and fees are paid, and deadlines for payment are at <a href="sts.fsu.edu">sts.fsu.edu</a>. Tuition and fees can increase by 5-15% from current rates each school year.

If you are a graduate student receiving tuition waivers from your FSU department, you are still responsible for paying fees (e.g., athletic, transportation, and activities fees). The fees portion of your university account usually amounts to \$800-\$1,000 each semester. You must pay these fees by the due date for tuition payment each semester.

If an outside agency, scholarship, government office, or private organization is paying any portion of your tuition and fees, you are responsible for submitting an Agency Billing form **each semester**, along with documentation of your award and a Letter of Authorization, in person, to the Student Financial Services office, located at A1500 University Center (sfs.fsu.edu). You must submit this form by the due date, which is usually the 3rd day of classes for that semester, in order to avoid a \$100 late-payment fee. A detailed award letter from your sponsor, including instructions for billing, a contact name, a billing address, and what specifically will be paid, is required at the time this form is submitted. The Agency Billing Form must be submitted to Student Financial Services **each semester** in order for the student's tuition to be billed to a third party.

The university does not send bills to students. You are responsible for knowing and paying any amount due on your account by the due date. A late fee of \$100 is charged for any amount not paid to the university by the due date. Your entire class schedule is cancelled if: (a) payment is not received; or (b) a payment plan is not instituted; or (c) an Agency Billing form is not submitted by the payment deadline. It is important to note that cancellation of classes will negatively affect immigration status.

You may pay tuition to Student Financial Services by personal check from a U.S. bank, a money order (banks and post offices supply these orders for a specific amount of payment in exchange for cash), or the FSUCard if it is linked to a SunTrust bank account. You may also pay by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover Card, but there is a fee for payment with these cards. There is no fee for payment with a SunTrust/FSU ID card. FSU also does not accept checks drawn on a foreign account. If a parent or sponsor is paying for tuition, fees, and insurance, you may grant them third-party access to your student account and payment functions through my.fsu.edu Delegated Access.

# Housing

The Center for Global Engagement has a Housing Options webpage with a listing of on- and off-campus options and a downloadable comparison chart of apartments that have been recommended by other international students! You can get to the Housing Options page easily from the CGE homepage, or by going to cge.fsu.edu/living-tallahassee/housing.

# **University Housing**

University housing costs are not included in the tuition and fees at Florida State University. If you want the option of living on campus, you can apply

for housing online as soon as you are officially admitted to FSU. Housing at university-owned residence halls and apartments fill quickly. More information about on-campus housing options is available from the University Housing Office:

University Housing Office 942 Learning Way Tallahassee, FL 32306-4174

Phone: 850.644.2860 Fax: 850.644.7997

housing.fsu.edu

Residence halls DO NOT provide linens or paper items. It is advisable to bring a "twin-sized" bed sheet set, a towel set, a small pillow, and some bathroom tissues for your first night in an FSU residence hall.

#### Private Residence Hall

Some students choose to live in Southgate Campus Center, a private residence hall near campus. The monthly rental cost may include utilities, phone, basic cable TV service, and meals. Students generally share a bedroom with another student. For more information visit southgateattallahassee.com.

#### Off-Campus Rental Units

If you are not going to live in on-campus University Housing, you should plan to arrive in Tallahassee early enough to find a place to live (at least two weeks before the start of classes). Apartment rental costs vary depending on the number of bedrooms and location. Be prepared to pay from \$500-\$1,000 per month, plus one-time deposits, first and last month's rent, and various other fees. Utility and telephone costs, which are typically paid separately from rent, can cost as much as \$300 per month. Some apartment complexes offer a variety of additional services which may include cable TV, high speed internet, a gym, recreational facilities, and a shuttle service to the university. Apartments also vary in terms of amenities in the unit, such as a microwave, dishwasher, or clothes washer and dryer. Apartments advertised as furnished do NOT normally provide small appliances, pots, pans, plates, silverware, sheets, towels, pillows, shower curtain, or paper products.

Take time to compare several facilities and research apartments on the internet.

In addition to the CGE's Housing Options website, some popular apartment search sites are: <a href="mailto:theapartmentseekers.com">theapartmentseekers.com</a>, <a href="mailto:rentalguide.net">rentalguide.net</a>, <a href="mailto:apartments.com">apartments.com</a>, <a href="mailto:Apartments.com">ApartmentGuide.com</a>, and <a href="mailto:move.com">move.com</a>. (Note: We provide these websites as a convenience, not as an endorsement).

Online listing services, such as Craigslist.org, are prone to fraudulent listings. It is not advisable to make plans via Craigslist contacts prior to arriving in Tallahassee. Never send advanced payments or your bank or credit card information to unknown people you have contacted via Craigslist or other similar sites.

#### Other Off-Campus Housing Tips

Be informed of the floor plan of your apartment. Many new apartments in Tallahassee rent each bedroom of a four-bedroom apartment to different individuals who then share the living space and kitchen. This is not an ideal arrangement if you are bringing your family or plan to have family visiting you for an extended time.

Most off-campus housing requires a one-year lease. If you want or need a shorter commitment, be sure to know what is allowed by the apartment management. Read your lease agreement carefully before signing it, and know the location and specifics of the apartment you are renting.

When signing a lease, many apartments require students to provide a financial guarantor. This is often required so that the landlord can ensure the tenant has the financial resources to pay for his/her rent. If your lease requires this, you can contact the Center for Global Engagement Student Services Coordinator (<a href="mailto:CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu">CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu</a> or 850.645.1424). The Student Services Coordinator will prepare a letter explaining that you have provided proof of financial resources to the university and the U.S. embassy as a condition of receiving your visa. In addition to this letter, you can provide the landlord with a copy of your financial documents and your I-20, which shows your funding source. Note: If you are receiving a majority of funds from your academic department, you may also have to show your landlord a personal funding source.

**IMPORTANT!** A lease is a binding legal contract and you may be liable for the remaining amount of your lease and/or loss of your deposit if you end your contract early. Short-term leases often also require advance notification of your non-renewal intention.

Also, signing as a Guarantor for someone else's lease also binds you to the terms of that person's lease.

#### Southern Scholarship Foundation

This foundation provides very low cost cooperative living houses for a limited number of students with excellent academic records and high financial need. Students share all household duties and expenses for food and utilities. For more information and application deadlines see southernscholarship.org.

#### Hotel Information

This information is not provided as an endorsement and is solely for the convenience of incoming students. This information is subject to change. For a complete list of hotels and motels, please visit the City of Tallahassee website at visittallahassee.com. Room costs vary, ranging from \$50-\$200 a night (plus tax). Many hotels also have websites where you can book your stay in advance using a credit card.

Some hotel accommodations close to campus are:

Four Points by Sheraton 316 W. Tennessee St. Phone: 850.422.0071 U.S. Toll Free: 866.716.8133 fourpointstallahasseedowntown.com	Days Inn University Center 1350 W. Tennessee St. Phone: 850.222.3219 daysinn.com
Doubletree Hotel 101 S. Adams St. Phone: 850.224.5000 doubletree.hilton.com	University Inn & Suites 691 W. Tennessee St. Phone: 850.224.8161 universityinntallahassee.com
Residence Inn Downtown 600 W. Gaines St. Phone: 850.329.9080 U.S. Toll Free: 800.922.3291 marriott.com	Aloft Tallahassee Downtown 200 N. Monroe St. Phone: 850.513.0313 alofttallahassee.com
Hotel Duval 415 N. Monroe St. Phone: 850.224.6000 U.S. Toll Free: 800.814.7000 parkplaza.com	Budget Inn 1402 W. Tennessee St. Phone: 850.224.4174 U.S, Toll Free: 800.570.7613 budgetinn.com

#### Climate & Wardrobe

Florida is known as the "Sunshine State" for good reason; the weather is often very pleasant compared to other areas of the United States. However, Tallahassee's location in North Florida means that we also have cold weather. During the months of December through February, temperatures can drop below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit/0 degrees Celsius). During the summer months, especially in July, August, and September, temperatures are usually in the 90s F/ 30s C, and occasionally climb to 100 degrees Fahrenheit/40 degrees Celsius, with very high humidity. Tallahassee also gets substantial amounts of rain. Most buildings and apartments are equipped with central heating and air conditioning. More weather information is at <a href="mailto:cityrating.com/cityweather.asp?city=Tallahassee">cityrating.com/cityweather.asp?city=Tallahassee</a>.

Dress on campus is quite casual, with both men and women wearing jeans, slacks, and shorts. In spring, summer, and fall, you will see lots of students wearing sandals or flip-flops to class. More information about the city of Tallahassee is at <a href="wisittallahassee.com">wisittallahassee.com</a>, <a href="talgov.com">talgov.com</a>, and <a href="morethanyouthought.com">morethanyouthought.com</a>.

#### **International Student Organizations**

There are a number of international student organizations at FSU. Many of these organizations are very active in assisting new international students before and after their arrival at FSU. It may be helpful for you to contact these organizations for advice and assistance before your arrival. For a



complete list of student organizations visit studentgroups.fsu.edu/organizations.

The Center for Global Engagement sponsors InternatioNOLE. The mission of the InternatioNOLE is to provide a welcoming community for globally-minded students. Learn more on our website under the Intercultural Programs tab.

#### Child Care & Education

Public school in the U.S. is free from kindergarten through high school (visit Leon County Schools at <u>leon.k12.fl.us</u>). There are a number of private schools in Tallahassee as well. For a list of schools and day-care providers, see <u>kidsincorporated.org</u>.

Note: Children who will enroll in school or daycare must show immunization and medical records at the time of registration. You should plan to bring original immunization and medical records with you from home, along with certified English translations, if these documents are not in English. Also, the academic calendar for the school system may not be the same as the university's academic calendar. The K-12 school year often begins earlier than FSU.

# Get to Know the FSU Campus

FSU online: <a href="youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8">youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8</a>
Self-guided walking tour: <a href="youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8">youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8</a>
Self-guided walking tour: <a href="youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8">youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8</a>
Self-guided walking tour: <a href="youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8">youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8</a>
Campus map: <a href="youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8">youtube.com/watch?v=yJPcDbpzxP8</a>
Youtube.



The Center for Global & Multicultural Engagement Building, "The Globe"

Center for Global Engagement 110 S. Woodward Ave. Tallahassee, FL 32306-4216 cge.fsu.edu



# CONTACT

# Main Office

Phone: 850.644.1702 Fax: 850.644.9951

http://cge.fsu.edu

**Student Services Coordinator** 

Phone: 850.645.1424 Fax:850.644.9951

CGE-NewStudents@admin.fsu.edu