

May 4, 2016

Dear New PhD Students:

I hope that you are well, and off to a productive Summer! The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of some important information and dates.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance, and please keep us advised of any change in your postal address, telephone number or e-mail address.

In addition to the information below you might find the following link useful

<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/checklist>

You might have already been pointed to this link by graduate admissions. It reiterates, and expands on, parts of the information below.

## **I. PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **Immunization and Health Insurance**

Georgia Tech requires documentation of a recent tuberculosis screening and various immunizations. You can see the required health forms at

<http://health.gatech.edu/immunization/Pages/default.aspx>

Be aware that no student is allowed to register until the immunization and the medical entrance forms are accepted by the Student Health Service.

All students must have medical insurance. Please look carefully at the web site

<http://health.gatech.edu/finance/Pages/SHIP/Student-Health-Insurance-Program.aspx>

for details on the mandatory plan. Notice that 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".

## The Office of International Education (OIE)

International students should look very carefully at the OIE website. In particular, browse the links at

<http://oie.gatech.edu/pre-arrival>

All procedures outlined in the after-arrival link will be covered during our Math orientation workshop (see below). We will check in together and attend OIE mandatory sessions together. The following topics are covered in detail:

- 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
- Office of International Education Orientation
- Housing and climate-Health and accident insurance

Further relevant information will be posted at the Graduate Admission web site:

<http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/>

## Institution-Wide Orientation Programs

Before the beginning of the Fall term there will be several Institution wide orientation programs for new graduate students which are highly recommended for all 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. We embed the above Campus-wide orientation activities in our own workshop described below.

## School of Math Workshop and TA training

The School of Mathematics requires **all new domestic PhD students** to be on Campus the week of **August 15-19**. Therefore, you must arrive in Atlanta no later than **August 14**. During this week we will provide Campus-wide orientation activities, as well as orientation specifically for Mathematics TAs, courses selection, registration and scheduling issues and so forth. The orientation program

runs each day of the week of August 15-19. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am-4:00pm each day.

If you are an **international PhD student** (that is, you hold a Visa), you will be required to be on campus the weeks of **August 8-12 and August 15-19** to participate in the School of Math's orientation program for international students. Therefore, you must arrive in Atlanta no later than **August 7**. The orientation program runs each day of the week. You can expect to be in the orientation from 9:00am-4:00pm each day of the week.

Attending these orientation programs and workshops will give you a head start on academic and TA issues, and will give you a chance to socialize with new and current graduate students. During the week of August 15-19, Ms. Klara Grodzinsky, the School's TA coordinator, will begin the TA training for Mathematics Graduate Students. In addition during the week of August 8-12, Dr. Mo Burke, the School's language specialist, will coordinate various activities and workshops designed specifically for international students, and continues as the principal coordinator of the School's orientation program during the second week. Dr. Burke's email is

[burke@math.gatech.edu](mailto:burke@math.gatech.edu)

### **Arrival and Hotel Info**

We understand that it may be impossible for you to move in the dorms before classes start (or find other suitable lodging before arriving here). For this reason, we have reserved rooms at the **Regency Suites Hotel** up to the morning of Saturday, **August 20**. These rooms are **free** to you (the School of Mathematics pays for them), and you will share a room with another new PhD student. Breakfast every day at the Hotel is free, and the hotel also provides vouchers for free dinners at a nearby Restaurant, Monday through Thursday (we will provide lunch for you during the orientation). Please be aware that you will need to check out no later than Saturday, August 20, unless you make a different arrangement with the hotel upon arrival.

Hotel information: The Regency Suites Hotel, 975 West Peachtree St NW, Atlanta, GA 30309.

<http://www.regencysuites.com>

Please do not contact the hotel directly about your room reservation. The School of Math is arranging the hotel rooms.

The Regency Suites Hotel is walking distance to Campus and to restaurants and coffee shops in Midtown Atlanta. The Hotel is also near a Tech Trolley and a block from the subway system (MARTA), which can be used to go to many other attractions (the High Museum of Art, Downtown, and Shopping centers in Buckhead).

**As soon as you know your arrival date and time, airline, and flight number please let me know.** We will arrange a pick-up for you at the airport by one of our current grad students, if you are flying into Atlanta. Also, please let me know as soon as possible whether or not you will need to stay at the hotel or have made different arrangements. In order to secure a hotel room for you, we need to hear from you by **July 1**.

**On the morning of Monday, August 8, international students will meet in the lobby of the hotel at 8:30am.** (Even if you are not staying in the hotel you will need to meet here to start the orientation.) Two Math graduate students will meet you there and accompany you to the orientation in the School of Math. This will probably be your first contact with our campus, and we will provide the needed practical support to make sure that your documents are in order, thus facilitating your check in with OIE.

### **Housing**

Please make sure to check information on housing ahead of arrival. For on-campus housing, contact the Georgia Tech housing office

[www.housing.gatech.edu](http://www.housing.gatech.edu)

For off-Campus housing, you may want to look at the information at

<http://www.apartmentguide.com>

and

<http://www.autno.com>

Finally, your best resources are our present graduate students. Please contact them for advice; see the list of present students and their e-mails at

<http://www.math.gatech.edu/people/grad>

### **Parking**

Parking on Campus requires a permit. See the web site

<http://www.parking.gatech.edu/>

for details. Still, I feel compelled to tell you that many of your fellow students prefer to park off-campus to avoid the stiff parking fee, though you must use caution as cars parked off-campus are more likely to be burglarized.

## **II. ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **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, after we meet with you, you will be assigned a Faculty mentor. The mentor will be your future reference point for all questions of academic concern. Please be aware that all graduate students who are supported as either Research or Teaching Assistants, or are on a Fellowship program, or hold a J1 or F1 Visa, must be enrolled Full Time at all times.

### **Mathematics Comprehensive Exams**

If you are coming to study for the PhD in Mathematics (ACO and CSE students should see the departmental website for details about comprehensive exams), and have had prior graduate level exposure coursework, you are encouraged to consider taking the written Math comprehensive exams during Fall 16 (by the way, you can attempt the Math exams as many times as you want, during the first two years). A description of the examination is available on the Web at the School's site where you can also find past exams and syllabi:

<http://www.math.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/written-comprehensive-exams>

When you arrive, we will ask you if you are planning to attempt these exams, which will be administered during the first two weeks of the semester.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)**

As of 2011 all incoming PhD students must complete Responsible Conduct of Research training. This will consist of an on-line component and an in-person component. Graduate Admission will send you more information about this shortly. For the in-person, the School of Mathematics has its own in-house RCR training course. We will discuss this with you when you arrive on campus.

### **Teaching Preference**

If you are going to be a Teaching Assistant (TA), Ms. Klara Grodzinsky, Math TA Coordinator, will ask you to let her know which courses you are planning to register for in order to coordinate schedules. We will discuss this in detail after your arrival. Ms. Grodzinsky's email address is

[klarag@math.gatech.edu](mailto:klarag@math.gatech.edu)

### **Teaching Assistant Duties**

Typical duties for new PhD students in Fall 2016 will include:

1 Recitation Section (2 hrs per week in class and one office hour)

1 hr/week in the Math-Lab

1 hr/week attendance/participation in CETL 8000, the course for Math Teaching Assistants.

The CETL course is mandatory for all new Graduate Teaching Assistants and is required during the first semester you teach for the School of Math. **In the second term, the teaching duties will increase to two recitations per week.**

## Oral English Instruction

Non-native English speakers are required to attend aural/oral English courses provided by the School of Mathematics during the Fall and Spring semesters. In some cases, students may be exempt from these courses.

Math 8305 – (Fall 2016) Academic Spoken English for International Graduate Students (3 hrs/week)

Math 8306 – (Spring 2017) Communication Strategies for International Teaching Assistants (2 hrs/week)

We look forward to seeing you when you arrive. Please contact me at

[ghomi@math.gatech.edu](mailto:ghomi@math.gatech.edu)

if I can be of further assistance in the meantime. It is also a good idea to copy (cc) [dgs@math.gatech.edu](mailto:dgs@math.gatech.edu) when you send me your arrival info.

Best wishes,

Mohammad Ghomi  
Director of Graduate Studies  
School of Math, Georgia Tech