

Dear Incoming Employee,

Welcome to the University of Maryland Department of Geographical Sciences! This letter outlines how you can plan for your arrival and includes information which may be helpful with the administrative processes to get you started. Please review this information and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

As a new employee, you are required to check into the administration office for your new hire orientation the first day of your employment. Please contact Liz Smith at 301-405-4051 or lizsmith@umd.edu as soon as possible to schedule your orientation. Attending this orientation is mandatory to learn the steps to receive your University ID card, apply for benefits, and access email and your assigned work location.

Before your orientation with Liz, please review the benefits options at <http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/Pages/HBHome.aspx>.

Please email your retirement selection to Liz Smith lizsmith@umd.edu and LaNettra Jones, lanjones@umd.edu before your arrival. If you do not select a retirement plan within one week of the start date of your appointment (see offer letter), you will be automatically signed up for the State Pension Plan. You will not receive a refund for any deductions however; you may change your plan at any time. Remember, once you choose an optional retirement plan, you cannot change back to the state at any time. Please take a look at the retirement options at <http://uhr.umd.edu/benefits/retirement.cfm>. Enrollment forms may be found at:

- State Pension Plan - http://www.sra.state.md.us/Participants/Members/Downloads/Forms/Form_1.pdf
If you choose not to enroll in the State Pension Plan, you must fill out the form to elect not to participate - http://www.uhr.umd.edu/documents/GRP-USM_Vendor_%20Forms-3.pdf
- Fidelity Retirement Package - [http://uhr.umd.edu/documents/403\(b\)_Fidelity_Package.pdf](http://uhr.umd.edu/documents/403(b)_Fidelity_Package.pdf)
- TIAA/CREF Retirement Package - [http://uhr.umd.edu/documents/403\(b\)_TIAA-CREF_Package.pdf](http://uhr.umd.edu/documents/403(b)_TIAA-CREF_Package.pdf)

For additional assistance or explanation of benefits, you may contact the University Benefits Office, 301-405-5654 or review the university benefits pages: <http://www.personnel.umd.edu/benefits>

International Employees and Foreign Nationals are required by the Office of International Services (OIS) to register and attend an orientation session. This orientation is usually held every Wednesday at 10:00 am and you must report the first Wednesday after your arrival in the United States. You may refer to the Website at: <http://www.international.umd.edu/ies/>, or call (301) 314-7749 for more information.

University Accounts

University login IDs and passwords are required to access most online University services. These services will enable you to acquire parking permits, set up email accounts, access various research labs, et cetera. Further information on setting up accounts can be found at: <https://www.oit.umd.edu/new/>.

Parking permits

Parking permits are required in most areas around campus. More information about parking on campus can be found at: <http://www.transportation.umd.edu/faculty.html>. You will be provided with the necessary information and forms to obtain a parking permit during your orientation with Liz Smith

Public Transportation to Campus

For those of you without a car, there are many options for public transportation. The University offers free shuttles to and from multiple neighborhoods (<http://www.transportation.umd.edu/schedules.html>). There is also a map provided by Washington D.C. Metro (www.wmata.com) that can map your route to school.

Housing

If you require assistance to locate housing, we recommend contacting Off-Campus Housing Services at 301-314-3645 or <http://www.och.umd.edu>. Additional information can be found on the enclosed Housing Information Sheet. Additionally, <http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/mld/> may be a valuable resource. Please be careful in using a service like craigslist. Do not give out bank account or credit card info over email.

Listed below are some useful campus Web sites:

Department of Geographical Sciences

www.geog.umd.edu - For information about faculty, research, course offerings, and much more.

<http://www.geog.umd.edu/localweb/howto/newhowto/> - Faculty, staff, and students also have access to intra-departmental administrative information, forms, and resources at the intranet site. Username - **local** and password - **geog**.

Office of International Services

<http://www.international.umd.edu/ies/>

For international student orientation and information.

Off Campus Housing

<http://www.och.umd.edu/>

For information on off-campus housing.

Office of Information Technology

<http://www.oit.umd.edu/>

For links to computing and communications resources including email access and user accounts.

Specifics on new student accounts can be found at

http://www.helpdesk.umd.edu/topics/getting_started/#4001.

On behalf of the Department of Geographical Sciences, we would like to welcome you to the University of Maryland.

Administrative Aids for New Employees/Visitors

1) Department Web Page: <http://www.geog.umd.edu>.

- a. The departmental web pages are the best place to get information about the department and resources available, including:
 - i. Contact information for faculty, students and administration
 - ii. Current Faculty, Staff, and student research

2) Departmental Intranet:

- a. To access, click on **Log-in** at the bottom right of the department home-page. You will need to enter your username and password, which will be provided during orientation, or by the UMD Office of Information Technology. Once you log-in to our website, click on GEOG Intranet in the yellow box.
- b. You'll find various policies, FAQs for computer support, useful links to information on campus, various forms for ordering supplies, committee meeting schedule, Departmental email reflector addresses, etc.

3) GEOG help:

- a. The department has an automated, email help system that should be used for computer-related questions or for administrative questions if you do not know who to contact. Please send an email with relevant details to geoghelp@geog.umd.edu. This must be sent from a University of Maryland email address, such as yourname@umd.edu. The request will be assigned to an appropriate staff member to help you.
- b. When responding to the email generated by the geoghelp system, please do not include the original email. Geoghelp automatically appends your response to the database file and sends out an amended email with your response included. If you include the original email in your response, it gets appended again making it very difficult to read.
- c. Please respond promptly if the tech staff asks for more information. They will not be able to solve your problems without this information.
- d. An introduction to Geoghelp can be found on the Departmental Intranet (see above) – the username and password will be provided at Orientation: <http://www.geog.umd.edu/localweb/howto/newhowto/geoghelp.html>

4) Xerox accounts:

- a. Research groups have Xerox accounts. Please contact your PI for the code for the Xerox machine. If you are teaching as a part time lecturer for the department, you can get a Xerox code specifically for the class. If you are a PI, you can get Xerox code (s) to be used for one, or all, of your projects. The funds for Xeroxing are provided in either your state teaching, or A21 research supply allocation. If you need an account set up, please contact Wilhelmina Johnson.

5) Mailboxes:

- a. All employees and visitors have mailboxes in the mailroom.

- b. If you need to mail a letter, you will need to attach a mail card to it. Mail cards are allocated just like Xerox accounts so please contact your PI, or Wilhelmina, as appropriate. Outgoing mail is placed in one of the three bins at the top of the mailboxes; outgoing with mail card, campus mail (no card needed), or personal stamped mail (again no mail card required).

6) Supplies:

- a. ALL supplies are ordered through the department's web-based procurement forms found on the intranet (see item 2 above). Different research groups have different procedures for ordering supplies, i.e. one point of contact, versus every group member ordering their own supplies. Your PI can tell you how ordering is handled for your group and which account is appropriate for the order if you need to order something directly. If you are ordering general office supplies for your research project, then the PIs A21 account should be used. If you are ordering supplies for teaching, then the state allocation account should be used.
- b. There is a general supply form for standard office supplies kept in stock in the department.
<http://www.geog.umd.edu/localweb/howto/newhowto/forms/supply.html>
- c. Use the procurement form (green form) for all other orders. Provide as much information about what you need in the notes section so we can determine the best way of ordering the materials.
<http://www.geog.umd.edu/localweb/howto/newhowto/forms/procure.html>

7) Access to the department:

- a. All employees and visitors in good standing will be provided 24/7 card reader access to LeFrak Hall (or Hartwick Building) and all research labs. Please do not prop the doors to the lab open and do not let others into the lab. (You are responsible for anyone working in the lab with you).
- b. Your office key will also open shared space in the department, including the large seminar room 1124, the mailroom, and the Xerox room.
- c. If your desk space is in one of the research labs controlled by a card reader, you will also be given a key to open the shared spaces.
- d. The lounge is available for all to use for lunch (approximately 11:30 am - 1:30 pm daily), though it needs to be reserved for other times. Please clean up after using microwaves, dishes, etc.
- e. If you habitually work late, you can obtain an "After-hours" parking pass to park in Lot A (directly outside of Lefrak Hall). Speak to Wilhelmina Johnson regarding this permit

8) Timesheets

- All employees are required to fill out timesheets electronically every two weeks. Liz Smith will send out a reminder on the Friday it is to be completed. To fill out your timesheet:
 - * Go to <http://ares.umd.edu>
 - * Go to payroll & human resources on the left
 - * Go to Time Entry/Faculty Leave

- * Select the appropriate pay period
- * Complete your Time/Leave Record (will be required to login)

For the current time sheet please mark the leave as you take it and approve at the end of the pay period. If you are out of town/on vacation, etc. you can still make changes and approve the following week.

For past time sheets that you neglected to complete, you can only put in the notes if you took leave and then approve the time sheet. If you took leave, please also send LaNettra an email (lanjones@umd.edu) letting her know which pay period and the amount and type of leave taken. Leave balances will have to be manually adjusted for you.

Please note that your supervisor then will have to go in and approve your time sheet to acknowledge you had permission to take the leave and worked the hours you stated. Supervisors should be reminded to approve time sheets, as this is a two step process.

9) Travel:

- Please reference the Department of Business Services/Travel Services Website (<http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel>) for complete travel policy and procedure information. The Smart Center also has useful FAQs on it's website: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/smart-center/forms.aspx>
- If you have any questions, please contact the smart center at help@smartcenter.umd.edu. The Geography front office students can also answer basic travel questions.

Before you travel:

- Pre-approval via an ELF Travel Approval Request (TAR) is required for travel outside of Maryland and for travel within Maryland that requires an overnight stay.
NOTE: Failure to complete a TAR *in advance of travel* may delay or preclude travel reimbursement, depending on the related circumstances and documentation.
 - The TAR is created by the Smart Center once you fill out their travel request form: <http://www.smartcenter.umd.edu/forms/newtravel.htm>
 - Pre-approval means the trip needs to be approved before its start date, not that the request must be submitted before the start date.
 - If you do not have an approved budget line item in the grant for foreign travel, you must provide justification for the foreign travel and dependant on the terms your grant, may require approval from the sponsor.. If your budget justification specifies foreign travel to China and you are now traveling to Brazil, you will need to provide information explaining why Brazil is relevant.
 - For insurance and permission purposes, you are supposed to submit a travel request for university related travel even if another organization is paying for your travel. In such a case simply list the expenses as zero and note who is covering the cost of the trip.

Airline Tickets

- Normally airline tickets should be purchased using the University contract travel agencies, making payment with the University Travel Card.
<http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel/services/agents.php>
 - If Globetrotter, Travel On or Omega are used, the ticket is paid for up front by the campus.
 - If the trip is canceled, the traveler does not have to worry about getting reimbursed (which can be very hard to do for canceled trips).
- Airline tickets are often only held for 24 hours. Please plan accordingly and book your tickets (and submit the Smart center travel request form) in the morning, not at 4 p.m. on a Friday. If you have tickets that need to be paid for the same day, please send Vivre Bell and Shannon Bobbitt an email to let us know that the TAR should be arriving shortly and the ticketing deadlines
- You can only use US carriers if you are traveling under a federal research grant. If there are no US carriers fly to your location, or for a segment of your trip, please have the campus travel agent confirm this and note it clearly in your travel request.
- It is extremely important that you use one of the three travel agencies when making your travel plans, particularly foreign travel as the travel agencies are well versed in university regulations as well as the Fly America Act and will update the travel documents as appropriate. Should the traveler make travel itineraries independently, they risk the chance of not receiving full reimbursement if the documentation is deemed insufficient by the campus and/or sponsor.

Hotels:

- If you want the department to pay for your hotel reservation up front, you must include this in your travel request information. We are not allowed to use our travel card to pay for your hotel unless it is specifically noted in the approved travel request.
 - You must make the reservation and then provide Wilhelmina with the necessary information. She will then contact the hotel and have the charges put on the departmental credit card.
 - You must bring Wilhelmina a copy of the invoice from the hotel showing the bill was paid. We must keep this with the travel card paperwork. This is an audit requirement. If we are not in better compliance of this, we will lose the travel card and travelers will need to pay for their hotels and wait to be reimbursed after the trip is over.
 - If the hotel is paid for by the traveler vs. the department credit card, the traveler must ensure the reservation was made directly with the hotel vs. travelnow.com, expedia.com, hotels.com, etc. While we understand that internet sites can provide cheaper rates, it has been our experience that either the documentation has been impossible to obtain from such sites, or deemed as insufficient by sponsors, leaving the traveler responsible for the costs.

Rental Cars:

- We cannot pay for your rental car in advance. We can only reimburse you. The campus is self insured and we cannot reimburse you for insurance. Please read the campus FAQs on rental cars carefully and ask for clarification, if needed, from the smart center.

After you travel:

- You must submit a travel expense form, with all relevant receipts, within 60 days after your trip in order to be reimbursed. The completed form and receipts should be put in the travel inbox in the main office. The expense form is also found on the Smart Center website.

10) Lunch Room:

Room 1166 can be used as a lunch room from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. It is reserved at all other times as a meeting room. There is no water in this room.

11) Printing:

- a. Business Cards or other printed materials can be ordered through the Procurement Form (Green Form). When ordering business cards, include the name as you want it to appear, title, address will automatically be 2181 LeFrak Hall, your phone number, and your email address. You will receive a mock up for approval.

12) Maintenance Requests:

- a. If you have a need for maintenance work at any time in LeFrak Hall (e.g., light burns out in office, leaky faucet in bathroom) please call work control at x52222 to report it and let Carol Groves know if the problem is not resolved in a timely fashion, or if the work request requires a work order.

13) Transportation on campus:

- a. **N.I.T.E. Ride** (Night Intra-Campus Transit Express) is a curb-to-curb, on-demand transportation service offered by Department of Transportation Services. It operates seven nights a week from 5:30 pm to 7:30 am when the university is open and is designed to serve the areas of campus that are not included on the evening bus routes. To request a ride please call 301-314-NITE (x46483). <http://www.transportation.umd.edu/routes/niteride.html>
- b. If you are working late at night you may also call for a police escort to get to your vehicle. 53555 is the on-campus number.
- c. The Motorist Assistance Vehicle (MAV) is a free service offered to any individual parking on campus experiencing automobile difficulties including jump starts, lockouts, tire changes, inflations, and gas transports. 301-314-4CAR

Tips for International Employees and Visitors

Here are some tips to make your journey and transition to the United States as easy as possible!

Getting the visa is the most important step, but the chances of being able to get the visa vary between countries. You must check very closely with IES to make sure they send out the DS-2019 or I-20 to your address that can receive international mail.

Step 1: Before Arrival

1. Double-check your documents. Make sure your visa stamping is properly printed with your name, status, and duration.
2. Make 3-4 copies of all your travel documents.
3. Get the necessary medical tests and required vaccinations, and do not forget to bring the filled in University of Maryland immunization form. Proof of tests and vaccinations is required at the University Health Center. <http://www.health.umd.edu/about/forms>
4. All international employees and visitors must carry health insurance. Employees and visitors on payroll will be covered by the State employee health benefit plan. All others must contact the University Health Center to procure health insurance coverage. <http://www.health.umd.edu/about/insuranceandfees>
5. Make sure you have enough funds with you before you arrive. You might need this money to pay for some of your initial expenses like rent, cell phone service, a bed, mattress, etc. There could be a gap of a few weeks between when you start working and when you get your first paycheck.
6. Winter clothing will be needed here. If you can't bring jackets, sweaters, etc., you can buy them here at reasonable rates.
7. Cooking skills are an added advantage. Knowing how to make traditional meals from your native country will not only save you money, but will also make you very popular with your colleagues!
8. Make sure you have a place to live before you arrive. Please look through the housing information provided with this packet. Also, check out the following sites:
 - <http://www.umdcssa.org/>
 - <http://www.scimd.org/>
 - http://umd.och101.com/search_frame.htm

Step 2: On Arrival

1. Try to arrange ahead of time to have someone pick you from the airport.
2. On your arrival at any of the international airports in the US, please be attentive at the immigration counter. What follows is VERY IMPORTANT!
 - Before landing at any of the international airports, you will be asked to fill out the I-94 form. The immigration officer at the counter will write your visa status on that form and pin it to your passport.
 - The immigration office will then staple a small card on your visa page, which is called "I-94".

- Before you leave the counter, make sure that your visa status in the passport and the one stamped on your “I-20/ DS-2019” and “I-94” form are the same. Also, make sure you have your I-94 card before you leave the counter and do not lose this card.

Step 3: Settling in at Maryland

1. As soon as you arrive here at the University of Maryland, report to the Office of International Services (OIS) located in Mitchell building.
 - If you are arriving early at Maryland, you can directly go to Holzapfel Hall and get your documents checked. You need to bring your I-20/DS-2019, I-94, and passport.
 - A map of the campus can be downloaded from the link given below.
 - Get a letter from OIS to give to the Social Security Office to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN).
 - Collect your University of Maryland ID card from the Mitchell Building.
2. Go to the University Health Center located opposite the Stamp Student Union and submit your immunization forms.
3. Visitors from certain origins have to get a skin test for tuberculosis. And almost every student from Asia will get a positive result. In that case the Health Center would take a chest X-ray for you. They will then ask you to take some medicines for half a year, which most people would sign and waive.
4. Check your OIS documents and immunization forms as early as possible to avoid complications.
5. A Social Security Number (SSN) is very essential in the US if you are employed by the Department, applying for a credit card, signing a lease, opening a bank account, etc.
 - Take the letter given to you by the OIS for your SSN to one of these Social Security Offices:
 - a. 10230 New Hampshire Ave, Suite 304, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1418
 - b. Social Security, 315 N Washington St, Rockville, MD 20850
 - c. Social Security, 7401c Forbes Blvd, Seabrook, MD 20706
 - A list of additional documents to be taken to the Social Security Office will be given to you by the OIS.
 - Arrive at the Social Security office as early as possible. They open at 9:00 AM (morning) and you should be there at least 30 to 45 minutes earlier to avoid long lines.
 - You can reach the Silver Spring Office by taking Metro bus C-8 (College Park – White Flint). It takes approximately 20 minutes to reach the Powder Mill Road bus stop from University of Maryland. The Metro bus stop is just opposite St. Mary’s Hall next to the University Health Center. This campus bus stop is called “Campus Dr. & Presidential Dr.” on the Metro time table.
 - The Social Security Office is located in the third floor of a building opposite the Powder Mill Road bus stop, across the main road. It is the only three stories building nearby the Powder Mill Road bus stop.
 - You can check the time table of Metro bus C8 using the below link.
<http://www.wmata.com/bus/timetables/md/c2-4.pdf?n>

5. Open a bank account at any of the closest banks.
 - Capitol One bank is recommended as it is located in the Stamp Student Union.
 - You don't need a SSN number to open bank account with Capitol One, but you will need your passport.
 - Bank of America is located on Route 1 in downtown College Park, which has higher interest rates and provides a certain number of free checks.
6. Having a credit card is handy and you can apply for one through any of the banks.
 - You need a SSN number to apply for a credit card.
7. A cell phone will be expensive, since you are new to the US. You might have to shop around with different providers. An initial deposit could range from \$200 to \$500. You might want to ask your friends or roommates for the best possible options.
8. Having a driver's license from your country or international driving license is helpful.
 - But you will still need to take a written and a practice test at the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in Maryland.
 - More information on this can be found at <http://www.marylandmva.com/DriverServ/Apply/default.htm>
9. If you need to purchase computers, notebook and necessary software at discounted rate, you may want to visit OIT's Technology shop located in Stamp Students Union. For further details you can check <http://www.oit.umd.edu/>.
10. Insurance: It is essential for every international employee and visitor. Medical cost in the United States is VERY expensive. You want to choose carefully for the plan that is most suitable for you.

If you have any specific questions, don't hesitate to ask your PI. S/he will assist you or find some appropriate people to assist you. We hope you all have a safe and smooth journey. We look forward to meeting you during Orientation.

Housing information

1. Off-campus Housing Information:

UMD Off-Campus Housing Services (OCHS)

Phone: (301) 314-3645

Fax: (301) 314-9874

E-mail: och@umd.edu

IM: [aim screenname = OCHatUMD](#)

Office: 1110 Stamp Student Union*

Off-Campus Searchable Database

If you are looking for housing in the area, OCH101, a service of the OCHS may help you find apartments, rooms for lease and roommates. Search by cost, location, and much more. Information is reviewed and posted daily, so housing information is always up-to-date. Or stop by in person at 1110 Stamp Student Union to work with an Off-Campus Living Consultant.

<http://www.umd.och101.com/>

Web Resources

You might also want to check others opinions about some of the available housing in the College Park area by entering the zip codes at <http://www.apartmentratings.com/>

<http://www.uloop.com>

*Directions to Stamp Student Union:

<http://www.union.umd.edu/visitorInfo/directions.shtml>