

Welcome to our academic family at Georgian American University!

Congratulations!

This is the first newsletter for exchange students/staff coming to Georgian American University. Each newsletter will contain information that will help you during your exchange semester/year at Georgian American University. Please, read them carefully.

This is the very first newsletter sent to you which will help you to deal with the practicalities to begin your studies.

If unfortunately, you need to cancel your exchange year/semester, please, let us know as soon as possible.

This is the content of our newsletter:

- **Coronavirus(covid-19) update**
- **Pre-arrival information**
- **Housing**
- **Cost of living**
- **Learning Agreement and our academic services (buddy program)**
- **Explore Georgian Culture**
- **Useful Advice**

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although there is a decrease in the impact of COVID-19 cases in Europe, many countries are opening their borders, we still approach you with a word of caution. Please, read the updated information about your country's travel restrictions. Additionally, keep an eye on the announcements made by the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs Georgia](#) as well as the [Georgian American University](#) website.

For now, restrictions for foreigners entering Georgia are the following (it may vary from country to country, so please check your country's travel restrictions as well):

- If you are a vaccinated traveler, you shall present your document of any vaccination (two doses, one dose in case of Johnson & Johnson).
- If you are a non-vaccinated traveler, you shall present PCR-examination (done during the last 72 hours prior to arrival to Georgia in Georgian, English or Russian Languages).

Your health and safety are our top priorities and we will do our best to ensure a safe and pleasant exchange experience for you.

For Further updates by Georgian authorities see these:

- [Stopcov.ge](#)
- [Georgian e-VISA Portal](#)

Pre-arrival Information

If you just started planning to buy flight tickets to Georgia, then read this part carefully – There are two main airports in Georgia: [Tbilisi International airport](#) and [Kutaisi Airport](#).

Tbilisi International Airport – More convenient way to get to the capital since it is located 17 km from the city center of Tbilisi. They have more flights and you can get to the city center by bus or taxi. Buses stop right at the front entrance of the airport. If you go by Taxi, it will take you around 20-25 minutes to get to the city centre and the fare is around 40-55 GEL (around 11-13 euros). If you take the bus, you will need from 1-3 euros.

Kutaisi Airport – If you are searching for cheaper flights, then you should consider Kutaisi Airport as well. It is located near Kutaisi, Georgia, but the journey to get from Kutaisi to Tbilisi will take longer. Once you land, you can either take a bus (it takes 4 hours and costs 4-5 euros) or a taxi (costs around 36 euros).

Keep in mind that the price range for flights in Kutaisi can be considerably cheaper (approximately, 50-70 euros) compared to Tbilisi.

Housing for visiting students

Hopefully, you by now have started to look for a place to live in Tbilisi. If you have not already started, now is the time! To help you out, we have some useful information for you.

The approximate price for a one-bedroom apartment outside of centre in Tbilisi can be up to 300 euros. The city has metro stations, and buses, therefore, it will not be expensive to use transportation if you decide to rent a place outside of the city centre.

If you want a place near the city center/ in the city center, then consider the following places:

- Tbilisi old town (closest metro station – Freedom Square) (2-3 minutes of walking)
- Rustaveli (closest metro station – Rustaveli or Freedom Square) (10-15 minutes of walking)
- Vake/Vera (closest metro – Rustaveli) (up to 30 minutes of walking)
- Marjanishvili (closest metro – Marjanishvili) (15-20 minutes walking)

Georgian American University is located in Saburtalo District, Merab Aleksidze street. There are apartment offers near the university depending on price and location. Some of them are:

- **Technical University station:** here you will find more expensive flats and apartments (around 400-500\$ per month, newly renovated) nearest location to the university, no transportation needed.

Important Information to keep in mind:

Contracts must be in Georgian and English to be valid. Never alone English. Depending on the arrangement with the owner of the property, the agreement may be informal / verbal, especially if the owner is a humble / non-English speaking person. Normally one pays the month in advance and there is an extra fee (security deposit) that is returned to you when you leave the property.

To get more information about the apartments, we recommend visiting the following websites:

- [Rentals](#)
- [Expat](#)
- [CitizenTbilisi](#)
- [Myhome](#)
- [Tbilisiapartments](#)

Cost of Living

If you are planning to live in Tbilisi, you should be prepared to have budgeted between 350 – 400 euros.

Daily living costs:

1. Lunch – 6.30 euros
2. Monthly Public Transport Unlimited – 12 euros
3. Broadband Internet Connection – 11 euros
4. Monthly Fitness Club Membership – 42 euros

Public transportation in Tbilisi is efficient and cheap, especially for students. There are some discounts as well.

In any case, you should remember to make sure that you make arrangements for adequate funding for your entire period of study before leaving your home country!

Learning Agreement and Our academic Services

We wish to remind you that your learning agreement is a preliminary plan for your studies at Georgian American University. It is not a registration for any courses, nor a guarantee that you have been accepted to attend all of those courses. Final course registration happens after arrival.

The actual registration for the courses takes place after you arrive in Tbilisi. Therefore, as soon as you arrive, please, contact the academic services at Georgian American university to discuss

your learning agreement. If the registration for the course in question ends before the orientation period, please contact the representative of your faculty at Georgian American University.

Please, check [Georgian American University's](#) website for more information. Also, you can contact us by email: international@gau.edu.ge, t.mechurchlishvili@gau.edu.ge, as well as call us on the following number: Office: (+995 32) 220 65 20 (317)

Buddy Program

Buddy Program is a support arrangement for new students at Georgian-American University. It introduces you to Georgian American University life and makes it easier for you to settle into the new environment. You will be assigned a buddy, who will help you through your university journey. Your buddy will be in contact with you as soon as your studies start.

Explore Georgian Culture

Now a little bit about Tbilisi – It is the capital city of Georgia, lying on the shores of Mtkvari river. Its population is approximately 1,3 million people.

There is a famous legend about Tbilisi – according to it, Tbilisi was founded in the 5th century by King Vakhtang Gorgasali. While hunting, he shot a pheasant that fell in warm spring and was either healed or boiled. The king found a city on its site, and the name of the city derives from the Georgian word “tbili” meaning “worm”.

Weather

Tbilisi experiences relatively cold winters and hot summers. The city has a moderate microclimate when compared to other towns with similar continental climates at similar latitudes - Tbilisi's average yearly temperature is 12.7 degrees Celsius (54.9 degrees Fahrenheit). With an average temperature of 0.9 °C (33.6 °F), January is the coldest month. July is the warmest month, with an average temperature of 24.4 degrees Celsius (75.9 degrees Fahrenheit).

Please, keep this information in mind before you start packing.

Tbilisi is a city of contrasts, with both contemporary and historic structures coexisting. Georgia's capital has seen multiple invasions and has been burned and rebuilt several times, yet it still possesses a violent past and a rich culture.

Here are some of the sightseeings you can visit while living in Tbilisi:

- Kartlis Deda memorial
- Narikala Fortress

- Old Tbilisi
- Peace Bridge
- Rike Park
- Clock tower
- Stamba Café
- Fabrika
- Marjanishvili Avenue

For more information, see:

- [ArrivalGuide](#)
- [Georgian Travel Guide](#)
- [Tbilisi Local Guide](#)

Useful Advice

In this part of the newsletter, I will share some of the useful information and safety tips you need to know before coming to Georgia.

Apps:

- TTC – official public transport application for Tbilisi bus and metro
- Tkt.ge – Tickets for events
- Menu.ge – Food Delivery service
- Bolt – Taxi App
- Railway.ge – Railway tickets between cities in Georgia
- Cstbilisi.com – City sightseeing services in and outside the city
- Tbilisifreewalkingtours.com – walking tours to explore Tbilisi

Safety tips and applications:

Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, has frequently ranked among the world's safest cities (currently 45th according to the 2022 Safety Index). In the case of emergency, there is a hotline you can call to:

- **112** - Using a uniform emergency number, the Emergency Response Center receives emergency calls from all around Georgia.

Second-hand stores

When you buy used clothing, you're not contributing to the tremendous waste of energy and materials that go into the manufacture of new clothing. Thrifting is a simple method to reduce your carbon footprint and take little effort toward reducing global warming. If you like thrifting, [this website](#) can help you find thrifting shops all over Tbilisi.

Georgian Language: The Alphabet and Useful Expressions

The Georgian language is not particularly simple and can be very difficult to learn, especially if your idea is to speak it fluently. Words are formed through prefixes and suffixes that indicate the meaning of words. You do not necessarily have to speak Georgian to live in Georgia, especially if you want to live in the larger cities like Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi. In most essential situations, it is always possible to find someone who speaks basic to advanced English. In the remaining situations Google Translate and the good will of the Georgian people always surpass the language barrier.

Warning: do not rely too much on Google Translate as it still does not work very well when translating complex sentences into the Georgian language.

Some useful expressions in Georgian are:

- gamarjoba – გამარჯობა – Hi
- kargi–კარგი - yes
- ara – არა – -no
- madloba – მადლობა – thanks!
- arapris – არაფრის – you're welcome!
- gaumarjos – გაუმარჯოს – Cheers! (toasting)
- me var – მე ვარ ... – I am (your nationality)...
- sad aris es kafe? – სად არის ეს კაფე? – Where is this cafe?

We wish you a pleasant exchange semester/year!

Georgian American University

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