

Graduate Admissions International Applicant Guide



Graduate Studies

Office of Research and Graduate Studies
10501 FGCU Blvd. South
Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
www.fgcu.edu/graduate
admissions@fgcu.edu
(239) 590-7408

Florida Gulf Coast University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; telephone number 404-679-4501) to award Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's and Doctoral degrees.

Revised on April 5, 2016 by Shannon Acosta

Dear Prospective International Graduate Student,

We are pleased to know of your interest in becoming an international student at **Florida Gulf Coast University**.

FGCU first opened its doors for classes on August 25, 1997 with approximately 2,500 students. Our student body has grown to exceed 15,000 students today.

FGCU is authorized under Federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students. We currently have students representing 76 countries from around the world.

We look forward to helping you become part of the exciting community of Florida Gulf Coast University.

Sincerely,

Dr. T.C. Yih
Dean, Office of Research and Graduate Studies



GRADUATE ADMISSION INFORMATION

The term international student refers to any student who is not a permanent resident or naturalized citizen of the United States.

International students are not permitted to enroll as Post-Baccalaureate Non-Degree seeking (including certificate programs) unless they are residing in the USA under OPT (Optional Practical Training) status.

The graduate admission process begins with the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. This office provides international students with university information and applications. Admission to a graduate program is decided by the program chair of the department offering the degree. We then work with the department of Global Initiatives and International Services to issue the I-20 form used to apply for the F-1 student visa.

International graduate student admission to FGCU is based on:

1. Academic admissibility
2. Financial support
3. Visa and US Immigration requirements

If you currently have a visa other than an F-1 visa, you should consult the Office of Research and Graduate Studies to discuss your immigration status. Each visa category has restrictions on whether or not the visa holder can enroll at the university. Prospective students who have visas, passports, or other immigration documents that are expired may need to seek the services of an immigration attorney. Florida Gulf Coast University does not provide legal advice on immigration matters. Prospective students who are determined by the United States Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services to be "out of status" cannot be admitted to the university.

After your admission is secured at FGCU, the International Services office provides support services for international students. This includes orientation to the university, orientation to living and studying in the U.S., assistance with cross-cultural adjustment and transition issues, information on and assistance with U.S. Immigration documents and regulations, on campus employment, and other services.



STEPS FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Admission Requirements:

1. Apply for admission and pay the application fee at <https://apply.fgcu.edu/Datatel.ERecruiting.Web.External/Pages/welcome.aspx>
2. If your Bachelor's Degree was earned outside of the United States, you must send official transcripts, proof of degree, copy of diploma(s), and if applicable, certification of graduation.
 - All transcripts and proof of degree must be in English; International applicants must submit original language transcripts and a certified English translation. Documents signed by notary or other public officials with no affiliation to the educational institution issuing the documents will not be accepted.
 - For all graduate applicants, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) offers transcript evaluations at no cost that provide US degree equivalents of foreign education for FGCU evaluation and admission purposes. The university reserves the right to request transcripts evaluated by one of the NACES approved credential agencies if determined by the ORGS office and/or individual programs.
3. Submit official Entrance Exam Scores (GMAT, GRE or MAT depending on graduate program).
4. Applicants must demonstrate full English proficiency in accordance with University policy and will be required to submit acceptable TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores unless the country of origin uses English as the official language. A minimum score of 213 is required on the computerized TOEFL, 79 on the Internet based TOEFL, and 550 on the paper based TOEFL. A minimum score of 6.5 is required for the IELTS. With the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies (or designee) and the appropriate college dean, applicants may furnish satisfactory evidence of English competency in lieu of the TOEFL or IELTS. Examples of satisfactory evidence include, but are not limited to, completion of English Composition I and II (ENC 1101 and ENC 1102, or equivalent) with a grade of C or higher; and/or a minimum of 60 credits satisfactorily completed at an accredited institution of higher education where all courses are taught in English.
5. Submit a Financial Support Statement. Specific guidelines are included in this Guide.

- See <http://www.fgcu.edu/Admissions/Prospective/financialforms.html>.
6. If you are transferring from a U.S. school or progressing from an undergraduate to a graduate program within the U.S., you must submit a Visa Clearance Form completed and authorized by your Designated School Official. This Form is the last page of this Guide. You may also visit <http://www.fgcu.edu/Admissions/Prospective/visa.html>.
 7. Submit copies of any and all immigration documents you currently have (copy of passport, Visa, I-94 form, etc.).

Important Note:

Once you have been academically admitted to FGCU and fulfilled the immigration requirements, you will be mailed an I-20 from the Office of Graduate Studies at FGCU. You will take this to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate when applying for the F-1 student visa. In your acceptance packet, you will receive information regarding the mandatory university orientation dates, health insurance, and immunization requirements for international students.

Enrollment Requirements:

1. Provide Student Health Services (239-590-1254) with the required immunization documentation. See <http://www.fgcu.edu/studenthealth/immunizations.html> for more information.
2. Provide appropriate insurance information that meets State of Florida Requirements.
3. For housing on campus, see <http://www.fgcu.edu/Housing/> to apply.

Important Contact Information

FGCU Testing Services
(239) 590-7955
<http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/Testing/>

Financial Aid and Scholarships
(239) 590-7920
FASO@fgcu.edu
<http://www.fgcu.edu/AS/FinancialAid/>

University Foundation
Scholarship Information
(239) 590-1067
<http://www.fgcu.edu/Foundation/scholarships.asp>

World Education Services (recommended)
International Transcript Evaluations
(305) 358-6688
info@wes.org
<http://www.wes.org/>

Josef Silny & Associates
International Transcript Evaluations
(305) 273-1616 (Miami)
info@jsilny.com
<http://www.jsilny.com/>

For a complete list of all acceptable transcript evaluation agencies, please visit:
<http://www.naces.org/members.htm>

For general information regarding the graduate admissions process, forms, program specific information, scholarships, etc., please visit the Graduate Studies website:
<http://www.fgcu.edu/Graduate/index.html>

If you would like any additional information or assistance, please contact the **Office of Research and Graduate Studies** at (239) 590-7408. You may also email Graduate Admissions at admissions@fgcu.edu.

Application Deadlines

Completed applications and ALL materials must be received by the following deadlines:

If you are outside the United States:

Deadline for Fall Semester	May 1
Deadline for Spring Semester	September 15

If you are currently in the United States attending school:

Deadline for Fall Semester	June 1
Deadline for Spring Semester	October 15

Summer admission is not permitted for International Graduate Students at FGCU.

Transfer of credits taken abroad:

If you are interested in transferring credits to Florida Gulf Coast University, all foreign transcripts must be evaluated for equivalency purposes on a **course-by course** basis. University-level coursework taken abroad may be transferable if earned at a recognized institution depending on academic equivalency. International students who have completed some university level education and are interested in transferring academic credit to Florida Gulf Coast University should submit an original evaluation of courses taken and an English translation of course syllabi for which credit is desired. Undergraduate students are placed at the appropriate level for their educational background. However, academic departments have the option of denying credit for any coursework not applicable to that department.

Please be sure to request that your selected evaluation agency mail your official **Course-by-Course** international evaluation directly to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. If you would like to submit your evaluation in person, ensure that it remains sealed in its original envelope.

Academic Calendar: Florida Gulf Coast University operates on a semester basis. Fall semester begins in late August and ends in mid-December. Spring semester begins in early January and ends in late April or early May. There are three summer sessions; two that begin in May and one that begins in June. Summer sessions condense an intensive level of academic study into a short time period. To view the academic calendar and catalog on line, please visit <http://www.fgcu.edu/Registrar/academiccalendar.asp> and <http://www.fgcu.edu/Catalog/index.asp>.

Some graduate programs admit students during specified terms only (Fall or Spring only). Degree program requirements, immigration regulations, and other factors may determine a specified term of enrollment.

Full Time Enrollment Requirement (Immigration Regulation)

Credits: Students may enroll for a particular number of semester hours or credits. Most courses earn three or four credits. A course that earns three credits means that a student will generally attend that class for three hours each week.

All international graduate students MUST be enrolled FULL-TIME or will fall out of status and become ineligible for immigration benefits

FULL TIME Enrollment for Graduate students (Masters and/or Doctoral Degree) is defined as:

FALL and SPRING semesters

- **Full Time** = minimum nine (9) graduate credit hours
- Minimum of six (6) credits must be in-person (NOT online) classes; only 3 online credits may be counted toward the 9-credit total.

SUMMER semester is **OPTIONAL** (no class requirements) for most continuing students.

Graduate degrees (Master's and Doctoral) vary in the number of hours required for graduation according to the individual program.

Transfer Students (must submit a visa/SEVIS clearance form):

You are considered to be a "transfer student" if:

1. You are currently enrolled in another U.S. higher education academic institution
2. You are moving from undergraduate to graduate level at FGCU
3. You are seeking a second degree at FGCU

To transfer to FGCU, you should have been pursuing a full course of study (12 undergraduate semester hours or 9 graduate semester hours) in your former program or be on authorized practical training. Otherwise, you are "Out Of Status" and must apply to the US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) for reinstatement to F-1 status which, if granted, will allow you to request enrollment at FGCU as F-1 status.

Visa Clearance Form:

You will need a **Visa Clearance Form** to verify your Visa status if you are a transfer student

currently attending a US high school, college or university. This form must be signed by the Designated School Official (DSO) at your current institution and should be sent in a sealed envelope directly to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at FGCU. You may use the form at the end of this Guide or you may download the form at: <http://www.fgcu.edu/ORGS/form-library.html>.

Financial Responsibility / Financial Statement Form:

For I-20 purposes, international students are required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to show adequate proof of their ability to financially support themselves (and any dependents) for the duration of their studies in the United States. International students are generally not permitted to be employed (except for restricted on-campus work) while studying in the United States, and therefore need to ensure full financial support for their education. All applicants must submit proof of financial resources in US Dollars equivalent to the cost of attending Florida Gulf Coast University for one academic year (refer to the Estimated Expenses information on page 8). The Financial Statement Form must be completed and signed by an official of your financial institution (such as a bank) where your funds are deposited, or by a sponsor who will be legally responsible for your financial support. The Financial Statement form must be submitted in its original form. Photocopies are not acceptable. This document should be dated no earlier than six months prior to the intended date of enrollment.

Scholarships and Financial Aid:

International students are not eligible for Florida State or U.S. Federal Financial Aid. However, international students may apply for other scholarships through the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office (see page 6) or explore scholarship opportunities on the ORGS website <http://www.fgcu.edu/Graduate/Financing-graduate-studies.html>

International Students from certain countries may apply for partial tuition exemptions through Florida's State University System's Linkage program. Information on these tuition waivers is available from the International Student Services office. You may contact International Student Services by phone at (239) 590-7925, by email at InternationalServices@Fgcu.edu, and on the web at <http://www.fgcu.edu/international/>.

International students may also want to seek scholarships and other forms of financial support from home country governments, employers, family and foundations associated with the student's selected field of study.

Medical Insurance:

International students are required to carry a personal health insurance program that meets the requirements of the State of Florida. **Proof of medical insurance is not needed for admission purposes, but must be provided to the university prior to registration for classes.** Information on an approved health insurance program can be obtained from the International Services office. Students who currently have a medical insurance policy must demonstrate to Florida Gulf Coast University that the policy meets the requirements of the State of Florida.

Housing and Transportation:

International students are encouraged to consider living on campus. Living on campus promotes the student's involvement in both the academic and social communities of the university. For residence hall information and applications, please contact Housing and Residence Life by phone at (239) 590-1700, by email at housing@fgcu.edu, or on the web at <http://www.fgcu.edu/housing/>. International students may also arrange their own accommodations in area apartments, with relatives or with a U.S. sponsor. A sponsor who hosts an international student should sign the **Financial Statement Form** to verify that they are providing the room and board as a form of financial support to the student.

Students living off-campus will need to provide their own transportation to the FGCU campus. Public transportation is available. International students who plan to drive their own automobiles are responsible for meeting all driver's license, registration, and insurance requirements of the State of Florida.





Graduate Studies

Estimated Expenses for International Students 2015-2016

A certificate of eligibility (I-20) will not be issued until proof of sufficient funds is verified by the student's financial institution and/or sponsor.

Note: It is estimated that expenses will increase 10% each academic year.

Estimated Expenses for 2015-2016	Graduate Programs (Master & Doctoral)
Medical Insurance	1,474
Books and Supplies	1,200
Tuition and Fees	23,592
Personal Expenses	1,700
Transportation	1,700
Housing and meals (Room and Board)	9,424
TOTAL (US Dollars)	\$39,090**

** Graduate International students are required to maintain a full academic course load each semester (9 graduate semester hours). Estimated expenses are based on yearly-required course loads.

Additional funds are required for any dependents that accompany you. For a nine 9-month period, the US requires \$6,000 for each dependent. For a twelve 12-month period, the US requires \$9,000 for each dependent.



Financial Support Verification Letter from Bank

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please refer to the **Estimated Expenses for International Students** form for exact costs based on graduate, undergraduate and sponsor factors. **ALL FIGURES MUST BE IN U.S. DOLLARS.** Foreign currency figures **ARE NOT** acceptable. This Financial Support Verification Letter can be submitted instead of the Financial Support Statement. It must be an original document on the bank or financial firm's letterhead. *This document should be dated no more than six months prior to the intended date of enrollment.*

The Financial Support Verification letter must include the following (please use this as a guide):

Date (day/month/year)

Re: Sponsoring (name of student to attend Florida Gulf Coast University)

To: Office of Research and Graduate Studies
Florida Gulf Coast University
10501 FGCU Blvd. South
Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

I / We certify that (name of account holder) currently has a minimum of US\$ (total amount of funds required for you to attend the university for one year) in an account with our firm, to be applied to educational expenses for (name of student) to attend Florida Gulf Coast University beginning (date or term you intend to enroll).

Sincerely,

(Signature of bank/financial officer)
(Print name of bank/financial officer)
(Address and telephone number)



INSTRUCTIONS:

Please refer to the Estimated Expenses for International Students form for exact costs based on graduate, undergraduate, and sponsor factors. Be certain to enter the correct amount in the spaces provided. ALL FIGURES MUST BE IN U.S. DOLLARS. Foreign currency figures **ARE NOT** acceptable. *This document should be dated no more than six months prior to the intended date of enrollment, and should include a copy of a bank statement to verify funds.*

A financial support statement must include the following:

Date (day/ month/year)

Re: Sponsoring (name of student to attend Florida Gulf Coast University)

To: Office of Research and Graduate Studies

Florida Gulf Coast University

10501 FGCU Blvd. South

Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

I / We certify that: (please complete all that apply)

I / We will financially support _____ (name of student) for the minimum amount of \$U.S. _____ to attend Florida Gulf Coast University, beginning _____ (date you plan to begin classes).

I / We will provide room and board to _____ (name of student) for the equivalent minimum amount of \$U.S. _____ while attending Florida Gulf Coast University, beginning _____ (date you plan to enroll).

Sincerely,

(Signature of sponsor)

(Print name of sponsor)

(Sponsor's Address and telephone number)

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISA CLEARANCE/ TRANSFER FORM

To be completed by international students transferring from a U.S. high school, college or university to FGCU.
 As a part of the application process to Florida Gulf Coast University, you must show that you are currently in legal status according to USCIS (U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services) regulations. To verify your status, you must:

- Step 1: Complete Section I** of this form first
- Step 2: Your international advisor** at your current/previous school **must complete Section II**
- Step 3: Your international advisor must mail or fax the completed form** to FGCU Graduate Studies.

IMPORTANT: We cannot issue your I-20 for transfer until after your release date (the day you will complete your attendance at your current institution), and without receipt of this completed Visa Clearance/Transfer Form verifying that you are in status.

Issuing your I-20 after the release date may take several weeks. Please allow ample time.

Section I – TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

I request and authorize my present international student advisor (or equivalent campus officer) to provide the information below as part of my application for admission to Florida Gulf Coast University.

 Signature Date U.S. Social Security Number Expected FGCU Entry Date
 (Leave blank if you do not have one)

Student's Name _____
 (As it appears in passport) Last Name/Family Name/Surname Given Name Country of Citizenship

Present Address _____
 Street and Apartment Number City and State Zip Code Phone Number

Section II - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DESIGNATED SCHOOL OFFICIAL (DSO):

Student's I-94 Admission Number: _____ Expiration date _____ or D/S _____
 Date of last entry into the United States: _____

Student's SEVIS ID Number: _____ SEVIS Release Date: _____

Last term student was enrolled full time at your institution _____ Specify Campus/Branch _____
 (if university has multiple campuses)

To the best of your knowledge, is/was this student in status as an F-1 Student and eligible for notification of transfer? Yes No if not, please explain: _____

Has the student ever been granted any kind of practical training? Yes No
 If so, please identify kind and duration

Signature of School Official (or DSO) Date Printed Name/Title

Name of Institution Address/ City/State/Zip Code Telephone Number

UNDERGRADUATE: Florida Gulf Coast University
 Office of Undergraduate Admissions
 10501 FGCU Blvd. South
 Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

GRADUATE: Florida Gulf Coast University
 Office of Research & Graduate Studies
 10501 FGCU Blvd. South
 Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565

For questions regarding this form, please call:

Office: 239-590-7878

Office: 239-590-7408