New Graduate Student Survival Guide

Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
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1. Before Arriving at Arizona State University

1.1 Activate ASURITE Account

Your ASURITE account is your primary login name for ASU computing services. It is used to log onto My ASU, which is an information portal for students, faculty, and staff where you can access resources needed on a regular basis (financial aid information, class registration and schedules, etc.). After you submit your application for graduate studies, you should receive an email instructing you to activate your ASURITE account. More information on ASURITE and MyASU can be found at:

https://selfsub.asu.edu/apps/WebObjects/ASURITEActivation
https://getprotected.asu.edu/content/account-password-services
https://contact.asu.edu/

1.2 Gather Necessary Documentation

1. Government-issued ID (Driver’s License, etc.)
2. Social Security card
3. Birth certificate
4. Original Admissions & Offer Letters
5. Transcripts & GRE scores
6. Previous Degree certificates
7. Industry experience related documents
8. Passport*
9. I-20*
10. TOEFL scores*

* For international students only

1.3 Find a Place to Live

If possible, research a place to live before arriving in Tempe, AZ. The following are tips to help you do this:

1. Contact alumni from your university who currently attend ASU.
2. Contact other students, Craigslist, or other bulletin boards.
3. If you know someone currently at ASU, contact them for help finding a room.
4. Contact current MBE members for advice.
5. Make a copy of your offer letter (showing the dollar amount of the RA or fellowship) as proof of employment for off-campus apartment applications.
6. If you do not find a place to rent before you come, you can visit:
   a. Chinese Students - for pick-up service and a temporary living arrangement, visit: http://cssasus.com/
   b. Indian Students - for pick-up service and a temporary living arrangement, visit: https://sites.google.com/site/isaasu/prospective-students/pick-up
   c. Korean Students – for pick-up service and a temporary living arrangement, visit: www.ksa-asu.com
   d. Taiwanese Student – for pick-up service and a temporary living arrangement, visit: http://www.asu.edu/clubs/taiwan/index.html
7. On Campus Housing:
a. Note that most graduate students live off campus. On-campus housing is mostly designed for undergraduates (specifically freshman).

b. For more information and an application, visit: [http://www.asu.edu/housing/](http://www.asu.edu/housing/)

c. On campus housing for married students with families is only available at Polytechnic campus. There are shuttles to the Tempe campus daily. For more information and application, visit: [http://www.poly.asu.edu/housing/index.html](http://www.poly.asu.edu/housing/index.html)

8. Off Campus:

a. Tempe has many apartment complexes. You can use Google maps to quickly locate some of them. You can also search using Google, or use a website such as [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)

b. Apartments on Terrace Road and Lemon Street are closest to the Engineering Research Center building. However, many prefer to live away from the campus because of safety concerns and higher quality apartments.

c. Tempe has a good public transportation system, which allows you to live far away from campus. Review (2.2) for information on public and self-transportation.

d. If you reserve an apartment before you come to campus, try to find a short lease in case you do not like the place you rented and do not want to stay there a full year.

e. If you arrive when all the other new students arrive, it may be difficult to find a place to live close to campus after you arrive.

f. Subscribe to the GPSA (Graduate & Professional Student Association) email list to find people who need a roommate. For more information visit: [http://www.asu.edu/gpsa/](http://www.asu.edu/gpsa/)

g. Useful Websites:
   - [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com)
   - [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)
   - [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)
   - [http://www.apartmentratings.com/](http://www.apartmentratings.com/)
   - [http://www.apartmentreviews.net/ratings/arizona/tempe.htm](http://www.apartmentreviews.net/ratings/arizona/tempe.htm)
   - [http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/)
   - [www.places4students.com](http://www.places4students.com)

1.4 Contact Student Organizations

1. International Student Organization
   [https://students.asu.edu/international/support/orgs?destination=node/15645](https://students.asu.edu/international/support/orgs?destination=node/15645)

2. The GPSA (Graduate & Professional Student Association) is also available to answer some of your general questions. For more information, visit: [http://www.asu.edu/gpsa/](http://www.asu.edu/gpsa/)


4. The Indian Student Association (ISA) can be reached at: [http://www.asu.edu/clubs/isa/home.html](http://www.asu.edu/clubs/isa/home.html)

5. The Korean Student Association (ISA) can be reached at:
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6. The Taiwanese Student Association (TSA) can be reached at:
   http://www.asu.edu/clubs/taiwan/index.html
   or https://www.facebook.com/groups/TSA.ArizonaStateUniversity/

2. After Arriving at Arizona State University

2.1 Get your ASU Student ID card (Sun Card)

Your Sun Card is a photo ID that shows your ASURITE ID number. You will need it before you apply for a parking pass. You can go to Memorial Union to take a picture and receive a Sun Card. Find more information on:
   https://cfo.asu.edu/cardservices

2.2 How to Get Around After Arriving in Phoenix

1. Public Transportation
   a. Tempe has an outstanding public transportation system that includes buses, shuttles, and a light rail. You can access all these services for free by obtaining a U-Pass. You can apply for a U-Pass at the Tempe Parking and Transit Services office (you will need your Sun Card). For more information, visit:
      https://cfo.asu.edu/pts-transit-pass
   b. For more information on public transportation, bus, rail routes, and schedules, visit:
      http://www.valleymetro.org/
   c. ASU also has on-campus shuttles that don’t require any passes. For more information, visit:
      https://cfo.asu.edu/pts-shuttles
   d. The Tempe Parking and Transit Services office is located as shown below.
   e. Other useful websites: http://www.asu.edu/parking/
      http://www.tempe.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=8847
      http://www.tempe.gov/city-hall/public-works/transportation/bus-orbit

2. Bicycles
   a. If you live within two miles of campus, biking is the fastest way to get to campus. For example, compared to parking in lot 59 (one of the cheaper lots) you could actually get to the Engineering Research Center building on campus faster if you ride a bicycle. You don’t have to worry about traffic, filled parking lots, and you can park right next to the building. It will take approximately 15 minutes to get to the office, depending on location and how fast you pedal. Also, the weather is nice for most of the year, but on the rainy days you can park in the visitor lot for $8/day (this could be cheaper than the >$200 you will pay for a parking pass). It is also a good way to get exercise during the busy semester.
   b. Note that people do steal bikes in Tempe. Try to park your bike in an open, well lit area if you are planning to work late at night which is when most of the thefts occur. Buy a sturdy bike lock, and remove detachable parts from your bike, specifically your front and rear lights for night riding.
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c. There are bike shops around the campus, but the bikes there are usually more expensive. You can go to Wal-Mart to buy a cheaper bike (<$100), or you can search on the above bulletin board services to buy a second-hand one.
d. The major roads in Tempe are typically around 40 mph (65 kph) so please ride safely. Also, purchase a U-lock for your bike.

3. Vehicles
a. Parking is expensive and lots fill up fast, so many people commute by buses, or walk/bicycle to campus.
b. Parking passes are available for $200 - $800 depending on how close you would like to be to campus. Lot 59 is a common parking lot for students who don’t mind parking far away. For more information, visit:
   http://www.asu.edu/parking/

2.3 Get a Bank Account

There are two financial institutions on campus in the Memorial Union: Arizona State Savings & Credit Union and Wells Fargo. The Memorial Union also has other ATMs available. Note that your personal documents will be required to open an account (Social Security card and government ID for domestic, passport and I-20 for international). For more information, visit:
   http://www.chase.com/
   http://www.bankofamerica.com

2.4 Apply for a Credit Card

Most places require a Social Security number (SSN) in order to apply for a credit card. However, banks will give you a debit card (check card) without the SSN.

2.5 Shopping

1. Web sites for deals and coupons (mostly for electronic products):

2. Shopping Centers
   a. Tempe Marketplace (Shopping center with Target, Best Buy, clothing stores...)
      2000 E. Rio Salado PKWY, Tempe AZ 85281
      www.tempemarketplace.com
   b. Fiesta Mall (Sears, clothing stores...)
      1445 W Southern Ave, Mesa, AZ 85202
      www.shopfiesta.com
   c. Walmart Supercenter (also next to a Home Depot and OfficeMax)
      857 N Dobson, Mesa (W), AZ 85201
      www.walmart.com

1. Grocery Stores:
   a. Foodcity
      1338 E. Apache Blvd. Tempe, AZ 85281
      http://www.mifoodcity.com/
   b. Safeway
      (Uses membership card, no membership fee)
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926 E. Broadway, Tempe, AZ 85282  
www.safeway.com  
c. Fry's Food and Drug  
(Uses membership card, no membership fee)  
3255 S. Rural Rd., Tempe, AZ 85282  
http://www.frysfood.com/homepage/index.htm  
d. Sunflower Farmers Market  
1706 E. Southern Ave. Tempe, AZ 85282  
http://www.sfmarkets.com  
e. Costco  
(Membership is required, membership fee $50/year)  
4502 East Oak St., Phoenix, Arizona, 85008  
1345 West Elliot Rd., Tempe, Arizona, 85284  
http://www.costco.com  
f. Lee Lee Oriental Supermarket  
(Membership is required now, no membership fee)  
2025 N Dobson Rd. Chandler, AZ, 85224  
g. Ranch 99 Supermarket  
North 44th St. Phoenix, AZ 85008  
h. Trader Joe’s  
6460 S McClintock Dr, Tempe, AZ 85283  
www.traderjoes.com

2.6 Medical Insurance

1. ASU provides health insurance for RA 50% appointments. Some fellowships (SFAz) also provide health insurance. You must enroll in health insurance through My ASU. A charge will appear on your student account for that semester, but should be paid by your RA/fellowship. For more information, visit:  
   http://students.asu.edu/health  
2. If you get sick, first go to the Student Health Center. They can then recommend another doctor if needed.  
3. For emergencies, call 911 from any phone for immediate medical help.  
4. Tempe St. Luke Hospital (on S Mill, around 650 ft (200 m) south of Apache):  
   1500 S Mill Ave  
   Tempe, AZ 85281  
   (480) 784-5500  
   tempestlukeshospital.com

2.7 Apply for a Phone

1. If you don’t have one already, apply for a cell phone. There are many different cell phone companies available (Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, etc.). Check with them for discounts for ASU students.  
2. If you don’t have a SSN, you will have to pay $250 for each person for the deposit. You can talk with the dealer for free phones. Sometimes there will be a discount, and the deposit fee can be exempted.
3. About Arizona State University

3.1 How to Select Courses

1. Talk with graduated or older students in your area.
2. Ask your advisor and other group members for recommendations.
3. Ask professors for a syllabus before registering for the class. This may help you make a better decision if the class is right for you.
4. Do not take more than 3 classes a semester.

3.2 Student Recreation Complex

The SRC has many recreational sports activities and exercise equipment. It is a good place to meet friends and can help you achieve balance in your life, as studying should not be your whole life. For more details, visit:

http://src.asu.edu/

3.3 Computer Labs

1. There are a number of computing sites on campus:
   http://help.asu.edu/Tempe_Computing_Site_Schedules
2. To register your personal computer for internet access on the ASU network (needed only for wired connection), visit:
   https://uto.asu.edu/

3.4 Where to Buy Books

1. My ASU will tell you what books you’ll need for the semester. Click on “books” below your schedule. This will take you to the ASU bookstore website.
2. The ASU bookstore on campus is the easiest place to buy textbooks and supplies, but it is much more expensive. For more information, visit:
   http://bookstore.asu.edu/asu/home.aspx
3. Many students buy their books online, but returns will be more difficult. Supplies can be purchased from Walmart or Target. Some useful websites include:
   www.amazon.com
   www.half.com
   www.buy.com

3.5 Crime at ASU and How to Protect Yourself

1. Tempe is heavily populated and so crime is a natural occurrence. Here are some general safety tips:
   a. Walk in groups.
   b. Do not walk alone at night.
   c. Do not walk in places that are not well lit.
   d. Carry little or no cash with you.
   e. Carry a small bottle of pepper spray.
   f. Do not violate traffic rules.
   g. Keep your bike locked and in well-lit open areas at night.
2. For more information, visit these websites:
   http://www.asu.edu/police/
3.6 Payroll for Teaching/Research Assistants and Fellows

1. RA/TAs:
   a. Research/Teaching assistants are considered to be ASU employees and receive payroll biweekly. Visit the Human Resources (HR) webpage to complete the New Employment Payroll Packet. You will have to bring this to the HR building (indicated in the packet). For this form, visit:
      http://www.asu.edu/hr/partners/advisor/
      https://cfo.asu.edu/hr-studentonboarding
   b. You will be paid every other week, and taxes will be taken out of your check before you receive it. You can set up direct deposit on MyASU.
   c. RAs and TAs are expected to work a specified number of hours a week for an advisor.

2. Fellows:
   a. Fellowship recipients are different than TA and RAs. However, you are still required to complete the new employee payroll packet. Follow the instructions above.
   b. As a fellow, you are not required to work a certain number of hours for an advisor.
   c. Payments are typically monthly, and in the form of a check that will arrive at your department office. You should receive an email from them when it arrives. Direct deposit is not available.
   d. Taxes are NOT taken out of the check before you receive it. You will have to file quarterly estimated taxes with the IRS. The form for this is 1040-ES. For more information, visit:
   e. Fellowships do not cover university and department fees. Also, some fellowships may not be posted onto your student financial account (on MyASU) before the tuition/fees deadline. The deadline for payments can be found in MyASU in the student calendar. If your fellowship covers more than the tuition and fees, a check will be sent to the address you have listed in MyASU. Direct deposit will work for this reimbursement.