



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

# Getting Started



**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

# Welcome

## TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI!

The Graduate School at Southern Miss is home to over 2,500 students, both in Hattiesburg and on our Gulf Park campus in Long Beach, Miss. While you will spend much of your time here working intimately with faculty and students in your own program, the Graduate School is here to help you navigate your graduate career from the admission process to the moment you walk across the stage at graduation. We want all of our graduate students to succeed, and we believe in providing you with the tools and support to do so. This welcome guide is designed to help you get started here at Southern Miss and to familiarize you with campus services and resources.

*If you have any questions or need additional assistance, reach out to our office.*



### **THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

118 College Drive #5024

Hattiesburg, MS 39406

P: 601.266.4368 | F: 601.266.5138

Email: [GraduateSchool@usm.edu](mailto:GraduateSchool@usm.edu)

Website: [usm.edu/graduate-school](http://usm.edu/graduate-school)



# NEXT STEPS



- 1. ACCEPT YOUR OFFER OF ADMISSION.** If you have not already done so, please register your intent to enroll by clicking the “Respond” button located at the top of your decision letter in your application center (<https://usouthernmiss.hobsonsradius.com/ssc/zx671wA867020x6702ll0l.ssc>).
- 2. LOG IN AND START CHECKING YOUR OFFICIAL SOUTHERN MISS EMAIL.** You should receive an email from iTech informing you of your new Southern Miss email address and temporary password within two to three days of being admitted. Once you receive the email, log into your new email account immediately. The first email in your new account will contain important information regarding your CampusID credentials for your SOAR account (Southern’s Online Accessible Records).
- 3. LOG INTO SOAR.** SOAR is the system of record for all Southern Miss students. You will use SOAR to register for classes, review and accept your financial aid, check your grades, track your progress to degree, and even apply for graduation ([info.usm.edu/soar](http://info.usm.edu/soar)).
- 4. CONTACT THE SCHOOL OF YOUR MAJOR.** While the Graduate School is always here to support and assist all graduate students, your school should be your main point of contact now that you have been accepted. Your school will assist you with advisement, help you enroll in classes, help you find funding opportunities, and assist you in staying on track for graduation. (International students will be assisted with enrollment once they arrive on campus.)
- 5. THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES (ISSS) OFFICE COORDINATES SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.** Admitted international students should remain in contact with International Student and Scholar Services to coordinate entry visas and arrival information. New students should notify the ISSS office of their arrival plans. Airport pick-up is available on a limited basis; email [intl@usm.edu](mailto:intl@usm.edu) for details. All new international students must report to the ISSS office, located in the International Center, room 411, upon arrival ([usm.edu/international-services](http://usm.edu/international-services)).
- 6. SUBMIT YOUR FINAL, OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.** Many applicants are admitted based on partial or in-progress transcripts. Once you have completed your final semester at your previous institution and degrees have been posted, you should contact the registrar of your previous institution and request a final transcript be sent to The University of Southern Mississippi. While you will be allowed to enroll in your first term on the basis of partial transcripts, in order to enroll in subsequent terms, you must furnish your final transcript. Final transcripts may be mailed to the following address:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Graduate Admissions  
118 College Drive #5024  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

*You may also submit transcripts via secure electronic transcript service providers, such as eScrip, Parchment or National Student Clearinghouse.*

- 7. SUBMIT IMMUNIZATION RECORDS.** Per Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) guidelines, all students must provide proof of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella. Admitted, domestic students should submit health records indicating immunity, which is typically two doses of the MMR vaccine. Admitted international students will provide health records upon arrival.
- 8. REGISTER FOR A PARKING PERMIT.** Parking permit registration is managed online and typically begins shortly before classes begin. For information on parking zones and permit registration, visit the Parking Management website ([usm.edu/parking](http://usm.edu/parking)).
- 9. GET YOUR STUDENT ID CARD MADE.** When you come to campus, be sure to visit the Image Center on the ground floor of the Thad Cochran Center to get your student ID ([usm.edu/image-center/student-id-card](http://usm.edu/image-center/student-id-card)).
- 10. START CLASSES.** If you’ve completed all the items on this list, you should be ready to start classes on the first day of the semester. ***We’ll see you there!***

# GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION

*The Graduate School wants you to be successful!*

To help you get started here at Southern Miss, you'll be enrolled in an online orientation hosted through Canvas. In this module, you'll learn more about support services and resources available at Southern Miss, as well as valuable information about progressing to your degree. Please check your email regularly as the start of the semester approaches for additional information.

In addition to the Graduate School online orientation, most academic programs have separate orientations. Please check with your academic program for more information.



## ON-CAMPUS SERVICES

### MOFFITT HEALTH CENTER

Moffitt Health Center is conveniently located on the Hattiesburg campus. The staff treats a wide range of health problems, including acute minor illnesses, such as colds, sinus problems and allergies; and chronic medical problems, such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension. Additionally, they offer preventive health services, including women's health exams, cholesterol screening, smoking cessation and a men's health program.

[usm.edu/student-health-services](http://usm.edu/student-health-services)

### SOUTHERN MISS HEALTH CENTER

The Health Center, located on the Gulf Park campus in Long Beach, Miss., provides basic medical care, including first aid, treatment of acute minor illnesses and preventative screenings. Additionally, students on the Gulf Park campus can also receive telemedicine consultations from Student Health Services physicians at the Hattiesburg campus.

[usm.edu/gulfcoast/health-center](http://usm.edu/gulfcoast/health-center)

### STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services provides individual, group and couples counseling. Additionally, staff are able to provide referrals to community resources, should the need arise.

[usm.edu/student-counseling-services](http://usm.edu/student-counseling-services)

### CENTER FOR MILITARY VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND FAMILIES

The Center provides services and support for student veterans, active-duty service members and their families while they pursue their educational opportunities.

[usm.edu/military-veterans](http://usm.edu/military-veterans)

### RECREATIONAL SPORTS

The Department of Recreational Sports' primary fitness facility, the Payne Center, houses a 27,000-square-foot gymnasium with an exercise track above it, a 7,900-square-foot workout room with cardiovascular machines and weight-lifting equipment, a circuit training room, a 25-yard pool, and an indoor rock-climbing wall. Membership to the Payne Center is included as part of tuition.

[usm.edu/rec-sports](http://usm.edu/rec-sports)

### CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The Center for International Education, located in the International Center, room 401, coordinates programs and services that extend the university to our local and global communities. The Center provides intensive English language instruction, administers the university's study-abroad programs, and coordinates international admissions and student services for international students and scholars. Students interested in study-abroad opportunities should contact the Office of Study Abroad at 601.266.4344.

[usm.edu/international-education](http://usm.edu/international-education)

# TECHNOLOGY

iTech is the university's technology support service ([usm.edu/itech](http://usm.edu/itech)). Their mission is to provide technological services to the Southern Miss community in a cost-effective, efficient and proactive manner, working with customers to determine their needs, to establish expectations, and to provide solutions that enable the university to fulfill its mission and achieve its goals. The Help Desk can be found on the first floor of the Cook Library, room 103. Help Desk technicians can also be reached at 601.266.HELP (4357) or via email at [helpdesk@usm.edu](mailto:helpdesk@usm.edu).

## Quick Tips

1. To get started, connect to the "eduroam" wireless network. Your username will be W+Student ID@usm.edu (ex: w123456@usm.edu). Your password will be your previously set CampusID password.
2. Microsoft Office 365 is available at Southern Miss for all active students. After you activate your email address, you will be able to access the web version of Office 365 in addition to downloading 365 ProPlus applications ([usm.edu/itech/microsoft-office-365](http://usm.edu/itech/microsoft-office-365)).
3. Included with Microsoft Office 365, students have access to the Microsoft OneDrive to store files across devices, share files, and edit documents in real time with other students.
4. The university offers students, faculty and staff unbeatable academic discounts available for personal software purchases through the Campus eStore and Academic Superstore ([usm.edu/itech/software-downloads-and-purchases](http://usm.edu/itech/software-downloads-and-purchases)).
5. iTech offers Help Desk services in person, by phone or via email. The Help Desk can be found on the first floor of the Cook Library, room 103. They can also be reached at 601.266.HELP (4357) or via email at [helpdesk@usm.edu](mailto:helpdesk@usm.edu).
6. Public computers are available on the Hattiesburg campus in Cook Library and on the Gulf Park campus in the Gulf Coast Library and the Fleming Education Center ([usm.edu/itech/public-computing](http://usm.edu/itech/public-computing)).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

iSouthernMS Mobile app allows you to stay connected to Southern Miss anytime, anywhere. This app keeps you up-to-date on Southern Miss events, news and athletics. It can be downloaded from the App Store or the Play Store.

The Ask-A-Librarian service is available for research assistance via telephone, email or chat ([lib.usm.edu/services/forms/askalib.html](http://lib.usm.edu/services/forms/askalib.html)). For in-person assistance for individuals or small groups, schedule a research consultation ([lib.usm.edu/services/forms/consultation.html](http://lib.usm.edu/services/forms/consultation.html)).

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Dial 911: If you are experiencing a medical emergency or are in need of police or fire assistance, dial "911" on your mobile device or home phone, and emergency personnel will assist you.

Emergency Phones: In case of an emergency on campus, the University Police Department has placed 45 Code Blue telephones throughout the Hattiesburg campus and six on the Gulf Park campus. These telephones can be used to have emergency personnel sent to your location.

Eagle Alert is the Southern Miss alert system. Emergency messages regarding weather, campus incidents and university closures are delivered to your Southern Miss email account and mobile phone via text and voice messages. To opt-in to phone and text alerts visit [usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert](http://usm.edu/safety/eagle-alert).

# ASSISTANTSHIPS

Currently, the university has approximately 900 assistantships in all areas. Stipend amounts for assistantships vary by school, and interested applicants should contact their academic units for information regarding available assistantships. Graduate assistantships are available in other areas, such as the Alumni Association, Athletics, Career Services, Center for Community and Civic Engagement, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Institutional Effectiveness, McNair Scholars Program, Moffitt Health Center, Recreational Sports and the USM Foundation.

- 1. Initial Hiring Paperwork:** Students who are awarded an assistantship should contact the awarding office or school to begin the hiring process. That school or office will begin the process by submitting initial hiring paperwork and a background check request to Human Resources.
- 2. Background Check:** All graduate assistants are required to complete and pass a university background check. Once the initial request has been received and processed by HR, you will receive an email from Red Tail Security Screening with instructions on authorizing a background check. Since the background check cannot be completed until authorized, look for this email (check your spam and junk folders). Background checks typically take 5-10 business days to complete.
- 3. Tax Paperwork:** Before starting work, all new graduate assistants must complete tax paperwork. This paperwork must be completed in person in the Human Resources office, located in McLemore Hall, room 301. Paperwork should be completed no later than your official hire date. (\*Please Note: International students will complete tax paperwork after arriving on campus, but before the fifth day of classes.) When coming to the office to complete your paperwork, you should bring current (not expired), original documents that establish your identity and your employment authorization. (For example, domestic students typically provide a driver's license and Social Security card, birth certificate or passport; international students typically provide a passport, I-20, I-94 and Social Security card receipt.) If you have questions about which documents are acceptable, contact Human Resources at 601.266.4050.
- 4. Insurance:** All graduate assistants are automatically enrolled in the Student Injury and Sickness Plan for The University of Southern Mississippi. To waive enrollment, you may request a review of your existing coverage. (\*Please Note: International students do not qualify for an insurance waiver.) If you remain enrolled in the graduate assistant insurance, you will receive a year of full coverage, although premiums are only deducted September through May. For additional information regarding graduate assistant insurance, visit [usm.edu/employment-hr/ga-ra-international-student-information](http://usm.edu/employment-hr/ga-ra-international-student-information) or email Amy Hester in Human Resources at [Amy.Hester@usm.edu](mailto:Amy.Hester@usm.edu).
- 5. If you have any questions regarding your initial hiring paperwork,** contact the awarding school or office. For questions regarding your tax paperwork or any other hiring questions, contact Human Resources at 601.266.4050 or email Moriah Rouse at [Moriah.Rouse@usm.edu](mailto:Moriah.Rouse@usm.edu).
- 6. Pay Cycle:** Graduate assistants are paid monthly, September through May, unless they are on work study. Graduate assistants funded through work study are paid at an hourly rate on the biweekly pay cycle. Graduate assistants should work no more than 20 hours per week to fulfill the obligations of the assistantship. Hour restrictions are still in effect during holiday breaks and the summer semester.



# FINANCES

## **BILLING**

Students are able to review all account information, including tuition, fees, credits, and all other awards and charges, through their SOAR portal ([info.usm.edu/soar](http://info.usm.edu/soar)). For questions about your bill or information about paying your bill, contact Business Services at [business.services@usm.edu](mailto:business.services@usm.edu) or at 601.266.4137.

## **LOANS**

Graduate students interested in applying for student loans should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Use Federal Student Code 002441. For additional information about federal financial aid, contact the Office of Financial Aid at [financial.aid@usm.edu](mailto:financial.aid@usm.edu) or at 601.266.4774.

## **STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

If you're looking for work, Career Services is the place for you ([usm.edu/career-services](http://usm.edu/career-services)). In addition to providing career counseling for students, Career Services helps students find jobs both on and off campus, through Jobs for Eagles ([usm.edu/career-services/jobs-eagles-login](http://usm.edu/career-services/jobs-eagles-login)).

## **FINANCIAL LITERACY**

For many students, Graduate School will be your first experience dealing with finances on your own. To help students, the Office of Financial Aid provides information on financial literacy ([usm.edu/financial-aid/financial-literacy-video-series](http://usm.edu/financial-aid/financial-literacy-video-series)). Additional information can be found on the Graduate School website ([usm.edu/graduate-school/financial-literacy](http://usm.edu/graduate-school/financial-literacy)).

