

Georgia Driver's License

1) New Information on Obtaining a Georgia Driver's License

Just to be clear about which office we're dealing with, here's a brief history of how the Department of Driver Services (DDS) has been named within Georgia (in recent memory):

Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Department of Motor Vehicle Services (DMVS)
and as of July 1, 2005, the Department of Driver Services (DDS)

The list of required documents for issuance of a Georgia driver's license is at <http://www.dds.ga.gov/rules/rules.aspx?chap=375-3-1&rule=375-3-1-.02&head=375-3>

Items 6.b. and 7. of the above site are reproduced here, as they are most relevant to international students:

6. Applicants for initial issuance of a Georgia driver's license, permit or identification card shall provide documentation proving either United States citizenship or legal authorization from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau of the United States Department of Homeland Security.

b. In order to prove legal authorization from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau of the United States Department of Homeland Security, an applicant for an initial Georgia driver's license, permit or identification card shall furnish one of the following as proof thereof:

- i. Foreign passport with appropriate immigration documents;
- ii. Resident Alien Card (Form I-551);
- iii. Temporary Resident Alien Card (Form I-668);
- iv. United States Department of Receptions and Placement Program Assurance Form (for refugees).

7. Applicants for initial issuance of a Georgia driver's license, permit or identification card shall furnish proof that the applicant currently resides in Georgia and provide a valid Georgia residence address. The following items are acceptable proof:

- a. Utility bill issued within the last forty-five (45) days with valid Georgia residence address;
- b. Bank statement issued within the last forty-five (45) days with valid Georgia residence address;

- c. Currently valid rental contracts and/or receipts for payments made within the last forty-five (45) days for rent payments with valid Georgia residence address;
- d. Employer verification;
- e. Non-expired Georgia driver's license, permit or identification card issued to parent, guardian or spouse.

This requirement shall not apply to persons applying for the renewal of a driver's license, permit or identification card by means other than personal appearance, when authorized to do so by the Department.

2) Driving in Georgia with an International License

International students may not need to get a Georgia driver's license at all. Problems with this option exist, however:

- 1) The average police officer may not be familiar with this particular provision of the law.
- 2) Not having a valid Georgia driver's license will increase the premium for liability insurance.

The specific provision can be found on page 147 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) at <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/GaCode/Title40.pdf>, reproduced below:

40-5-21(b) O.C.G.A.

(b) Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of Code Section 40-5-20 or subsection (a) of this Code section, a nonresident of this state who is attending a school in this state shall be exempt from the driver's licensing requirements of this chapter if and only if:

- (1) He or she is at least 16 years of age and has in his or her immediate possession a valid license issued to him or her in his or her home state or country; provided, however, that any restrictions which would apply to a Georgia driver's license as a matter of law would apply to the privilege afforded to the out-of-state license; and
- (2) He or she is currently enrolled in a school in this state, has paid for the current period of enrollment the tuition charged by the school to nonresidents of Georgia, and has in his or her possession proof of payment of such tuition for such current period of enrollment.

In short, an international student **does not need to get a Georgia driver's license** as long as he/she is registered as a student in a school in Georgia, and has paid his/her tuition for that semester/term.