



Navigating Success: A Guide for African Graduate Students in the U.S.

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AGSA President*

<https://lsuafricangrads.org/>



Key Guide Agenda

01

Immigration & Legal Status

F-1 visa compliance, maintaining status, employment authorization, and travel considerations

03

Financial Management

Banking, credit building, budgeting, money-saving strategies, and tax obligations

05

Housing & Transportation

On and off-campus housing options, transportation systems, and car ownership considerations

02

Academic Essentials

Registration, graduate school requirements, American grading system, research opportunities

04

Healthcare & Insurance

Student health insurance, campus and off-campus healthcare resources, mental health support

06

Cultural Adaptation

Understanding American academic culture, building resilience, and finding community

Your First Semester Journey



Immigration Compliance

Register with International Services within 30 days of arrival. Understand and maintain F-1 requirements, including full-time enrollment (9+ credit hours).

Academic Setup

Meet your advisor, register for classes, and learn essential university systems like myLSU and Moodle. Attend all orientation sessions.

Basic Living

Secure housing, open a bank account, and get phone service. Establish your foundation for comfortable living during your studies.

Health & Safety

Get health insurance (mandatory), locate the Student Health Center, and save emergency numbers to your phone.

Integration

Attend AGSA welcome events, explore campus resources, and begin connecting with fellow students and faculty.

Prioritize these steps in order. Your immigration compliance is critical—everything else builds from there.

Immigration & Legal Status



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Understanding F-1 Visa Compliance

As an F-1 student, maintaining your legal status is **critical**. Violations can lead to serious consequences, including deportation. The rules might seem complex at first, but learning them now will prevent problems later.

⊗ Never work off-campus without proper authorization. Unauthorized employment is the fastest way to lose your F-1 status.

⊗ Violations of F-1 requirements can lead to immediate loss of status, deportation, and bars on future entry to the United States.

Full-time Enrollment

9+ credit hours each semester (6 in final semester only with approval)

Address Updates

Report any change of address to SEVIS within 10 days

Travel Documents

Valid passport, I-20 signed within last 12 months, valid F-1 visa

Employment Limits

On-campus: Max 20 hours/week during semester, full-time during breaks

Visit International Student Services within your first 30 days to register your arrival and verify your documents.

F-1 Employment Authorization

Strictly Regulated Options

- **On-campus work:** Up to 20 hours/week during classes, full-time during breaks
- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** Must be integral to your curriculum, requires authorization before starting
- **Optional Practical Training (OPT):** Apply 90 days before graduation, \$410 application fee
- **STEM Extension:** Additional 24 months for eligible fields (total 36 months OPT)



**Unauthorized work =
immediate F-1 status violation**

Even a single day of
unauthorized employment can
jeopardize your legal status
and future in the U.S.

Always consult with your International Student Advisor **before** accepting any employment opportunity, including unpaid internships.

[check](#)



Important Documents

Passport

Your primary identification document. Keep it valid at all times (renew at least 12 months before expiration through your country's embassy or consulate).

F-1 Visa

The stamp in your passport that allowed your entry. Can expire while in the U.S., but you'll need a valid one to re-enter after traveling abroad.

I-20 Form

Certificate of Eligibility issued by your school. Must be signed by DSO for travel and updated for any program changes.

I-94 Record

Arrival/departure record proving legal entry. Access and verify it online at i94.cbp.dhs.gov after each entry to the U.S.

Social Security Card

Required for employment. Only obtain if you have authorized work. Keep in a secure location.

Store physical copies securely and keep digital backups of all documents. Consider keeping a second set with a trusted friend.

Travel Considerations



Re-entry Requirements

- Valid passport (valid at least 6 months into the future)
- Valid F-1 visa stamp (must be unexpired to re-enter)
- I-20 with travel signature from DSO within last 12 months
- Proof of enrollment and financial support

Important Considerations

- If your visa expires while in the U.S., you can legally remain but cannot re-enter without renewal
- Visa renewals require returning to your home country or a third country
- Allow 2-3 extra months for visa renewal processing, especially during peak times
- Maintain continuous enrollment records for visa renewal applications

Academic Essentials



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Registration and Course Selection

Key Registration Steps

1. Meet with your academic advisor at least 2 weeks before registration opens
2. Review your degree requirements (coursework, exams, thesis/dissertation)
3. Practice navigating the university portal before your registration window
4. Register for required courses first, then electives
5. Ensure you're enrolled in 9+ credit hours to maintain F-1 status

Important Academic Deadlines

- **Add period:** First 5-7 days of semester
- **Drop deadline:** Usually week 10 (without receiving a W grade)
- **Withdrawal deadline:** Usually week 12 (will receive W grade)
- **Comprehensive exam applications:** Often due 6-8 weeks before exam date
- **Thesis/dissertation submission:** Typically 2-4 weeks before end of graduating semester

Mark all deadlines on your calendar as soon as they're announced!

The American Academic System

Grade	Percentage	GPA Value	Interpretation
A	90-100%	4.0	Excellent
B	80-89%	3.0	Good
C	70-79%	2.0	Average (Concerning for graduate students)
D	60-69%	1.0	Below Average (Failing for graduate students)
F	Below 60%	0.0	Failing

❏ Graduate students typically need to maintain a 3.0 GPA minimum.

Academic Culture Differences

- Active participation expected in class discussions
- Critical thinking valued over memorization
- Professors expect you to use their office hours
- Direct communication about academic challenges
- Collaboration encouraged, but plagiarism strictly prohibited

❏ **Cultural Difference:** In the U.S. system, A grades aren't just for perfect work. Thoroughly meeting all requirements can earn an A. Don't be afraid to ask professors about grading criteria.

Technology & Communication Setup

Essential University Platforms

myLSU Portal

All-in-one dashboard for registration, grades, financial aid, transcripts, and personal information updates.

LSU Gmail

Official communication channel. Check daily for important announcements and messages from professors.

Moodle

Course management system for materials, assignments, grades, and online discussions.

Phone & Internet

Recommended Phone Plans:

- Mint Mobile: \$15-30/month (T-Mobile network)
- Visible: \$25-40/month (Verizon network)
- T-Mobile/AT&T student plans: \$40-60/month

Internet Service (Off-Campus):

- Cox Communications: \$50-80/month
- AT&T Internet: \$40-70/month
- Consider splitting costs with roommates

Free Software Through LSU

Access at Software.lsu.edu: Microsoft Office 365, Adobe Creative Cloud, MATLAB, SAS, SPSS, antivirus software, and 1TB of cloud storage on OneDrive.

Understanding American Academic Culture

Classroom Participation

Active participation is expected and often graded. Professors value students who ask questions and contribute to discussions. Silence is not seen as respectful but as disengaged.

Office Hours

Professors set aside dedicated time for student meetings. Using these hours is expected and shows initiative. Prepare specific questions before attending.

Informal Hierarchies

Faculty-student relationships are more casual than in many African countries. Many professors prefer to be called by their first name, though always start formal unless invited otherwise.

Plagiarism Rules

Extremely strict by comparison to some countries. All sources must be cited properly. Self-plagiarism (reusing your own work) is also prohibited without permission.

Independent Work

American education emphasizes independent thinking and critical analysis rather than memorization. Be prepared to form and defend your own opinions.

Social and Professional Networking

American Small Talk

Common topics include weather, sports, weekend plans, and movies. Americans tend to avoid politics, religion, money, and personal issues in casual conversation. Questions about family are usually welcome.

Professional Relationships

More casual than in many African countries, but maintain respect. Email etiquette is important - concise, clear subject lines, proper greetings. Follow up within 24-48 hours on communications.

Personal Space

Americans typically maintain about 2-3 feet (60-90cm) of personal space. Handshakes are common in professional settings, hugs among friends. Always ask before physical contact.

Networking Norms

Exchange contact information at events. LinkedIn connections are standard for professional contacts. Follow up with a brief email after meaningful conversations. Coffee meetings are common for informational interviews.

Financial Management



Financial Management for Graduate Students



Creating Your Budget (Based on \$20,000 - \$40,000 Annual Stipend)

Your monthly income will be approximately \$1,667 before taxes, or about \$1,500 after taxes.

Housing

\$600-800 (shared apartment)

Food

\$300-400 (primarily cooking at home)

Transportation

\$50-100 (bus pass/gas)

Utilities & Phone

\$100-150

Personal/Misc

\$100-200

Savings

\$200+ (emergency fund)

Money-Saving Tips

- Use the free Tiger Trails bus system
- Cook meals at home instead of eating out
- Shop at Walmart/Aldi for groceries
- Rent textbooks or buy used
- Attend free campus events for entertainment
- Use student discounts (always ask!)
- File taxes with free VITA program assistance

Start building an emergency fund as soon as possible, aiming for 3-6 months of expenses. This financial buffer will give you peace of mind and prepare you for unexpected costs.

Banking & Building Credit



Choose a Student-Friendly Bank

- Campus Federal Credit Union (on-campus)
- Regions Bank (multiple locations)
- Chase Bank (good mobile app)
- Bank of America (international services)

Bring: Passport, I-20, I-94, LSU ID, proof of address



Set Up Your Accounts

- Checking account for daily expenses
- Savings account for emergency fund
- Set up direct deposit for assistantship
- Download mobile banking app
- Order a debit card



Build Credit History

- Start with secured credit card (\$200-500 deposit)
- Consider Discover Student or Capital One Student
- Use for small purchases only
- Pay full balance monthly - NEVER carry debt
- Monitor your credit score ([creditkarma.com](https://www.creditkarma.com))

Building good credit takes time but will be invaluable for your future in the U.S., especially if you plan to rent apartments, buy a car, or pursue employment after graduation.

Building Credit History

Why Credit Matters in the U.S.

Your credit score affects your ability to rent apartments, get phone contracts, buy cars, and eventually secure mortgages. Starting early is essential for international students.

Secured Credit Cards

Start with a secured card that requires a deposit (\$200-500). Recommended cards: Discover Student, Capital One Secured, Citi Secured. Use for small purchases and pay the FULL balance monthly.

Credit Score Basics

Scores range from 300-850. Above 700 is good, above 750 is excellent. Factors: payment history (35%), credit utilization (30%), length of history (15%), new credit (10%), credit mix (10%).

Building Good Credit

Pay all bills on time, keep credit utilization below 30% of limit, don't apply for multiple cards at once, keep oldest accounts open, check your credit report annually for free at annualcreditreport.com.

⊗ **NEVER carry a balance on credit cards!** Interest rates are extremely high (20%+) and can quickly lead to debt problems.

Money-Saving Strategies



Textbooks

- Rent from Chegg or Amazon instead of buying
- Use library reserves for required readings
- Buy used editions when possible
- Share costs with classmates for expensive texts
- Check if PDF versions are legally available



Food

- Cook at home and meal prep on weekends
- Shop at discount stores (Aldi, Walmart)
- Use student meal plans strategically
- Buy in bulk and share with roommates
- Use grocery store loyalty programs



Transportation

- Use free campus bus systems
- Consider biking for short distances
- Carpool with classmates
- Limit rideshare services (Uber/Lyft)
- Compare car insurance rates if driving



Entertainment

- Attend free campus events
- Use student discounts for movies/museums
- Share streaming subscriptions
- Explore free outdoor activities
- Look for student happy hours and specials

Financial Wisdom for Graduate Students

3-6

Months of Expenses

Build an emergency fund covering 3-6 months of essential expenses as quickly as possible. This provides crucial financial security.

50%

Needs vs. Wants

Aim to spend no more than 50% of your income on essential needs (housing, food, utilities, transportation). This leaves room for savings and discretionary spending.

\$0

Credit Card Debt

Aim to maintain zero credit card debt. If you use credit cards, pay the full balance monthly to avoid high interest charges that can quickly accumulate.

15%

Savings Rate

Try to save at least 15% of your income for emergencies and future goals. Even small consistent contributions add up significantly over time.

Your graduate stipend is enough to live comfortably if you budget carefully. Remember that your current financial sacrifice is an investment in your future earning potential.



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Healthcare & Insurance

Healthcare Navigation

Student Health Insurance

Health insurance is **mandatory** for international students. The LSU Student Health Insurance plan costs approximately \$1,500-2,000 per semester and covers most basic medical needs.

Your health insurance typically covers:

- Basic medical care and checkups
- Emergency services (with copay)
- Prescription medications (partial coverage)
- Mental health services

Where to Get Care



The Student Health Center should be your first stop for most medical needs. Located on campus, it provides affordable care for common illnesses, preventive services, and mental health support.

For emergencies only, visit hospital emergency rooms:

- Baton Rouge General Medical Center
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center

Campus Health Resources



Student Health Center

Centralized medical facility on campus offering basic healthcare services.

Typically open weekdays with limited weekend hours.

Services: Primary care, immunizations, lab tests, women's health, basic medications

Cost: Most services covered by student insurance or small copay



Counseling Center

Professional mental health services for students struggling with adjustment, stress, anxiety, depression, or other issues.

Services: Individual therapy, group sessions, crisis intervention

Cost: Often free for limited sessions, then reduced rates



Campus Pharmacy

Convenient pharmacy located within the Student Health Center for filling prescriptions and purchasing over-the-counter medications.

Advantage: Staff familiar with student insurance plans and typically offer competitive pricing

Always carry your student ID and insurance card when visiting these facilities. Many services require appointments, though urgent care is usually available same-day.

Off-Campus Healthcare

When to Use Each Type of Facility

- **Primary Care Doctor:** Regular check-ups, non-urgent health concerns
- **Urgent Care Centers:** After-hours care, non-life-threatening issues that need prompt attention
- **Emergency Rooms:** Life-threatening conditions ONLY (extremely expensive)

Urgent Care Centers

- Ochsner Urgent Care (multiple locations): \$100-150 per visit
- Our Lady of the Lake Urgent Care: Similar costs
- Typically open evenings and weekends
- No appointment needed

Emergency Rooms

- Baton Rouge General Medical Center
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
- Ochsner Medical Center

⊗ When to Use the Emergency Room

ONLY for severe conditions like: chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe bleeding, major injuries, loss of consciousness, severe abdominal pain

ER visits typically cost \$1,000+ even with insurance

Save these locations in your phone's map app for quick access in emergencies.

Prescription Medications

Campus Pharmacy

Located in the Student Health Center with competitive prices. Staff understands student insurance plans and can help navigate coverage issues.

Off-Campus Options

CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart Pharmacies are widely available. Compare prices as they can vary significantly between pharmacies.

Generic vs. Brand

Generic medications are chemically identical but much cheaper (70-90% less). Always ask your doctor if a generic option is available.

Insurance Coverage

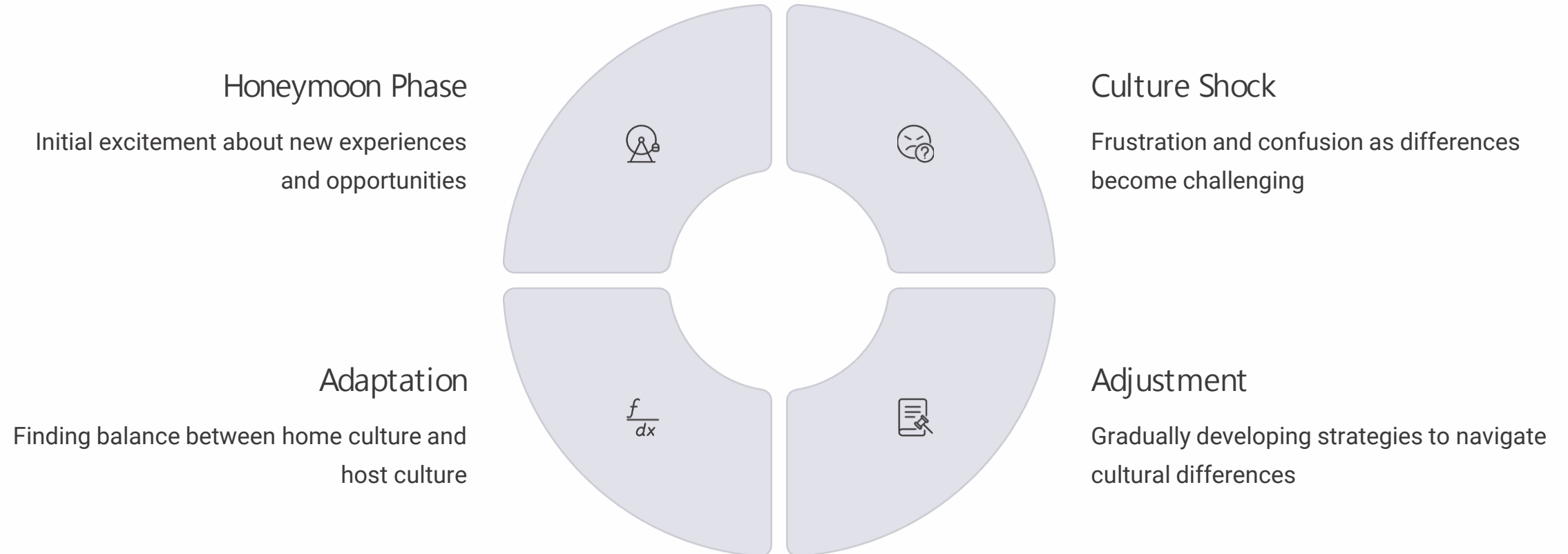
Most plans cover generic medications better than brand names. Check your plan's formulary (covered drug list) before filling prescriptions.

Discount Programs

Apps like GoodRx can provide significant discounts on prescriptions not covered by insurance. Always compare with your insurance price.

Mental Health & Cultural Adjustment

Understanding Cultural Adjustment



It's completely normal to experience homesickness and cultural adjustment challenges. The LSU Counseling Center offers free, confidential support specifically for international students. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness, in American culture.



Housing & Transportation

Housing Options



On-Campus Housing

- **Nicholson Apartments:** 1-2 bedroom units, \$600-900/month
- **West Campus Apartments:** Family housing, \$650-1,100/month
- **Edward Gay Apartments:** Graduate/family housing, \$550-850/month

Pros: Close to campus, utilities included, furnished options

Cons: Limited availability, typically need to apply months in advance

Popular Off-Campus Areas

Near Campus (Walking Distance):

- Tigerland: Student apartments, \$500-700/room
- Nicholson Extension: Quieter area, \$600-800/room

Need Transportation:

- Burbank/Sherwood Forest: \$400-600/room
- Mall Area (Bluebonnet): \$500-700/room

When looking for housing, consider: proximity to campus/bus routes, safety of neighborhood, included utilities, laundry facilities, and grocery store access. Always visit before signing a lease if possible.

Housing Search Tips

What to Look For

- **Safety:** Research crime statistics, visit at different times of day
- **Transportation:** Proximity to bus routes, bike paths, or parking
- **Amenities:** Laundry facilities, internet access, grocery stores nearby
- **Total Costs:** Rent + utilities + application fees + deposits
- **Lease Terms:** Length, penalties for breaking, renewal options

Lease Considerations

- Most leases are 12-month commitments (some offer 9-month student leases at higher rates)
- Typical move-in costs: First month + security deposit (+ last month at some properties)
- Application fees range from \$30-100 per person
- Many properties require proof of income 2-3× the monthly rent
- International students often need a U.S. guarantor or extra deposit



Always read the entire lease before signing! Ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Transportation Guide

Getting Around Baton Rouge



Tiger Trails Bus System

Free with LSU ID. Routes cover campus and major areas of Baton Rouge. Download the TransLoc app for real-time tracking. Main routes include #1 (Nicholson), #4 (Highland), #7 (Mall), and #10 (Downtown).



Biking

LSU has bike lanes and the terrain is relatively flat. Secure bike racks are available throughout campus. Many students find biking to be the most efficient way to get around campus and nearby areas.



Car Ownership

Provides maximum flexibility but comes with costs: insurance (\$100-200/month), parking permits (\$300-600/year), gas, and maintenance. Consider whether you truly need a car before purchasing.

For occasional trips beyond bus routes, ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft are readily available in Baton Rouge, though costs can add up if used frequently.



Car Ownership Considerations

Pros of Car Ownership

- Flexibility and convenience
- Access to wider housing options
- Easier grocery shopping and errands
- Travel opportunities on weekends and breaks
- Job opportunities in wider area

Cons of Car Ownership

- High insurance costs (\$100-200/month)
- Maintenance and repairs
- Gas expenses
- Parking permits (\$300-600/year)
- Need for driver's license

Used Car Buying Tips

- Budget \$5,000-10,000 for a reliable used car
- Get a pre-purchase inspection (\$100-150)
- Check vehicle history report (\$25-40)
- Compare insurance quotes before buying
- Consider reliability and maintenance costs
- Toyota and Honda models typically most reliable

If buying privately, never wire money or pay cash without receiving the title and having the seller sign transfer documents.

Understanding American Academic Culture

Classroom Expectations

- Active participation is expected and often graded
- Asking questions is viewed positively, not as a sign of weakness
- Professors prefer to be addressed by title (Dr./Professor) unless they specify otherwise
- Punctuality matters - arrive on time for classes and meetings
- Electronic communication should be professional (clear subject lines, proper greetings)

Academic Integrity

- Plagiarism rules are strictly enforced
- Citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago) vary by discipline
- Group work is encouraged when permitted
- Individual assignments must be completed independently
- When in doubt, ask your professor about collaboration expectations

American academic culture may feel more informal than what you're used to, but high standards remain. Professors expect independent thinking and may give less direct guidance than you experienced previously.



African Graduate Student Association



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African Graduate Student Association (AGSA)

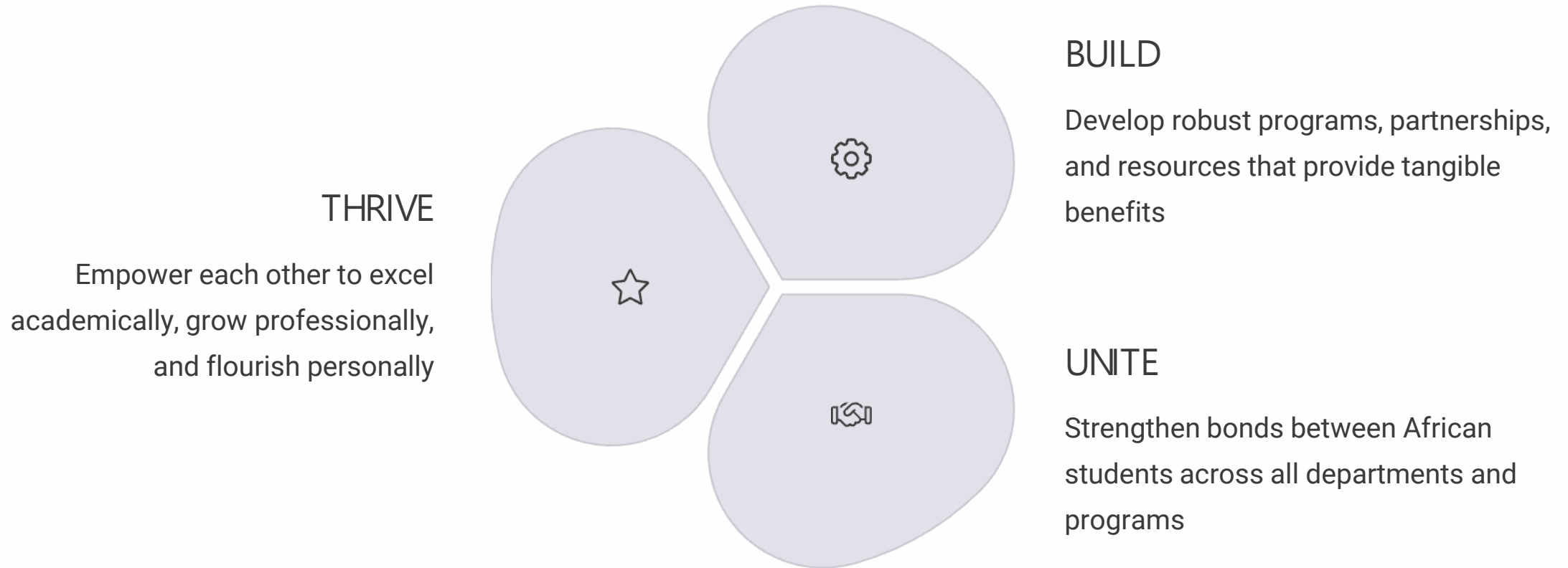
Benefits of Joining

- Built-in support system of fellow African students
- Mentorship from experienced students
- Professional networking opportunities
- Leadership development
- Cultural connection to home
- Community service opportunities

AGSA serves as your family away from home, providing both practical support and cultural connection. Get involved early to maximize your experience!



Our Vision: UNITE, BUILD, THRIVE



This vision belongs to all of us. In AGSA, we work as a team, with each member contributing their unique talents and perspectives to our shared goals. Together, we will create a transformative experience during our time at LSU.

Message from the President: Monsuru Dauda



Monsuru Dauda- President

- ❖ PhD in Chemical Engineering
- ❖ From Nigeria

The African Graduate Student Association is here to support you every step of the way - from navigating your first semester to celebrating your graduation.

Our organization is more than just meetings and events; we are a community that understands the unique challenges and opportunities you face as an African student in American academia.

Whether you need academic guidance, cultural connection, or simply someone who understands your experience, AGSA is your home away from home. I encourage you to actively participate in our monthly meetings, attend our cultural events, and consider taking on leadership roles as you grow.

Your diverse perspectives and experiences enrich not only our organization but the entire LSU community. Remember: your dreams brought you here, your determination will see you through, and your success will inspire the next generation of African scholars



Executive Committee: Leadership Team



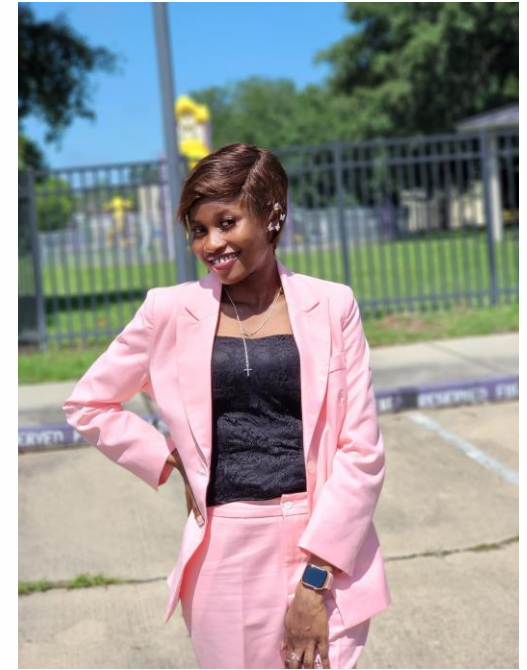
David Ukuku - Vice President

- ❖ PhD in Chemical Engineering
- ❖ From Nigeria



Toyin Opaleye - General Secretary

- ❖ Msc in Agricultural Economics
- ❖ From Nigeria



Bridget Adu Poku - Treasurer

- ❖ PhD in Early Curriculum and Instruction
- ❖ From Ghana



Executive Committee: Leadership Team



Emmanuela Akuba Ezan –
Membership Chair

- ❖ Msc in Human Development and Family Science
- ❖ From Ghana



Sideeq Bello –
Sports Director

- ❖ PhD student in Computer Science (Cybersecurity)
- ❖ From Nigeria



Maganizo Kapita –
Integration Officer

- ❖ PhD student in Mathematics
- ❖ From Malawi



Michelle Djuidje –
Integration Officer

- ❖ PhD student in Petroleum Engineering
- ❖ From Cameroon



AGSA: More Than an Organization



We Are Family

Creating a home away from home for all African graduate students at LSU



Team-Based Approach

Recognizing that every role and contribution matters to our collective success



Support Network

Providing academic, professional, and personal assistance to all members



Cultural Celebration

Honoring our diverse African heritage while building new traditions together





Together We Will Succeed

1

Vision

UNITE as a community across all
backgrounds and departments

2

Mission

BUILD for the future with strong programs
and partnerships

3

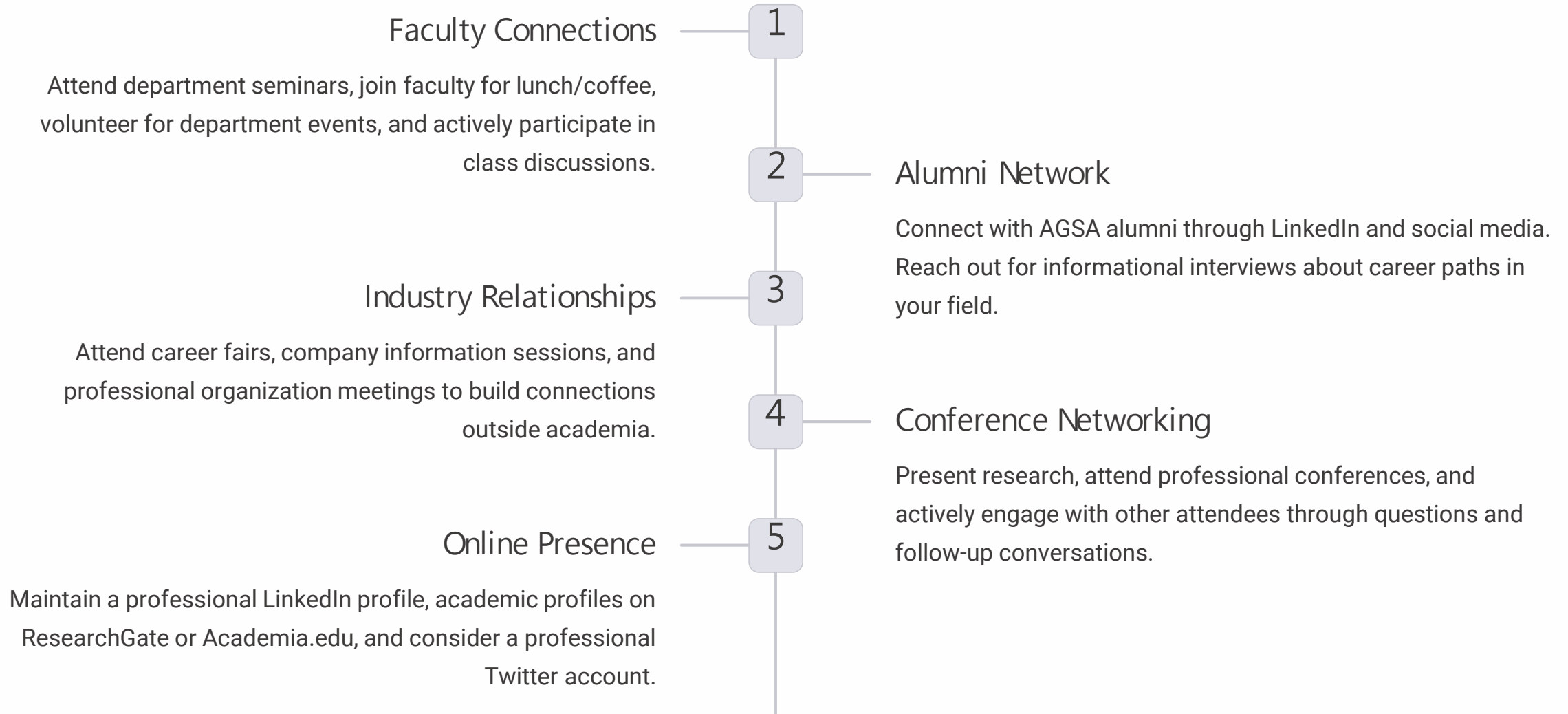
Goal

THRIVE as scholars and leaders at LSU and
beyond

As we conclude this investiture ceremony, let us move forward with purpose and passion. Together, we will create an AGSA that serves as a home away from home for every African graduate student at LSU.

Thank you, and God bless AGSA!

Building Your Professional Network





Technology & Communication

Research & Funding Opportunities



Research Assistantships (RA)

\$18,000-\$25,000/year + tuition waiver + health insurance. Work directly with faculty on research projects related to your field.



Teaching Assistantships (TA)

Similar benefits to RAs. Requires English proficiency test. Involves teaching undergraduates or grading papers.



Graduate School Fellowships

Apply by February 1st each year. Prestigious awards that provide funding without teaching/research requirements.



External Funding

NSF, NIH, Fulbright, and foundation grants. Deadlines vary. Work with your advisor to identify opportunities.

Beyond financial benefits, these positions provide valuable experience that enhances your CV. Start conversations with potential advisors early about funding opportunities in your field.

Essential University Platforms



University Portal

- All-in-one dashboard for academic services
- Registration, grades, financial aid, transcripts
- Campus announcements, emergency alerts
- Personal information updates



University Email

- Official communication channel
- Professors will email here exclusively
- Check daily for important information
- Use for all academic correspondence

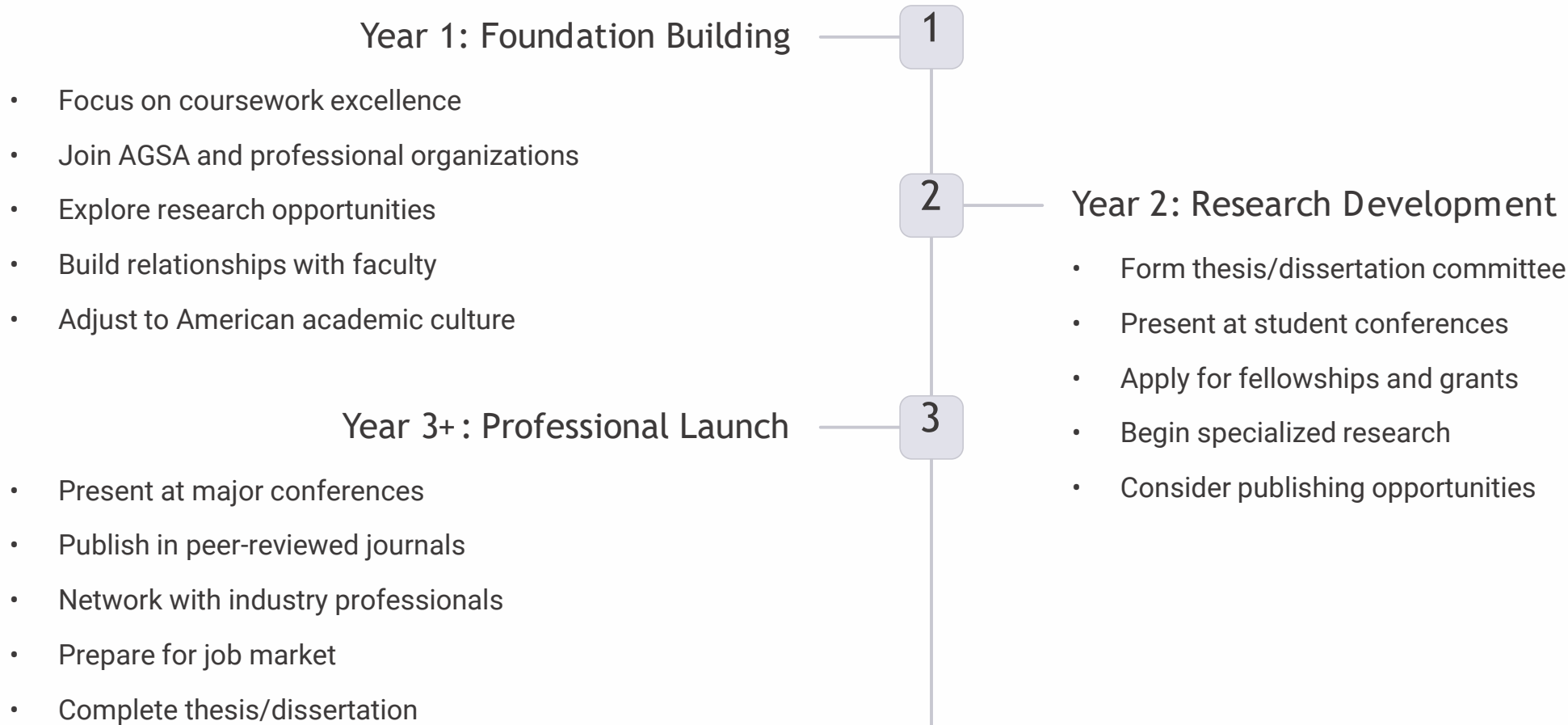


Learning Management System

- Course materials, assignments, grades
- Discussion forums, online quizzes
- Communication with professors and classmates
- Usually Canvas, Blackboard, or Moodle

Set up mobile notifications for all these platforms to stay informed about deadlines, announcements, and grade postings.

Professional Development Timeline



Your academic timeline may vary depending on your program and field of study. Work with your advisor to create a personalized plan that aligns with your career goals.

Building Resilience for Graduate Success

Develop Multiple Support Systems

Don't rely on just one person or group for support. Build relationships with:

- Faculty mentors in and outside your department
- Fellow students from diverse backgrounds
- AGSA community members
- Professional networks in your field
- Local community connections

Practice Self-Care Routines

Graduate school is a marathon, not a sprint. Maintain your wellbeing with:

- Regular exercise (use LSU's UREC facility)
- Sufficient sleep (7-8 hours nightly)
- Nutritious meals (cook traditional foods from home)
- Spiritual practices important to you
- Hobbies and recreational activities

Develop Productive Work Habits

Success requires effective time management:

- Set specific, achievable daily goals
- Use productivity techniques (Pomodoro method)
- Find your optimal work environment
- Minimize distractions during focus time
- Schedule regular breaks to prevent burnout

Resilience isn't about never struggling—it's about knowing how to recover when challenges arise. The strategies above will help you bounce back from inevitable setbacks.

Safety & Emergency Information



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Personal Safety Tips

Awareness

Stay alert to your surroundings, especially at night. Limit headphone use in isolated areas. Trust your instincts if a situation feels unsafe.

Emergency Contacts

Program campus police, local police, and trusted friends into your phone. Consider creating an emergency contact group for quick access.

Secure Housing

Always lock doors and windows, even when home. Don't prop building entrance doors. Be cautious about who you let into your building.

Transportation Safety

Use well-lit, populated routes. Share your location when using rideshare services. Check bus schedules to avoid long waits at night.

Digital Security

Use strong passwords, enable two-factor authentication, be cautious with public WiFi, and protect personal information on social media.

Important Campus Resources and Contacts

Academic Support

- **Graduate School:** (225) 578-2311
- **International Student Services:**
(225) 578-5919
- **Library Research Assistance:**
(225) 578-6544
- **Writing Center:** (225) 578-4439

Campus Services

- **LSU Police:** (225) 578-3231
- **IT Help Desk:** (225) 578-3375
- **Parking Services:** (225) 578-5781
- **Student Legal Services:** (225) 578-8737

Health & Wellness

- **Student Health Center:** (225) 578-8774
- **Counseling Center:** (225) 578-8774
- **Crisis Intervention:** (225) 924-3900 (24/7)
- **UREC (Recreation):** (225) 578-8601

Financial Services

- **Financial Aid:** (225) 578-3103
- **Bursar's Office:** (225) 578-3631
- **Campus Federal Credit Union:**
(225) 769-8841
- **VITA Tax Preparation:** (Seasonal)

Save these numbers in your phone for quick access when needed. When in doubt about which office to contact, start with International Student Services or your department's graduate coordinator.

Final Keys to Success

01

Maintain Immigration Compliance

Your legal status is the foundation of everything else. Stay enrolled full-time, keep your documents current, and consult with International Services before any major decisions.

02

Prioritize Academic Excellence

Establish strong study habits from the start—it's much harder to raise a low GPA than to maintain a good one. Seek help early if you're struggling in any course.

03

Build Your Professional Network

Connections matter tremendously in American professional culture. Actively cultivate relationships with faculty, peers, and industry professionals in your field.

04

Maintain Cultural Balance

Honor your African identity while adapting to American academic culture. This dual perspective is a strength that will enrich your contributions.

05

Practice Self-Compassion

The challenges you face are real and significant. Be patient with yourself, celebrate small victories, and remember why you embarked on this journey.

We at AGSA believe in your potential to thrive at LSU and beyond. Welcome to our community!