Dear <first name>.

In a couple of weeks, we look forward to your participation in New Graduate Student Orientation. In preparation for that event and for your arrival, we ran a New Graduate Student Survey to find out your most pressing questions. Please the results below. If you have any additional questions about orientation activities, please visit:

http://grad.jhu.edu/admissions/guide.html

and

http://grad.jhu.edu/studentLife/orientation.htm

Yours,
Anna De Cheke Qualls
Dan Horn
Homewood Graduate Affairs

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ON REGISTRATION

Q. How can I register?
A. Registration forms for all new graduate students must be submitted in-person at the Registrar’s Office in the basement of Garland Hall. Information and instructions regarding registration have already been mailed to your department and are waiting for you on-campus. You are expected to meet with your faculty advisor to discuss course selection prior to registering for classes for the first time. You must be cleared by the following offices for your registration to be processed: (1) the Student Health and Wellness Center -- you must have completed their Health and Immunization Record; (2) the Student Health Insurance Office -- you must have either signed up for the University-sponsored health insurance plan or have waived it; (3) the Office of Student Accounts; and (4) the Office of International Students and Scholars Services (OISSS) if you hold an F-1 or J-1 visa.
Q. When can I register?
A. You may register at any point prior to the start of classes. After that, you will be charged a late registration fee. The late fee charges are $150.00 during the 1st week of classes, $200.00 during the 2nd week and $300.00 any time following the 2nd week.

Q. Do I pick my own courses the first semester?
A. You must consult with your advisor before registering. He/she will need to sign your registration form.

Q. Is there an add/drop period for courses?
A. You will be able to add or drop courses until October 21st. As with your initial registration, please consult with your advisor before making any changes to your schedule.

Q. How do I find out who my advisor will be?
A. If you do not yet know who will serve as your advisor, you should contact your department's Graduate Program Coordinator.

Q. What is a normal schedule?
A. It varies from department to department, but, in general 3-5 courses per semester is a reasonable workload.

ON HOUSING

Q. Is there graduate student housing offered by the University?
A. There is no University housing for graduate students. However, the Off-Campus Housing Office will support you in your search for a place to live. There are ample private apartments and house shares within walking distance to the Homewood campus. Please see http://www.jhu.edu/hds/offcampus/ for more information.

Q. Is there temporary housing available?
A. If you need housing for the short-term when you first arrive in Baltimore, the Off-Campus Housing Office can provide you with a list of temporary housing options. It is also available on-line at http://www.jhu.edu/hds/offcampus/short_term/short_term.htm.

Q. What can I do before I get to Baltimore to try to find housing?
A. Call the Off-Campus Housing Office or visit its website. The New Students Guide (http://grad.jhu.edu/admissions/guide.html) has a long list of alternatives for your search as well. You should also feel free to reach out to a student group that you may consider joining or your department's Graduate Program Coordinator to see if they have any suggestions.
Q. Where do graduate students live?
A. For the sake of convenience, many graduate students live in the relatively inexpensive neighborhoods adjacent to the campus -- Charles Village, Tuscany-Canterbury, Roland Park and Remington-Hampden.

ON HEALTH INSURANCE

Q. Must I have health insurance to be a JHU student?
A. All full-time enrolled graduate students in the Schools of Arts & Sciences and Engineering are required to have health insurance. In many cases, the student does not pay for this him/herself. Please check with your Graduate Program Coordinator as to who will be paying for your insurance policy.

Q. Can I choose my own plan?
A. International students must use the University-sponsored Chickering Group plan. U.S. citizens have the option to waive the University-sponsored plan, but they must provide evidence of a comparable plan in that instance.

Q. How do I enroll for or waive the University-sponsored health insurance plan?
A. To enroll for the University-sponsored plan or waive it, you must go online at http://www.chickering.com/stu_conn/student_connection.aspx?group_number=890468. Use your Social Security number as your student ID for insurance purposes. Make sure you choose "Graduate Student" in Step 4 of the enrollment process. Your balance will show $0 due. If you do not want the University-sponsored insurance plan you must complete your waiver at this time. Choose "Online Waive System" or if you prefer to mail your waiver, print the "Waiver Form" and return it along with a photocopy of the front and back of your current health insurance ID card to the Office of the Registrar.

Q. When does health coverage begin if using the University-sponsored insurance plan?
A. The full-year policy begins on August 15, 2007 and runs through August 14, 2008. If you are a graduating student completing degree requirements prior to December 31st you may enroll for a half year only. Choose the "December Graduate" form in the online enrollment system.

Q. What are the specifics of the University-sponsored health insurance plan?
A. The full details of the plan can be found at http://www.chickering.com/schools/jhuhc/brochure0708.pdf.

Q. Does the University offer eye care or dental insurance plans?
A. Vision One is included in the student health insurance plan. Please check the plan for details using the link above. Chickering now offers three different options for dental care. These are optional. The premium is not paid for by the university. Go to http://www.chickering.com/stu_conn/student_connection.aspx?group_number=890468
ON STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Q. Do graduate students have access to the Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC)?
A. All graduate students in the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering have access to the Student Health and Wellness Center. Please visit their website for more information at http://www.jhu.edu/shcenter/index.html.

Q. What do I have to pay for at the SHWC?
A. There is no charge for any service at the SHWC except to purchase prescription medications and things like crutches. Anything sent out of the SHWC (e.g., blood tests, x-rays, specialty referrals) will be billed to the student’s health insurance.

Q. What forms do I have to send to the SHWC in order to be treated there?
You must have a completed health form on file at the SHWC before you can be seen. There will be a $75 charge to complete the form plus the cost of any needed immunizations. You must be in compliance with the University immunization requirements.

Q. Do I need to purchase the University-sponsored health insurance plan to access the Student Health and Wellness Center?
No, you don’t. Services performed at the SHWC (with a few exceptions mentioned above) are free to all KSAS and WSE graduate students. Insurance only plays a role if you need blood work, x-rays or specialty referrals.

Q. How do referrals work?
To maximize the benefits of the University-sponsored health insurance plan, you should obtain a referral from the SHWC for specialty care. This reduces the deductible from $250 to $75! Referrals cannot be granted retroactively. If you continue seeing a specialist after your first year here, you will need to update your referral. The only exception is that you do not need a referral to go the emergency room.

Q. Does the Student Health and Wellness Center have an OBGYN or nurse practitioner for female services?
All healthcare providers at the SHWC provide gynecological care. There is also a nurse midwife on staff who is very experienced in this area as well. She can also deliver prenatal care through her private office.

ON EMPLOYMENT/FINANCIAL AID
Q. How often do research and teaching assistants get paid?
A. Research and teaching assistants are paid twice per month -- on the 15th and the last day of each month.

Q. When will I receive my first paycheck?
A. This is dependent upon when your department submits the necessary paperwork. International students must complete the I-9 form before the payroll process can begin. Please consult your department’s Graduate Program Coordinator for the exact date.

Q. What kinds of part-time employment opportunities are available to graduate students?
A. A wide range of part-time jobs, both on-campus and off-campus, are listed with the Office of Student Employment Services. Students can work up to 20 hours per week on an hourly basis. Please visit http://www.jhu.edu/~stujob for more information.

Q. As a student employee, what forms do I need to fill out and where can I find them?
A. Student employees (including research and teaching assistants) need to complete an I-9 form prior to starting any employment at JHU. Domestic students would do this at the Office of Student Employment Services in Garland Hall. International students would do this at the Office of International Students and Scholars Services (OISSS) on Charles Street. The completed form must be submitted to the Office of Student Employment Services. Any additional forms, such as tax forms and direct deposit forms, must be submitted to the Office of Student Employment Services. These forms are available online at http://www.jhu.edu/stujob, click on “Student Handbook”. Your department may have an additional form for you to complete prior to setting you up in the payroll system. Please confer with your department’s Graduate Program Coordinator.

Q. Does the school take taxes out of my paycheck or is that my responsibility to report at the end of the year?
A. Student wages are taxable. Federal and Maryland State Tax Withholding Certificates can be downloaded from the Student Employment Services website at http://www.jhu.edu/stujob, click on “Student Handbook”, then “Tax Information”. Both forms must be completed so your employer (JHU) can withhold the correct amount of tax from your earnings. Tax to be withheld is based on the number of allowances you claim. If you are uncertain of the amount to claim, you can use the "Personal Allowances Worksheet" to obtain the number (found on form W-4). Completed forms should be submitted to the Office of Student Employment Services. Students receiving fellowship payments are responsible for making quarterly estimated federal and state income tax payments, if needed. For more information on fellowship payments go to https://www.controller.jhu.edu/depts/tax/payroll_admin.html.

Q. How much can I take out in loans as a graduate student?
A. U.S. citizens or permanent residents who demonstrate need may borrow up to a maximum of $20,500 per academic year in subsidized and unsubsidized federal loans.
Additional borrowing is also available through Grad Plus. For more information on financial aid and how to apply visit the website for the Office of Student Financial Services: http://www.jhu.edu/~finaid.

Q. When should I turn in my financial aid application?

A. There are no hard and fast deadlines, but you must allow a minimum of 2 months from the time you submit your aid application until your loan is disbursed to your account. All students wishing to apply for financial aid must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA or renewal FAFSA) and the Johns Hopkins Graduate Student Application for Financial Aid (http://www.jhu.edu/finaid/elecserv). Some students will be required to submit a signed copy of your (and your spouse’s) most recent federal income tax return, all pages and W-2 forms. If you didn’t file a tax return in the preceding year, complete the Non-Filing Statement on the Graduate Student Application for Financial Aid.