

MSSG Student Handbook

FALL 2021

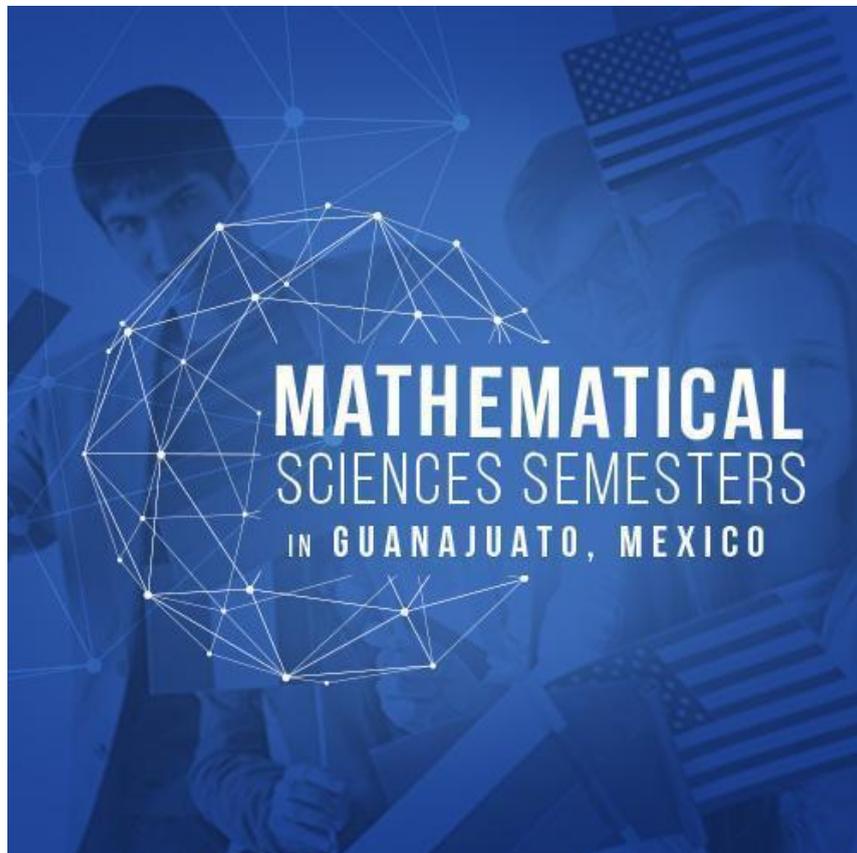


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SECTION ONE: Welcome to the MSSG Program

Dear students,

Congratulations on your admission to the program! MSSG is a rigorous program aimed at students with a strong grounding in Mathematics who want to increase their knowledge of data science, modeling and partial differential equations from a comprehensive, forward-looking, and cutting-edge perspective while acquiring a solid theoretical foundation.

We are committed to creating a diverse, welcoming and capable support network for incoming students. This handbook is designed to organize all of the important information and documents in one place. The details about living in Guanajuato, student housing and navigating the registration process will be supported by the MSSG staff onsite, but the following pages will give you an overview of what to expect, who will help you, how to contact them, and what is expected of you.

If you have any questions after reading this, please contact the Program Administrator or the Peer ambassador that has been assigned to you.

Best,

Kate Clancy

MSSG Program Administrator

Pre-departure Checklist

- Read & Print all required forms and contracts
- Complete all forms to the best of your ability before arrival
- Print Insurance Card
- Email insurance policy & medical information to callclaudia.gerontologist@gmail.com
- Have the MSSG admission letter on hand for travel (both copies)
- Complete Virtual Orientation
- All Payments made a minimum of **four weeks** prior to arrival
- Read & Print Handbook
- Share flight information with MSSG Program Administrator and Peer Ambassador
- Verify that your study & travel is approved by your home institution

Required Forms

Please download and print each of the following forms. Complete and sign them to the best of your ability before arrival. We will go over these forms and answer questions during the orientation.

Document title	Link to download PDF
Student Code of Ethics	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pEMrC2P00q2Ghd5CPLjgJk4ujbM8dOCq/view?usp=sharing
Student Agreement	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-sLC9rtBxY5eMWtDNtkUtRd_3XlwU2MX/view?usp=sharing
Medical Information	https://drive.google.com/file/d/174tMCe6WG5wzMVMAAyOmOa0c-dZTIsFA/view?usp=sharing
Independent Housing Waiver	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c7Lb67ArSOd2HDo9B48ZCWU9BRGGDKug/view?usp=sharing
Independent Travel	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iQ_Fzjj-7klqXBJUrLjM1MZ7W6Rvz_bJ/view?usp=sharing
COVID Protocol 2021-22	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vT-qio8T3NR_3f9fX1bgNXXFnjDG1QHT/view?usp=sharing

Payments

If you require an invoice, please contact MSSG. All fees are in US dollars.

Payments breakdown and important dates

Tuition costs for the Mathematical Sciences Semesters in Guanajuato (MSSG) Fall 2021 semester

1) Health & Wellness Provisional Fee	\$250.00
2) Tuition Fee:	\$7,250.00

Total Tuition and Admission Fee for MSSG Fall 2021 semester	USD \$7500.00
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Payment for the health & wellness support can be paid via paypal or transfer before arrival or may be paid with cash or a credit/debit card on location. This payment is made **directly to the provider**, not to CIMAT.

Independent Housing can be paid for onsite (monthly) or can be prepaid by student or sending school if arranged for by the student. This payment must be made via paypal or bank transfer **directly to the provider**.

Tuition can be paid via paypal or bank transfer to CIMAT.

Bank Name:	HSBC, S.A.
Account Holder:	Centro de Investigación en Matemáticas, A.C.
Account Number:	2150031426
CLABE (for Mexican accounts only):	021210021500314264
ABA:	026003052
SWIFT Code:	BIMEMXMM
Bank Address:	Víctor Cervera Pacheco #14 MZ 10 L4, Colonia Burócratas, 36250, Guanajuato, Gto., Mexico

The costs of the bank-to-bank transfers are borne by the student and are not covered by the tuition.

Please be sure to include your complete name as a reference.

Once payment has been made, **please send proof of payment to mathsciencesgto@cimat.mx**. Any document used to prove payment should be sent in a legible PDF file, stating the date of payment and the name of the student. CIMAT will not accept any document that does not fulfill this requirement.

Tuition does not include:

- Health insurance and medical care (accepting onsite first aid and nursing services)
- Housing
- Round-trip airfare and/or ground transportation from home institution to Mexico and/or Guanajuato
- Ground transportation within Guanajuato
- Ground or air transportation within Mexico
- Meals and leisure activities
- Expenses for spouses or other family members or relatives

Health Insurance & Medications

It is mandatory to have comprehensive international health insurance that is valid in Mexico for at least the duration of your stay. We strongly advise you to contact your insurance provider to make sure of the costs and exactly what the insurance covers. CIMAT requires this international insurance policy to meet the following requirements:

- 1) Coverage of a minimum of \$100,000 USD in medical expenses
- 2) Emergency medical evacuation and repatriation benefits
- 3) Legal assistance
- 4) Transportation costs for one family member in the event of hospitalization

You will be asked to provide proof of your medical insurance upon admission. **If you cannot deliver this proof to CIMAT one month prior to your arrival, we reserve the right to cancel your admission.** Buying additional travel insurance is also highly recommended. If you require medical attention, there are several hospitals in the area that have agreements with different insurance companies. We can help you find the right one for you.

In case of a chronic condition, please verify with your insurance company that all your healthcare expenses will be covered.

Please fill out this [Medical Form](#) and present it to Dr. Claudia Ruvalcaba via email or upon arrival.

Medications

If you require any type of prescription medication, be sure to bring enough to cover the duration of your stay in Mexico. Do not remove them from their original packaging and keep your doctor's prescription handy in case you are asked to provide it.

If you are a US citizen, keep in mind that it is forbidden by the law to bring some American over-the-counter medicines containing pseudoephedrine or codeine into Mexico. We advise that you follow the instructions of the US Embassy in Mexico

(<https://mx.usembassy.gov/information-regarding-bringing-medications-in-to-mexico/>) and, if you take any kind of medication that you are not allowed to bring with you, ask your doctor about their equivalent in Mexico.

Please remember that it is illegal to mail prescription medicines to Mexico without a permit from the Mexican Health Department.

Traveling to Mexico

Paperwork & Documentation Required for travel

All US citizens are required to present **a valid US Passport** when entering Mexico (whether by air, land or sea).

No visa is required for tourists (people visiting Mexico for unpaid activities and for a stay of less than 180 days).

You will need to present the **original letter of admission from** CIMAT to the immigration officer at passport control.

No foreign nationals, regardless of nationality, are required to obtain a Mexican visa if they already possess a current, **valid US visa** and they plan to study in Mexico for less than 180 days. However, if the USA visa stamped in your passport has expired, even if you have an official document or form proving your legal status in the US, you will have to apply for a Mexican visa.

If traveling to Mexico on a US visa, it must expire **AFTER** your return flight to the USA.

You can find the list of nationalities that are required to obtain a Mexican visa to enter the country as a [tourist here](#).

If you are a US citizen we recommend that you enroll in the STEP program: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Preparing & Packing Checklist

We suggest you consider the following list of preparations and items to pack.

Checklist:

- Verify that your travel and study is approved and all of your paperwork is filed correctly with your university.
- Verify that your insurance policy complies with MSSG requirements.
- Print insurance card and policy
- Check with Cell phone provider to purchase an international (US, Mexico & Canada) plan. Be sure to communicate that you will be located in Mexico.
- Alert your bank and credit card company of your travel to Mexico.
- Create a folder for all paperwork regarding your travel
- Check your country's consular website for travel advice and possible support provisions while traveling in Mexico. (US citizens should enroll in the STEP program.)
- Send your itinerary to the program administrator and your peer ambassador.

Suggestions and tips:

- If your doctor agrees, consider taking probiotics for a month or more before travel. Boosting your immune system is a good way to prepare your body for eating a new diet.
- If possible, establish a routine for walking or running for a few weeks to a month prior to departure. Guanajuato is a walking city and it is nestled in the mountains, so be prepared for lots of stairs and hills.
- If language is one of your goals, start practicing before your trip. Create a daily habit with Babbel, Duolingo or ask us about working with a language teacher prior to your arrival.
- Download Whatsapp
- Download and set up payment options for Uber

Packing list:

- Comfortable shoes
- A sturdy, comfortable backpack
- Reusable water bottle
- Carry on (on your person): Petty cash - \$100 or less. Your admission letter, your address and your passport. A set of clothing in case of misplaced luggage. Your laptop and your cell phone.

SECTION TWO: Arrival & Orientation

Orientation Week: What to expect

During your first week on site, we will provide you with a series of orientation workshops and guided tours to familiarize you with your neighborhood, the city center and campus. During your pre-departure orientation you will be given a detailed orientation schedule for your first week on-site.

You will be introduced to the people here who you can look to for support (local health professionals, academic advisor and social/cultural assistance). You will participate in workshops that address the important aspects of safety, health and cultural adjustment that will prepare you to make the most of your semester.

You will also be informed about what is expected of you as a participant of the program and as a visitor in this city. Understanding how to respectfully and responsibly engage in your academic and social life is key for your success and relies on your willingness to adapt in ways that you might not expect. We understand that transitioning into a new culture and living in a new place without the native language is challenging and can be tiresome. We hope to give you tips and tools from the beginning of your journey to help you along the way.

Registration & Administrative tasks

Within the first week of class, you will officially enroll in the classes in CIMAT's system. You will have your own email address, will have been introduced to the library staff and been given a complete tour of the library and onsite workspaces available to students.

You will need to submit all of your signed forms to the Program Administrator. Lastly, you will be given a student ID which can offer discounts on some local offerings.

SECTION THREE: Academics

Calendar

The expected course load for students at MSSG is a minimum of four courses in the Fall or Spring semesters and two or three courses for the summer program. Students can choose to take a heavier course load if they feel they are capable of handling it but should understand that this is entirely their responsibility. The academic courses and syllabi can be found at mathsciencesgto.cimat.mx.

In addition, the MSSG program organizes a half-day mandatory orientation session on the last Friday before the start of the semester.

A fall semester in Mathematical Tools for Modeling, a spring semester in Mathematical Tools for Data Science and a summer program are offered each year. Each semester consists of 14 weeks of instruction (8 weeks for the summer program) and one week of exams. Prior to the start of the semester, we will provide an introductory course to the programming languages required for the courses, such as Python and R. Classes meet 2/3 times a week.

Spanish language:

Students not participating in Spanish courses during the semester, must either pass a Spanish oral exam or complete the Survival Spanish Intensive Course before classes begin. This decision must be made prior to arrival.

Spanish Oral Exam: No fee

Pre- semester Survival Spanish Intensive Mini-Course: 100 USD

Breaks:

The Fall semester includes a break during the third week of October, while the Spring semester will break for the second week of April.

Upon arrival you will be given a complete Academic Calendar

Procedures & Deadlines

Withdrawal from the Program

If you wish or need to withdraw from the program after less than one week, the program will reimburse you 90% of your refundable tuition; after less than two weeks, 80%; less than 3 weeks, 60%; less than 4 weeks, 40%; less than 5 weeks, 20%.

No reimbursement will be made when the withdrawal has been imposed as a disciplinary measure.

Credit Transfer and Course Weight

Although the MSSG course materials are designed in such a way that the credits will be transferable to colleges and universities worldwide, students are strongly advised to verify that their MSSG credits will be transferable for their own needs.

Ask for guidance from your institution's Department of Mathematics or Registrar's Office and let us know which documents the Study Abroad or International Mobility Department at your institution needs to corroborate CIMAT's accreditation in order to validate our transcripts, and we will provide them promptly.

Please also make sure that you fulfill your home university's requirements for studying abroad and inform yourself of the regulations on the number of courses you need to take while you are abroad. The expected course load for students at MSSG is four classes in the fall or spring semesters and three classes for the summer program. Students can choose to take a heavier course load if they feel they are capable of handling it, but should understand that this is entirely the student's responsibility.

Transcript will be graded A-F, audit/non-attending or incomplete.

Support

You will be introduced to your **Peer Mentor** before arrival, usually in the pre-departure orientation, if not earlier.

During your first week of classes you will meet your **Academic Mentor**, a researcher who will be available to meet with you and guide you through the process of adapting to and making the most of the academic environment of CIMAT.

SECTION FOUR: Student Life

Student Housing

MSSG has two possible student housing options:

- San Javier Independent Apartment Living
- Host Family

The costs of these options are similar, but the experiences will differ greatly. The apartments offer safe, affordable living in a convenient location. Students will cook for themselves and be responsible for laundry. In general, this option offers more freedom and requires more responsibility.

The host family living option provides a private room and bathroom, occasionally a separate living area, and study space is available. However, in general, the student is sharing a space and interacting with a Mexican family. The host will provide two meals a day, cleaning and laundry are usually also provided in the monthly fee. This option offers more support and companionship but limits freedom of the student.

All options will include utilities and high speed internet, as well as fully furnished spaces. You will not need to bring or purchase sheets, blankets or towels etc. unless you choose to.

All contracts for housing are established directly between the student and the provider. Any changes to the housing arrangement during your stay will be subject to the contract that is agreed upon between the provider and you.

CIMAT's role is exclusively to provide connection to viable options and support with questions about language. We have no legal or financial participation in this aspect of your travel.

Cost of living & Basic Needs

This is an estimated breakdown of how much the cost of living in Guanajuato would be for a month. Keep in mind that fees are calculated in Mexican pesos (MXN), so final amounts are prone to variations based on the current exchange rate.

Expenses	Costs
Monthly Rent (including utilities)	MXN \$6,000 (≈ USD \$300)
Meals	MXN \$4,000 (≈ USD \$200)
Local transportation	MXN \$1,000 (≈ USD \$50)
Leisure activities (museums, tours, cinemas, etc.)	MXN \$500-800 (≈ USD \$25-\$40)

Transportation & Communication

The downtown area of Guanajuato is fairly compact and most of the places where you are likely to find accommodation will be within a twenty-minute walk of the main square, Guanajuato University and all the main social hubs.

For longer distances within the city limits, there is an extensive and cheap bus service, but timing can be unreliable, and some routes are less well-served than others.

Nevertheless, if your bus does not show up on time, Guanajuato has many taxis. However, these are not metered. The common local practice is to tell the driver where you are going before you get in and ask what the charge

would be, and—once you know the city a little better—understand whether the fare is reasonable.

Alternatively, if you would prefer not to haggle with drivers, Guanajuato also has Uber.

Climate

Guanajuato lies 6,558 feet above sea level in Mexico's central highlands. Therefore, the city has a mostly warm and mild climate, May being the hottest month of the year and December and January the coldest months.

During June, July, August and September it is Guanajuato's rainy season, and the summer temperatures are cooled by the rain. Note that the rain can be very heavy, so you should definitely bring some kind of protection, though nothing too bulky, as it is also summer time.

Note that, due to these climate conditions, most houses don't have heating or air conditioning systems.

Communication

Whatsapp and Facebook are commonly used among young people in Mexico. It is important that you download Whatsapp before you arrive. Most of your communication with your support team and peers will be through this platform. We suggest students consider joining Facebook during their visit as there are several useful groups that are dedicated to either students or the foreign born visitors and residents of Guanajuato.

Independent Travel Protocol:

- Independent travel must be presented to the Program Administrator for review and approval.
- Travel to zones that are a level three or four according to the State Department is prohibited unless there are extenuating circumstances that require student travel to this area or there is local information that deem the specific site and situation safe.

- We permit travel via bus or plane.
- Travel outside the city of Guanajuato in independent vehicles is prohibited.
- Travel inside the state of Guanajuato is only allowed on a case-by-case basis. All plans must be submitted in writing to the PA for review and approval.

Health & Safety Guidelines and Support

Health & Wellness support

Due to the increased risks involved with the presence of COVID 19, we have decided to partner with a local healthcare consultancy, Call Claudia. As a student of the MSSG program we require that you subscribe to their membership program for foreigners living in Guanajuato. This agency will provide the following support:

1. Health & Wellness Workshop: Healthy living in Guanajuato

This workshop will provide students with information about common illnesses in this region (including water borne and blood borne diseases), prevention as well as treatment, guidelines for staying safe and healthy during the pandemic, common triggers for mental health crisis while abroad, how to seek help from Call Claudia, what care is available and estimated costs, navigating insurance policies while abroad.

2. 24/7 support for health and mental health emergencies.
3. COVID testing upon arrival and departure
4. One consultation with a GP
5. A network of highly qualified healthcare professionals
6. English speaking providers or translation support when needed
7. Support with navigating the healthcare system and insurance policies.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-County-Information-Pages/Mexico.html>

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/high-risk-travelers.html>

<https://mx.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-mexico/>

Local resources and tips: Living in Guanajuato

MSSG Student collaborative Map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/2/edit?mid=1bDpYx6kSGj3TrPi5rGxyi6R3dlx0zaGu&usp=sharing>

Directory of goods & services:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17PwiN1g0ZpKs5bNuCqf7bwcmOxVtaFQP/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114752706105118365108&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Directory

Name	Role	Contact info
Rogelio Ramos Quiroga	Coordinator	+52 473 738 0608
Kate Clancy	Program Admin	+52 473 103 9673
Ernesto Martínez	Housing Support	+52 878 788 0705
Dr. Claudia Ruvalcaba	24/7 Health Care Support & Emergency Contact	+52 473 139 3038
Jasiel Ramirez	24/7 Emergency support	+52 473 737 0167
US Embassy – Consulate General in Guadalajara Chinese Embassy	Main Line Guadalajara Mexico City	+52 33 8526 1444 Phone: + 52 55 5616 0609

Emergency Numbers:

Guanajuato City Police	066
Emergency Services	911
Red Cross	065