



BAY STATE COLLEGE
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK
2017-2018

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International Student Services

Designated School Official (DSO):	Kate O'Hara Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students 31 St. James Ave, Second Floor, Academic Affairs Suite kohara@baystate.edu Hours: 7:00am – 3:00pm, by appointment
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Immigration Advising

One of the main functions of the Designated School Official (DSO) is to advise F-1 students regarding their compliance with all federal regulations. While the DSO is here to help you understand these regulations, legal immigration status is your responsibility.

Basic F-1 Visa Terminologies

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): This Department oversees three agencies:

- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): Responsible for citizenship, asylum, lawful permanent residency, employment authorization, refugee status, inter-country adoptions, replacement immigration documents, family and employment immigration related and foreign student work authorization.
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): Responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence, and SEVIS.
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP): Responsible for immigration inspections at U.S. ports of entry, border patrol, and custom services.

SEVIS Form I-20: A student receives a Form I-20 after being admitted to the College. The student needs to present this form to the U.S. embassy or consulate in their home country to apply for the F-1 student visa. This form contains area of study information such as major, degree objective, start and end dates of program, and other personal information relevant to the F-1 status. This form must be signed by a College DSO or PDSO if you are to leave the country for any reason at any time.

Form I-20 Extension: If the student is unable to complete the degree program by the end date listed on the I-20, they must request an extension of the I-20 with the DSO at least one month before it expires. Failure to apply for an I-20 extension in a timely manner will result in termination of the F-1 status.

F-1 Visa: A computer-generated entry permit that is issued by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad for you to enter the U.S. to begin your studies. For more information about visa applications please visit the U.S. Department of State at www.travel.state.gov.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Card: Students receive a small white index card upon arrival to the U.S. Students are admitted for the duration of status, which is abbreviated as "D/S" by CBP officers on both the I-94

card and Form I-20. Duration of status means the period the student is pursuing a full course of study, plus any additional Optional Practical Training following completion of the course of study. This card is very important as it is needed for on-campus employment, application for a Social Security Number, and a driver's license (the I-94 may now be in an electronic format).

Travel Abroad: To re-enter the U.S. after a trip abroad, students must present the following documents at Port of Entry:

- Valid passport (for at least 6 months into the future)
- Valid F-1 student visa
- Valid SEVIS I-20 endorsed by the DSO (each signature is valid for six months into the future even though the I-20 says one year)

Students who are engaging in post-completion OPT must also carry:

- Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Proof of employment letter

Automatic Visa Revalidation for F-1 Student: Allows F-1 students to enter the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, or one of the adjacent islands to the U.S. (other than Cuba) on an expired F-1 visa if the trip is not exceeding 30 days. However, the student must have a valid Form I-20 endorsed for travel by the DSO, valid passport, original I-94 card, and an expired F-1 visa stamp. Students who meet any of the following criteria will NOT be allowed to use automatic revalidation:

- Applied for a new F-1 visa that has not been issued
- Applied for a new F-1 visa and were denied
- Has a terminated or completed SEVIS record
- Has been out of the U.S. for more than 30 days

CERTIFICATION

New Students

New F-1 students are required to attend International Student Orientation prior to the start of classes. At this time, students will check in with the DSO to verify their enrollment and become certified as an Active student in SEVIS.

New students are required to provide copies of the following documents upon check-in:

- F-1 Visa
- Form I-20
- Valid Passport
- Front/Back sides of I-94 Arrival/Departure Card

Failure to provide these documents may result in a student's inability to attend classes.

All Students

All F-1 students are required to complete an International Student Registration Form at the start of each academic semester. New students will complete this for the first time at Orientation. This form will be provided via email by the DSO at the start of each semester and must be completed and returned within

one week. Students will use this form to provide a local address, phone number, and emergency contact information and to confirm their enrollment for that semester.

Information from this form will be used to certify students in SEVIS at the start of each semester. Failure to complete and return the form in a timely fashion will prevent the student from being certified and may result in withdrawal from the College and I-20 termination.

In addition to providing this information at the start of each semester, students are required to update the DSO within 10 days any time that there is a change in any of this information so that it can be updated in the student's record.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

In addition to the College's policies listed in the Student Handbook, F-1 students must comply with the following policies:

Full-Time Course Load

All F-1 students must be registered for at least 12 credits each semester (15 credits for students in the Foundation Year Program). The government has established 3 exceptions to this rule, all of which require prior approval from the DSO and have strict guidelines:

- Medical Condition
- Specific Academic Difficulties
- Final Semester of the Academic Program

Students who seek an approved reduced course load must speak with the DSO prior to registration and gain approval. Retroactive approval will not be granted.

Students who fail to meet the full-time course load requirements each semester may be administratively withdrawn from the College and may have their I-20 terminated.

Accelerated Courses

International students may only take one fully-online course per semester under federal guidelines. Students who maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA (minimum of 12 credits completed at Bay State College) will be allowed to take one accelerated on-ground course per semester, in addition to that fully-online course. Students must be full-time (12+ credits) in order to take two accelerated courses in a given academic semester; the percentage of accelerated courses on a student's schedule must always be less than or equal to 50% of the total academic load.

International students will only be permitted to enroll in the Day Division and will be charged as Day Division students for all courses taken.

Program Completion

To fulfill the graduation requirements of the Foundation Year Program offered at Bay State College, the student must have successfully completed at least 24 credits.

In order to successfully pass the Foundation Year English I and English II courses, the student must receive a C or higher. If the student does not meet this requirement, the course must be retaken in the following semester.

An F-1 student's program end date is established during the enrollment process based on the program of study and is entered into SEVIS. Students must complete their degree within this time frame. If a student is in jeopardy of not completing within the designated time, they should immediately speak with the DSO.

Summer Terms & Holidays

The summer term is considered an optional term for those students enrolled in the Day Division (with the exception of the PTA and Nursing programs). Summer is considered a mandatory term for students enrolled in the PTA or Nursing programs.

F-1 students are eligible to take a semester break from their studies after completing the equivalent of one academic year of study. The one academic year may include any studies at a previous institution as a student on an F-1 visa (transfer students). Most often, this semester off will be completed in the summer; however, it can be taken during any semester as long as one academic year has been completed. Students enrolled in the Foundation Year Program must complete both semesters of the program before being eligible for an approved break.

Students enrolled in a program where the summer is considered optional may choose to register for summer classes in order to catch up or get ahead in their studies. These students are not required to meet the full-time course load requirements (12 credits) listed above during the summer terms. Students who leave the United States for the summer and choose to take online classes are not held to the one-course restriction, provided they are not residing in the United States while enrolled in these online classes.

Students enrolled in the Nursing or PTA programs who take classes during the summer terms are subject to both the full-time course load requirement and the limitations regarding fully-online courses.

Transfer Process

F-1 students interested in transferring to another institution must contact the DSO to determine eligibility and to review the transfer process and required paperwork. Prior to transferring, all international students must meet with the Admissions Department to conduct an exit interview. Transfer paperwork will not be completed by the DSO until this interview is conducted.

EMPLOYMENT

On-Campus Employment

F-1 students must meet certain requirements in order to be employed in an on-campus position.

Students enrolled in the Foundation Year Program are eligible only after completing the full Foundation Year Program (2 semesters). All other F-1 international students are eligible after completing one semester at the College. Students must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA and otherwise be in good standing at the College in order to be considered for a position. Approval from the DSO is also required and students must possess a valid Social Security Number.

International students are not eligible for Federal Work Study positions. All else being equal, priority will be given to domestic students when filling open positions.

Students who are interested in an on-campus position should first contact the DSO to: ensure the student's eligibility, provide resources to the student regarding how to obtain a Social Security Number, collect any necessary paperwork, and record this information into SEVIS.

On-campus employment must be performed either on the school's premises or at an off-campus location which is educationally affiliated with the College.

Students are not permitted to work more than 20 hours per week when school is in session; however, during scheduled breaks, students may work on a full-time basis.

Internships and Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is any off-campus employment that is directly related to a student's field of study which is an integral part of the established curriculum and instrumental to achieving an academic objective. This includes all internships that are required for degree completion or for which the student is receiving academic credit.

In order to be eligible for CPT, an F-1 student must be in good standing with the College and have completed one academic year as a full-time student. The one academic year may include time spent in other programs of study at other institutions while on an F-1 visa, as long as there was no break between the programs.

There is no restriction on the number of hours per week that a student can work while completing CPT (can be part-time or full-time); however, students who complete one year (12 months) or more of full-time (40 hours per week) CPT will be ineligible for the Optional Practical Training (OPT) after completing their degree.

There is no restriction on compensation during CPT; however, students who are paid wages must have a valid Social Security Number.

Students who are registered for an internship at the College in a given semester must contact the DSO prior to the start of the internship in order to register for CPT within SEVIS. The student must provide the following information:

- Start and End Dates of CPT
- Whether the opportunity is full-time or part-time
- Employer's Name and Address
- How the CPT applies to the curriculum
- Any additional remarks

This information will be entered into SEVIS and the student will receive an updated I-20.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a work authorization granted after degree completion. It must be related to the student's program of study and requires approval from USCIS. A student can participate in OPT for up to 12 months after completing his or her degree; however, the OPT must be completed within 14 months of the program end date.

Students who are interested in applying for OPT should contact the DSO at the start of the final semester of the academic program. The DSO will assist the student through the process of applying for OPT. It is important to do this as soon as possible as it may take up to 3-4 months to gain approval from USCIS. The student must submit the application for employment authorization prior to the end of the 60-day grace period after the program end date or the application will be denied. Students are not eligible to begin OPT until USCIS approval has been granted.

If a student possesses a degree in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering or Math), they may apply for a 17-month extension of the OPT. This applies only to students who are on a period of OPT after completing a bachelor's degree in one of these fields and requires approval from USCIS. Interested students should contact the DSO for more information.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition Charges

International students are required to pay full semester charges prior to the start of each semester. Payments made after these dates will be subject to a \$25 late fee each month the payment is late. The student will also be in jeopardy of having their I-20 terminated due to late payments.

For students residing in on-campus housing, all charges including room and board must be paid in full by move-in day. If residing on campus and starting in the fall semester, the first payment must include the cost of room and board for the entire year (fall and spring semesters).

Students who are relying on funds through their respective governments should plan accordingly in order to comply with the payment due dates.

Students will not be permitted to attend classes or move into the residence hall if payment terms are not met.

Payment Options

International students have two options for making payments to the College:

- **Online Payment**

Go to peertransfer.com or contact peerTransfer at:

Skype: peertransfer

Email: support@peertransfer.com

Chat: www.peertransfer.com

- **Wire Transfer**

Account Name: Bay State College

Bank: Bank of America

557 Boylston Street

Boston, MA 02116

Account Number (bank code identifying your new accounts): 52225114

Routing Number (bank code for checks and ACH): 011000138

ABA Number (bank code for wire transfers): 026009593

SWIFT Code (bank code for international wires): BOFAUS3N

Things to Do in Boston

Sightseeing

Boston Common and Public Garden: The Common is America's oldest public park, established in 1654. Across from the Common (Charles Street side) is the Public Garden, the nation's oldest botanical garden and home to Boston's famous Swan Boats, which have taken passengers around the pond since 1877. Both the Common and Garden are a short walk from campus and a great place to take a break between classes. *Take the Green Line to Boylston or to Park Street for the Common and to Arlington for the Public Garden.*

Boston Public Library: Located a few short blocks from campus in Copley Square, this was the first publicly-supported municipal library in the United States, the first large library open to the public in the United States and the first public library to allow people to borrow books and other materials and take them home to read and use. The Library recently underwent a complete renovation but still maintains impressive historical architecture and a beautiful atrium.

Boston Duck Tours: A fun and quirky tour of Boston in a WWII-style amphibious "Duck" vehicle. Your guide will detail Boston's rich colonial history and iconic sites as you first drive through the streets, then splash into the Charles River in your "Duck" for spectacular views of the Boston skyline. Tickets and tour information at www.bostonducktours.com.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace: The Marketplace offers a variety of activities and entertainment including shopping, street performers, outdoor cafes, and vendors. The area was created in 1742 by the merchant Peter Faneuil to imitate the Palladian architecture of British markets. Its three historical buildings, street performers, and the many pushcarts of Quincy Market will tempt you with food, merchandise, and entertainment. *Take the Green Line or Orange Line to Haymarket and you will be in the North End. Walk south, toward the waterfront. Faneuil Hall is clearly marked, with many shops, restaurants, and vendors all around it. You can also take the Green Line to Government Center and walk through City Hall Plaza and down the steps to Faneuil Hall.*

North End: This is Boston's "Little Italy" and a Boston tradition for more than 40 years. The Italian community sponsors religious festivals throughout the summer and early fall. Saturday nights find the streets packed with people taking advantage of the unending ristorantes, trattorias, and cafes. *Take the Green Line to Haymarket and you will be in the North End. The North End is directly north of Faneuil Hall.*

Museum of Fine Arts: The MFA contains nearly 200 galleries with Asian art, Egyptian art, European paintings, photography, decorative arts, and sculptures. The Museum has one of the largest collections in the world and is bound to satisfy everyone's particular interests. The MFA also offers incredible special exhibits, concerts, films, and lectures. Student discounts are available with your BSC ID. 465 Huntington Avenue. *Take the Green E Line to the Museum stop or take the D Line to Fenway and walk.* www.mfa.org

Museum of Science: A Boston landmark, the Museum is located in Science Park, a plot of land spanning the Charles River. Along with over 700 interactive exhibits, the Museum features a number of live presentations throughout the building every day, along with shows at the Charles Hayden Planetarium and the Mugar Omni Theater, the only domed IMAX screen in New England. Student discounts are

available with your BSC ID. 1 Science Park. *Take the Green E Line (Lechmere-bound) to Science Park.* www.mos.org

New England Aquarium/IMAX Theater: Colorful and educational exhibits of more than 2,000 aquatic creatures are featured. It also has special shows and videos featuring a variety of animals. Whale watch cruises are also available during the summer. Across from the aquarium is an IMAX Theater, New England's largest theatre screen featuring 3D Imaging and Surround Sound. *Central Wharf. Take the Blue Line to the Aquarium stop.* www.neaq.org.

The Freedom Trail: Discover Boston on foot as you explore the Freedom Trail! The trail guides you through the historic neighborhoods of Boston and lets you experience the incredible wealth of culture and tradition that defines this city. It is a 2.5 mile (4.02 km) walk that will take you to 16 historically-significant sites of the American Revolution. Hire a tour guide, rent an audio system for a guided tour, or buy the official smartphone app and walk the brick trail with friends. www.thefreedomtrail.org

Entertainment

Movie Theater: AMC Loews Boston Common 19, 175 Tremont Street. *Take the Green Line to Boylston or walk through Boston Common.*

Music Venues:

House of Blues, 15 Lansdowne Street. *Take the Green Line to Kenmore.* www.houseofblues.com/boston

Paradise Rock Club, 967 Commonwealth Avenue. *Take the Green B Line to Pleasant Street.* www.crossroadspresents.com/venues/paradise-rock-club

Brighton Music Hall, 158 Brighton Avenue. *Take the Green B Line to Packard's Corner (intersection of Commonwealth Ave and Brighton Ave).* www/crossroadspresents.com/venues/brighton-music-hall

Sports Teams

Boston Red Sox: Boston's professional baseball team. Games are held at the famous and beloved Fenway Park, located down the road in Kenmore Square. After a historic drought of championships, the Red Sox finally broke the "curse" and have been World Series champions in 2004, 2007, and 2013.

Boston Celtics: Boston's professional basketball team has won a total of 17 NBA Championships, most recently in 2008. As one of the oldest teams in the league, the team's history makes them legendary in Boston! The Celtics play at the TD Garden in downtown Boston near North Station.

Boston Bruins: Boston's professional hockey team since 1924. The Bruins have won six Stanley Cup Championships, most recently in 2011, breaking a 39-year drought. The Bruins also play at the TD Garden.

New England Patriots: The Patriots are the area's professional American football team and play at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. The "Pats" are the most recent Super Bowl champions and have won a total of 5 Super Bowls since 2002.

Getting Around Boston

Public Transportation (MBTA)

www.mbta.com

Public transportation in Boston is fairly cheap, reliable, and easy. There is the bus, the commuter rail, and the subway system, known as the “T.” The easiest way to get around the city is by asking for a Charlie Card, a rechargeable plastic card, as the fare is cheaper than paying with an individual Charlie Ticket. You can obtain a Charlie Card for free from MBTA customer service agents in major subway stations (the closest to campus is Back Bay station). You can add funds to the card at any Charlie vending machine or at www.mbta.com. If you take the “T” often, you may want to buy an unlimited monthly pass or a student semester pass. A semester pass can be purchased through the Department of Student Affairs in 31 St. James. The deadline is in early August for the fall and November for the spring semester. Discounted monthly passes can be purchased online through the MBTA or at locations listed on the MBTA website.

The “T”

Bay State College can be easily accessed via the Green, Orange and Red lines of the subway. The campus is located between the Arlington and the Copley stops on the Green Line. Students using the Orange line can reach campus via the Back Bay station and those riding the Red Line have a short walk through Boston Common from the Park Street station to get to campus.

Bus

The MBTA also runs a bus system that connects the city. Many bus routes stop at Back Bay station or in Copley Square, both of which are within walking distance to campus. The full list of bus routes is available on the MBTA website.

Commuter Rail

This train system is also run by the MBTA. It serves areas primarily outside of Boston that are not covered by the T. Price varies based on destination. Visit the MBTA website for more information about routes and pricing.

Taxicabs and Ride Sharing

If you are in a hurry, a cab or ride share might be a better option. However, this can be more expensive than public transportation. Under normal conditions, allow 5-15 minutes for a cab or ride share to arrive. Local cab companies include:

MetroCab	(617) 782-5500
Independent Taxi Operator’s Association	(617) 268-1313
Bay State Taxi	(617) 566-5000
Uber (ride share)	Set up an account at www.uber.com
Lyft (ride share)	Set up an account at www.lyft.com

Financial Matters

Banks offer many different types of financial services, including checking and savings accounts, money orders, safety deposit boxes, credit cards, and foreign currency exchange. When choosing a bank, consider the following:

- How convenient is the location of the bank? Are there many branches or just one?
- Do the rates and services offered by the bank suit your needs?
- Does the bank have its own ATMs that are easily accessible?

Local Banks

- Bank of America
440 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
www.bankofamerica.com
- Citizens Bank
426 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
www.citizensbank.com
- Santander Bank
61 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
www.santanderbank.com
- Century Bank
437 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
www.centurybank.com

What do I need to bring?

In order to apply for a U.S. bank account, you will need the following items:

- Your passport and visa
- A signed Form I-20
- Bay State College Student ID Card
- A permanent address

Types of Accounts

Checking

Banks offer different types of checking accounts designed to fit individual needs. The cost of these accounts can vary from bank to bank. Some charge a monthly fee, while others offer free service if a certain minimum balance is maintained at all times. Ask for student checking rates, which will often have lower or no fees. Make sure to ask before you commit to one bank. Your cancelled checks and a list of all account activity of the preceding month will be sent to you in a monthly statement. It is important to keep an accurate record of every check and transaction you make. Through some banks you can apply to have a line of credit attached to your checking account, providing you with overdraft protection.

Savings

A savings account enables you to save money and accumulate interest on your savings each month, although the rate is relatively negligible. Interest is paid either monthly or quarterly. Usually, you cannot write checks.

Direct Deposit

Employers often use this method to pay their employees. The payroll amount is electronically transferred from the employer to the checking or savings account of the employee's choosing.

Taxes and Tipping

In the United States, each state has its own sales tax on certain goods and services. Massachusetts has a 6.25% sales tax on most purchases; however, articles of clothing costing less than \$175 and groceries are not taxed. Tipping (15-20%) is customary for a variety of services such as waiters/waitresses, cab drivers, and food delivery. When drinking at a bar, it is recommended that you leave a dollar for each drink served as a tip. Also be aware that, at some restaurants, the tip is included in the bill for larger parties. Your bill will read "tip (or gratuity) included" at the bottom of the receipt if this is the case.

Health Insurance and Health Care

All students are required to either enroll in the College's student health insurance program or to submit waiver information showing participation in a health insurance program with comparable coverage (U.S. equivalent).

Health Insurance Forms

To complete the online paperwork, follow these steps:

- Determine if you are eligible for a waiver at <http://www.baystate.edu/files/resources/waiver-information-for-international-students-2.pdf>
- Go to <http://www.baystate.edu/files/resources/health-insurance-waiver-or-enrollment-request-2016.pdf>
- Select "Bay State College"
- On left-hand side of page, select "Waiver" or "Enroll Form"

Waiving Insurance

This means that you have provided proof to the College that you hold your own health insurance that at least meets what the College's insurance provides.

- After clicking on "Waiver Form" enter your information as prompted
- Your student ID is located on your check-in form
- Date of Birth must be entered as Month-Date-Year
- You do not need to enter a Social Security Number
- Press continue after completed page 1
- On page 2, enter the school's address (NOT YOUR OWN):
Student Business Center
122 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02116
- On page 2, under the name of Health Insurance company choose "Other" and then enter the name of your health insurance company at the bottom of the page
- Press submit

Enrolling in Insurance Plan

This means that you do not have your own health insurance that meets Massachusetts law and need to take and pay for the College's insurance.

- After clicking on "Enrollment Form" enter your information as prompted
- Your student ID is located on your check-in form
- Date of Birth must be entered as Month-Date-Year
- You do not need to enter a Social Security Number
- Press continue after completed page 1
- Choose "Annual" for type of insurance

- On page 2, enter the school's address (NOT YOUR OWN):
Student Business Center
122 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02116
- Select "New Student"
- Press submit

Medical Care

Although Bay State College does not have an on-campus health center, we are located in an area that provides students with a variety of health care options. It is highly advisable that students contact their health insurance provider to discuss which facilities are covered and select a primary care physician in the immediate area.

In the event of an emergency, students should notify the Department of Student Affairs at (617) 217-9222 or after-hours at (617) 217-9211.

If you are not feeling well, we recommend that you DO NOT go to the emergency room of a hospital unless it is an emergency. You will wait a long time and it will be very expensive. Instead, consider a walk-in clinic or urgent care center. Local health care facilities include:

- **Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital Walk-In Clinic:** 330 Brookline Ave, Boston, (617) 667-3337
- **Massachusetts General Hospital Clinic:** 15 Parkman Street, Boston, (617) 726-2000
- **Harvard Vanguard Medical Center:** 165 Dartmouth Street, Boston, (617) 859-5000

Make sure to bring your health insurance card with you. Health care is very expensive in the U.S. which is why you are required to have insurance.