F-1 Employment Workshop
Spring 2023 | Boston College

Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS)

Boston College | Hovey House | 258 Hammond Street | Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
Tel: 617-552-8005 | Fax: 617-552-2199 | bcis@bc.edu | www.bc.edu/oiss
The OISS has moved!

Hovey House
258 Hammond Street
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
Agenda

● On-Campus Employment
● Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
● Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  ○ Pre-Completion OPT
  ○ Post-Completion OPT
● STEM OPT Eligibility
● Online vs. Paper I-765 Form Filing
● Work Options after OPT
● Questions
A Social Security Number (SSN) alone DOES NOT give you authorization to work in the U.S.

Even if you already have an SSN, you must be approved with the proper work authorization before engaging in employment.
Click “Maintaining Your Status”

Scroll down and click “OISS Forms”
On-Campus Employment

- Limited to **20 hours/week** while school is in session (includes GA/ TA/ RA positions) or more than 20 hours/week during vacation periods

  **Examples:** dining hall staff, graduate assistant, teaching assistant, working in the BC bookstore

- Cannot be a federally funded work-study position

- Must have a job offer before requesting OISS authorization or a Social Security Number

- Check the [Student Services website](#) for job listings
Off-Campus Employment Options

- Unforeseen Economic Need (extremely rare)
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  - Pre-Completion
  - Post-Completion
Off-Campus Employment for Unforeseen Economic Need

- If CPT and OPT are not an option and your financial situation changes:
  - Must document that need exists due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control.
  - Not restricted to any field of study; must have been in F1 status for at least one year.
  - Authorized by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) - can take up to 3 months to be approved.

- Very rarely approved - please talk to the OISS if you feel you may qualify.
Requirements for OPT and CPT

All off-campus work, externships, and internships require a new I-20 form!

- You must complete at least one academic year (2 semesters) in the U.S. to qualify.
- Your job/internship must be directly related to your major.
- You can work up to 20 hours/week while school is in session.
- You can work more than 20 hours/week during winter & summer breaks.
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Must be required for your degree or for academic credit which counts toward your degree. *

*CPT is required for paid & unpaid externships for credit

- Employer-specific
- Must have job offer in advance
- Can be approved part-time (during classes) or full-time (on breaks)
- CPT time is not deducted from 12 months OPT, in most cases
  - More than 12 months full-time CPT = no OPT
- OISS will process requests for CPT I-20s in 1-2 weeks
Examples of CPT

- An MBA student in an approved Directed Research course → credits count towards your degree
- A PhD student doing research at another institution → required for dissertation research
- Social work field placements, counseling or teaching practica → required for degree completion
- An undergraduate student in an internship or independent study course → credits count towards the degree
How Do I Apply for CPT?

● Submit the following to OISS:
  ○ CPT I-20 Request Form **at least 2 weeks prior to start of internship**
    ■ Download from “Maintaining Your Status” section of OISS website under “OISS Forms”
  ○ **Letter or email from your employer** listing the start/ end dates, hours per week, job description

● Allow 1-2 weeks for I-20 processing
● OISS will notify you when your new I-20 is ready
● **Do not start your placement without your new I-20.**
CPT I-20 Request Form

Parts 1 & 3: Completed by you

Part 2: Completed and signed by your Program Director or Dean’s Office

Return completed form to the OISS
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- No job offer required in advance to apply
- Not employer specific
- Total of 12 months available per degree level
  - Used during your studies = Pre-completion OPT
  - Used after your studies = Post-completion OPT
- Additional 24-month STEM OPT extension available for select degrees
- Authorized by USCIS. Processing typically takes anywhere from 2 to 5 months.
Pre-Completion OPT – BEFORE Graduation

- For use when off-campus employment is related to your degree, but not necessarily for credit or required for your degree program.
- Can be part-time (up to 20 hours/week) while school is in session and full-time during vacation periods.
- Any time used will be deducted from your 12 months of available OPT:
  - Full-time: deducted at normal rate (1 month used = 11 months left)
  - Part-time: deducted at ½ rate (2 months used = 11 months left)
- Submit I-20 request to OISS around 3 ½ months before your pre-completion OPT start date, then submit to USCIS.
Post-Completion OPT - AFTER Graduation

- Must be full-time (20 hours/week or more)
- Must be used directly after completing degree
- Changing employers is allowed (must report within 10 days)
- Can work more than 1 job at a time
- Limited to 90 days of unemployment
- Submit I-20 request to the OISS around 90 days before program end date!
What is my “Program End Date”? 

- **May Graduates**  →  Commencement Day 
- **August Graduates**  →  Last day of classes during your last summer session class 
- **December Graduates**  →  Last day of exams Fall semester 
- **PhD Students**  →  Consult OISS 

**Note:** This may be different than what is currently listed as the “Program End Date” on your I - 20.
When should I apply for post-completion OPT?

- **Earliest**: USCIS will accept an application **up to 90 days before your program end date**. Submit an I-20 request to the OISS 2 weeks prior to when you will submit the application.

- **Latest**: USCIS will accept an application **no more than 60 days after your program end date**. USCIS must RECEIVE your application no later than the 60th day. **Do not wait until the last minute to apply!**
Post-OPT Timeline: May 2023 Grads

- **February 21**: Earliest day to submit to USCIS
- **May 22**: Program end date
- **May 23**: Earliest OPT start date
- **July 21**: Deadline to submit to USCIS

OPT End Date: 60 day grace period after to depart U.S., transfer, change status

Application period: Submit application to USCIS up to 90 days prior and no later than 60 days after graduation.

Submit I-20 request to OISS from 3 ½ months before end date and no later than 2 weeks before end of grace period.

Work on post-completion OPT according to dates on EAD card.
Overview of OPT Application Process

1. Submit OPT I-20 Request Form to the OISS
2. Pay $50 OISS OPT Fee [www.bc.edu/payoiss]
3. OISS will process your new I-20 form within 2 weeks
4. Pick up the OPT I-20 at OISS, when notified
5. Submit your OPT I-20 and Form I-765 to USCIS (use OISS checklist)
6. USCIS will review your application typically in 2-5 months. You will receive a receipt notice, approval notice, and EAD card. EAD arrives 1-3 weeks after approval.

*You cannot begin working until you receive your EAD!*
What do I need to start my application for OPT?

OPT I-20 Request Form

$50 OPT Fee

Boston College ISS
Office of International Students and Scholars

Instructs:
1. Read the attached instructions carefully and complete Part I.
2. Ask your Dean’s Office, Department Chair or Advisor to sign Part I (see instructions).
3. Fill the BC ISS OPT Fee on the back of the signed form.
4. Return this signed form ASC and the completed I-20 form to the ISS in person or be email to iss@bc.edu.

Part I: To be completed by the student:

Last/Family name: __________________________ First/Given name: __________________________
NON BC email: __________________________ Phone number: __________________________
Major(s): __________________________________________ Eagle ID (First 8 digits): __________________________

Have you received off campus work permission (OPT or CPT) from a different university in the past? [ ] Yes [ ] No

OPT Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy): __________________________
OPT End Date (mm/dd/yyyy): __________________________

You must choose a start date within 60 days after your completion of studies or your OPT. Your start date must be on the 15th of the month to begin OPT the following month. You cannot extend by the designated period if the OSTEM is not changed.

I am currently seeking the job or internship/employment. I understand that I must begin work 30 days after the start date of my OPT or my I-20 status will be terminated.

[ ] I have seconded employment. Please complete the required employment information below. I understand that I must report any changes in my employment to the ISS within 30 days of the change.

Employer Info:
Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________________________
State: __________ Zip code: __________
Employment start date (mm/dd/yyyy): __________________________
Job Title: __________________________

Explain how this job is related to your major:

Part II: To be completed by the Dean’s Office, Department Chair, or Academic Advisor. Please use instructions for list of staff authorized to sign this application. Please return this form to the student after signing.

The student is applying for work permission after completion of studies through the U.S. Immigration Service. If granted, the student will be authorized for employment directly related to his/her degree. Please confirm the following:

The student is committed to be full-time, in good academic standing and is expected to complete all degree requirements including thesis/dissertation/required internship by __________________________.*

* Note: The date is not necessarily the graduation date, especially for PhD students. Master’s students who finish in the fall semester should have the end of their first summer session before the end of their first summer session or their completion date.

Name: __________________________
Signature: __________________________
Date: __________________________

Office of International Students & Scholars
Boston College
OPT Start and End Dates

Choose a **start date** within 60 days of your program end date (May 23 - July 21)

Your **end date** should be one year later. For example, if your start date is July 20, 2023, the end date should be July 19, 2024.
Post-Completion OPT Start Dates

OPT start date must fall within 60 days of the Program End Date

May 22
Program End Date

May 23
Earliest OPT Start Date

July 21
Latest OPT Start Date

12 month Employment Period

OPT End Date:
60-day Grace Period to depart U.S., transfer, change status
Reminders for Choosing a Start Date

- If you choose a **late start date** but your employer wants you to start earlier, you can’t start.
- If you choose an **early start date** but don’t have a job yet, you start accruing unemployment days as soon as your EAD card begins.
- It can take up to 2-5 months for approval, and another 1-3 weeks to get your EAD card.
- You **cannot** begin working until you have the EAD card **AND** reach the EAD start date.
- EAD dates cannot be changed after you submit to USCIS.
Complete this section if you have a job offer already. This is not required.

**Employer Information**

Complete this section if you have a job offer already. This is not required.

**Remember**: All OPT employment must be directly related to your major!
Must be signed by your Dean's Office, Academic Advisor, or Program Director.

Note: your Dean, Advisor, or Director MUST include your graduation date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMMIGRATION PROCESSING FEES</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Visiting Scholars, Postdocs &amp; Faculty</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-1 STEM Extension</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OISS Shipment fee payment (BC faculty and staff only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For questions please contact:

Office of International Students and Scholars
72 College Road
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
617-552-8005

www.bc.edu/payoiss

$50 OISS Post-Completion OPT Fee
Submitting Documents to USCIS

A full pros and cons list of each filing method is available on our website.

File by Mail

- Has been used for decades and may be most reliable
- Can only pay immigration fees by check or money order
- Must pay for shipping; mailing time must be taken into account

Online Filing

- Allows applicants to receive a Receipt Number right away
- Can pay online with a US credit card
- Easy to submit incomplete application and unexpected errors may occur

DO NOT submit the online Form I-765 application until you have already received a NEW OPT I-20 from the OISS! If you submit your application and haven’t requested the new I-20, your application will be REJECTED.
Form I-765
Filing by Mail

Use the document Filing Form I-765 by Mail provided by the OISS for help completing this form.
Form I-765
Online Filing

Use the OPT Online Form I-765 Filing Guide provided by the OISS to complete the application. Read all instructions very carefully.
What should I submit to USCIS?

For **both** online and paper filing:

- Copy of OPT I-20 (pages 1 & 2)
- Copies of all previous CPT or OPT I-20s (from BC or any other school)
- Most recent I-94 Record
- Photo or scan of front and back of previous EADs *(if applicable)*
- Photo or scan of passport biographical page
- Photo or scan of F-1 visa *(not required for Canadian citizens)*

**Paper Only:**
- Form I-765 signed in **blue ink**
- Check, cashier’s check, or money order
- Form G-1145 *(optional)* for text/ email notification that application is received
- 2 original, brand new, passport-style photos

**Online Only:**
- Pay the filing fee with US credit/ debit card on pay.gov.
- Digital passport-style photo
What happens after I submit my application?

- Check your mail!
  - I-797C Receipt Notice
  - I-797A Approval Notice
  - SSN Card (if applicable)
  - EAD Card

*If you used the OISS address on your I-765, we will notify you when we receive these.

Do not start working until you have your EAD!

If you receive a “Request for Evidence” (RFE) notice from USCIS, or if your application is returned to you, contact OISS immediately!
Receipt Notice: 2-3 Weeks

Approval Notice: 2-5 Months

EAD Card: 1-3 Weeks

You cannot start working before the “valid from” date listed on your card. May be different from your requested date.

Use your ‘receipt number’ to track your case status on the USCIS website.
What are my responsibilities while on Post - OPT?

- See “OPT Reminders” handout issued with your OPT I - 20.
- Work full-time (at least 20 hours/week)
- Work in a job directly related to your degree
  - Can be paid or unpaid
  - Can have multiple employers
- Do not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment
- Report any changes to your address or employment within 10 days of the change using our online form. **Failure to do so will result in termination of your F-1 status.**
OPT Employer and Address Reporting Form
Once USCIS has approved your OPT application:

- You will receive an email you to create an SEVP Portal Account
- The portal is used to report employment info directly to the U.S.
  government, which is updated in SEVIS
- OISS requires you to submit the OISS Form on our website, and
  recommends using the Portal to review employment information

For more information and an SEVP Portal Guide, visit:
https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help
Can I travel while on post - OPT?

- Must have **EAD, OPT I-20 with travel signature** within last 6 months, and **job offer letter**
  - If EAD has not arrived yet, you must carry the I-797C receipt and/ or approval notice!
- **Re-enter using your F-1 visa!**
  - If you travel abroad with an expired visa, you must renew it!
  - Consult OISS to discuss individual cases
- If you have an **H-1B application pending**, always discuss travel with your employer or immigration attorney first.
Travel Signatures

Before traveling abroad, be sure that the travel signature on page 2 of your I-20 will be no more than 6 months old at the time you plan to re-enter the U.S.

Request a new travel signature from OISS before traveling if needed.
24-Month STEM OPT Extension

- Extends work authorization an additional 24 months
- Requires a new application to the USCIS
- Must have a degree in a STEM-qualified field from a U.S. university within the last 10 years
- Employment must be DIRECTLY related to your STEM-qualified degree
- Employer must be enrolled in the e-Verify system
- Employer must complete I-983 Training Plan
# BC STEM- Eligible Majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Degrees</th>
<th>Undergraduate Degrees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applied Analytics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Applied Physics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Applied Economics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Biochemistry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applied Developmental &amp; Educational Psychology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Biology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applied Statistics &amp; Psychometrics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chemistry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Computer Science (MCAS only)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Administration (STEM track, Class of ‘24)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economics (MCAS only)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemistry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental Geoscience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earth &amp; Environmental Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental Studies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Geological Sciences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Research, Measurement, &amp; Evaluation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Human-Centered Engineering</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geophysics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mental Health Counseling</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Engineering</strong></td>
<td><strong>Physics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychology</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mental Health Counseling</strong></td>
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<td>• Developmental &amp; Child Psychology</td>
<td><strong>Quantitative Finance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Psychometrics & Quantitative Psychology | *MSSA Sports Analytics Certificates do not qualify*
| **Social Psychology** | |
| **Quantitative Finance** | |

*CSOM concentrations do NOT qualify for STEM OPT.*
Options after OPT: H-1B Visa

- Employer - sponsored work visa for “specialty occupations”
  - Bachelor’s degree or equivalent in a relevant field to the job required
- Generally 6 year maximum: 3 years initially with 3 year extension possible
- Dual intent allowed - can intend to immigrate to the U.S. or return home after
- Consular processing (travel abroad to apply for the visa) or change of status in U.S.
The H1B “Cap”

There is a limit or “cap” on the number of H1B visas allowed each fiscal year. 65,000 issued each fiscal year - this is referred to as the “H -1B cap”

- Additional 20,000 exemptions for applicants with a Master’s or Doctorate from a U.S. university.
- Fiscal year: October 1 - September 30
- Typically more applications received than are available so there is a “lottery”

Universities and some non-profits affiliated with Universities are “Cap - exempt” institutions can submit H -1B petitions at any time during the year and are not subject to the cap (higher ed, non-profits)
The H1B “Cap” and Application Timing

**Initial Online Registration Period:** Early- to mid-March. The employer can submit an initial $10 registration to place you in the lottery.

**Lottery:** April 1. Employer will be notified if you are selected in mid-April.

**H1B Petition Filing:** If selected for the lottery, your employer has 90 days to file your H1B application.

- If approved, H1B status begins on October 1st.
- **Cap-Gap Extensions:** If your H1B is pending/approved when your EAD expires AND your EAD ends before October 1st, OPT is automatically extended to Sept. 30 to cover the “gap” in employment authorization.
Post-OPT Timeline with H-1B
[Cap-Subject, May 2023 Graduate]

- May 22, 2023: Graduation
- July 1, 2023: 12-month OPT Period
- April 1, 2024: Employer Files H-1B Petition
- March 2024: H1B Online Registration Period
- May 2024: H1B Lottery
- June 30, 2024: Cap-Gap Extension Period
- Sept. 30, 2024: H-1B Status Begins on October 1, 2024
- October 1, 2024: H-1B Status Begins

H-1B Status Begins on October 1, 2024
Additional Advice

1. Be informed!

2. The OISS is here to help you!

3. Utilize the Career Center's resources early and often.

4. Don’t forget about your responsibilities for maintaining your status while on OPT!
Upcoming Events

Workshops:

US Resume Writing for International Students  (For all students, except Law and CGSOM)
•  (In-person) Feb. 7, 4:00-5:00pm

Options After OPT: US Employment with Immigration Attorneys from *Iandoli, Desai, & Cronic PC* (For all students)
•  (Virtual) Feb. 16, 3:30-5:00pm

Interviewing in the US for International Students  (For all students, except Law and CGSOM)
•  (In-person) March 20, 4:00 - 5:00pm

BC Career & Networking Fairs:

Bank Week  – Jan. 30 - Feb. 3
Health & Sciences Fair  – Feb. 15
Nonprofit, Government, and Social Impact Fair  – Feb. 23
Social Impact Careers Week  – Feb. 20 - 24
Communications, Arts, & Media Networking Night  – Mar. 22
Social Services Recruitment Fair  – Mar. 31
SEC & ACC Virtual Career Fair  – April 5
Questions?