

# F-I International Students Handbook

Academic Year 2015-2016

BFA and Graduate Students



Please refer to the **BFA or Graduate Student Handbook, New Student Guide and International Student Page on Moodle** for additional policies, forms and information.

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for F-I students. Items or policies in this handbook may be subject to change at any time.

For complete information please visit [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov).

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# Welcome to Moore College of Art & Design

To Our International Students;

We are very excited that you are a part of our community and you have chosen Moore to be your home-away-from-home. Your knowledge, experiences and talents have brought you to this point. We are here to help you with your next steps as you pursue your dreams. Moore is a better place because you are here with us.

This is the F-I International Student Handbook for undergraduate and graduate students. This guide is a tool for you to use throughout your time at Moore to help you navigate being an international student. The F-I International Student Handbook has lots of helpful information, including:

- Admissions requirements, documents for entry, and the check-in process upon your initial arrival
- Information about maintaining your F-I status, including minimum Course of Study requirements (how many classes/credits you must take per semester or term)
- Travel information, Employment Authorization, and what happens after graduation
- Explanations of commonly used items and terms you will hear throughout your time as an F-I student
- And much more!

Being an international student isn't always easy but we are here to help you. There is a lot of information included in this handbook. Please make sure you have access to it when you need it and refer to it first when you have questions about being an F-I student.

In addition to this handbook, you will also have mandatory and optional meetings; an online Moodle group for F-I students where you can find important forms and instructions on processes; and other requirements you will need to fulfill. You should also refer to either the BFA Student Handbook or the Graduate Student Handbook, depending on your program level, for policies that apply to all Moore students. They are available at <http://moore.edu/for/current-students>.

We are really happy that you are here with us and we want to support you as you work towards your education and career goals at Moore.

Sincerely,

Cara Croke  
Academic Advisor & Primary DSO for SEVIS

## **Handbook Information**

**BFA Student Handbook:** <https://moore.edu/for/current-students/student-handbook>

**Graduate Student Handbook:** <http://moore.edu/academics/graduate-studies/graduate-handbook>

## **Contact Information**

### **Academic Advisor, International Advisor & DSO\* – Cara Croke**

Class scheduling, I-20/SEVIS\*\* record updates, travel, internship and employment authorization and other F-I related requests

Phone: 215-965-4063

Email: [ccroke@moore.edu](mailto:ccroke@moore.edu)

Location: Educational Support Services, 108 Stahl Hall

### **International Admissions Counselor & DSO\* – Emma Irvin**

Pre-arrival information, I-20/SEVIS registration, and other F-I related requests

Phone: 215-965-4020

Email: [eirvin@moore.edu](mailto:eirvin@moore.edu)

Location: Admissions Welcome Center, Ground Floor, Sarah Peter

### **Registrar, DSO\* – Alyssa Truskowski**

Class scheduling, I-20/SEVIS\*\* record updates, travel, internship and employment authorization and other F-I related requests

Phone: 215-965-4028

Email: [atruszkowski@moore.edu](mailto:atruszkowski@moore.edu)

Location: Educational Support Services, 110 Stahl Hall

### **Business Office**

Phone: 215-965-4022

Location: Business Office, 2nd Floor, Wilson Hall

### **Student Services – Slade Roff**

Phone: 215-965-4040

Email: [sroff@moore.edu](mailto:sroff@moore.edu)

Location: Student Services, Stahl Hall

### **Housing – Matthew Point**

Phone: 215-965-4035

Email: [mpoint@moore.edu](mailto:mpoint@moore.edu)

Location: Student Services, 107 Stahl Hall

### **Nurse – Diane Azuma, R.N.**

Phone: 215-965-4032

Email: [dazuma@moore.edu](mailto:dazuma@moore.edu)

Location: Student Services, 101 Stahl Hall

### **Counselor – Ruth Gayle**

Phone: 215-965-4002

Email: [rgayle@moore.edu](mailto:rgayle@moore.edu)

Location: Student Services, 102 Stahl Hall

\*DSO: Designated School Official for SEVIS

\*\*SEVIS: The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

## Timeline and Important Dates for F-I Students For Academic Year 2015-16

<b>July 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- F-I International Graduate Student Orientation Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>August 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- F-I International BFA Student Check-In and Orientation for students, scheduled into BFA Orientation</li> <li>- F-I International Student Mandatory Meeting for ALL F-I students</li> <li>- Graduate Studio Art students participating in a Teaching Assistantship must get CPT Authorization from Cara or Emma prior to starting their Assistantship.</li> </ul>
<b>September – October 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check your documents and determine if you need to take any actions this year (renew your visa, get a new signature on your I-20, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>December 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get an updated signature on your I-20 for travel from Cara or Emma if you need to.</li> </ul>
<b>January 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mandatory check in with Cara to be registered in SEVIS system during the first two weeks of class.</li> <li>- Graduate ID students participating in Internship must get Internship/CPT Authorization from Cara or Emma prior to signing an Internship Contract with the Career Center.</li> </ul>
<b>February 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mandatory CPT/OPT meeting for juniors, seniors and graduate students. First-year and sophomore F-I students are welcome to attend but are not required to participate.</li> <li>- February 15, 2016 is the first day BFA seniors can apply for OPT.</li> </ul>
<b>May 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get your I-20 signed by Cara or Emma if you intend to travel during the summer</li> <li>- BFA Juniors participating in Internship must get Internship/CPT Authorization from Cara or Emma prior to signing an Internship Contract with the Career Center.</li> <li>- Graduate ID students continuing their program must check-in with Cara to be registered in the SEVIS system within the first two weeks of their summer courses.</li> </ul>
<b>June 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Graduate students continuing their program must check-in with Cara to be registered in the SEVIS system within the first two weeks of their summer courses.</li> </ul>

## **Before Leaving Your Country or Starting at Moore**

### **Immigration Status: F-1 Student Status**

The F-1 Visa (for academic students) is a non-immigrant visa which allows you to enter the United States as a full-time student at an accredited university. You must be enrolled in a program or a course of study that culminates in a degree, diploma or certificate. This visa status allows you to remain in the U.S. until the completion of studies date listed on your I-20, provided you have maintained your status. To maintain full-time status, F-1 students are required to meet specific criteria, such as registering for a minimum number of credits per semester and more. [See *Maintaining F-1 Status*, page \_\_\_\_, for more information]

**\*Very important!\* You must not work, intern or volunteer without prior authorization from the DSO.** [See *Employment & Internship Authorization*, page 14, for more information.]

### **School Transfer/Transferring In to Moore**

If you are already studying at a university in the U.S. on an F-1 visa and you are planning to transfer to Moore, you must transfer your SEVIS records to Moore. If you do not clearly understand the transfer procedure, contact Emma, the International Admissions Counselor for more information. You must report to a DSO at Moore **immediately** upon your arrival, bringing your passport and transfer I-20. Transfers must be reported to USCIS within the first 15 days of a new semester.

**Please note:** Transfer students must begin classes during the **next available semester or term**; you cannot take a break between institutions. [See *Maintaining F-1 Status*, page 10 and *Transferring out of Moore*, page 17 for more information]

### **Visa Application Process**

Please consult with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for complete details on visa processing: <http://usembassy.state.gov> and [http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html). Please read the form enclosed with your I-20 form carefully and make sure you understand your visa obligations before you sign the form. Next, you will need to arrange for your entry into the U.S. by obtaining the appropriate visa from the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest to where you live.

**\*Very Important!\* Do not apply for a B-1/B-2 (Tourist) Visa. B-1/B-2 visa holders are not permitted to study in the U.S.**

You cannot apply for your student visa more than 120 days before the program start date listed on your I-20. Before applying for your student visa, you must pay the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS) fee. SEVIS is a U.S. government database that tracks the immigration concerns of students and exchange visitors. You must pay the \$200 SEVIS fee and include the receipt with your visa application. Please make sure you maintain a copy of your receipt for your records. You can pay the fee by mail or online. Your fee payment must be accompanied by form 901, which you can download from [www.FMjfee.com](http://www.FMjfee.com). Please be aware that this fee will not be refunded if your visa application is denied.

### **Citizens of Canada and Bermuda:**

You do not need to apply for a visa, but you must present an I-20 form and proof of financial support at the port of entry to the United States. Be careful to present the documents listed above at the border to avoid being given a B-1/B-2 tourist status, which does not allow full-time study or employment.

Residents of Canada (who are not Canadian citizens) must apply for an F-1 visa. If you arrive in the U.S. with a visa notated with another university's name but wish to attend Moore College of Art & Design, you may be denied admission to the U.S.

**\*Very Important!\* Be sure to get a visa that lists Moore College of Art & Design.**

### **Going to the Embassy**

#### ***What to bring with you to the embassy:***

Take your **entire** I-20, passport, the same proof of financial support that you provided for your I-20 form, SEVIS fee payment receipt, and any additional documentation that is required in your country for a U.S. visa. Make sure to read all of the information on page 2 and sign the bottom of page 1 of your I-20.

When you apply for a visa, you must prove your intent to return to your country. These are some examples of intent: close family ties in home country, organizational memberships (including religious or social groups), business or real estate owned by you or your family. You must also bring proof that you intend to return to your home country and continue your professional career. It is also important for you to prepare your study plan so that the visa officer knows that you are a serious student.

**Please note:** The visa only allows you to enter the country. However, the form I-20 allows you to stay. If you lose your form, contact a DSO at Moore immediately.

## **US Arrival**

### **Entry into the United States**

When you arrive at a port of entry in the United States, you will be required to present your form I-20, along with your passport and financial documents. Do not check these documents with your baggage. Non-immigrants who arrive in the U.S. by air or sea should be issued the passport admission stamp. If a student or scholar has received a passport admission stamp, there will also be an electronic I-94 record. To access this record, visit: [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94). This should be printed immediately after arrival. Please note that immigration officers no longer stamp I-20 documents.

The I-94 record should reflect the complete mailing address where you will reside, not the general address of the school or program. It indicates the date when your permission to remain in the U.S. expires. Your I-20 is the permanent record of your permission to enter and remain in the country and must be kept in your possession as long as you are a student.

**Please note:** Immigration laws allow you to enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the program start date listed on your I-20. We encourage you to arrange your travel schedule so that you can arrive at least one week before classes begin. This will give you time to become acquainted with the campus, local neighborhoods and the city. Also, it's important to come early to go through clearance, attend new student orientation and participate in the mandatory F-1 orientation and/or meeting that is given each semester or term.

## **Transportation from Philadelphia International airport to Moore**

Moore does not currently offer an airport shuttle service. Below are instructions on how to travel to Moore College of Art & Design from the Philadelphia International Airport via public transport.

### **By Train**

Take the airport Regional Rail train offered through SEPTA. The train has one stop in each terminal, including International arrivals. Trains leave for downtown Philadelphia every 30 minutes and the ticket is approximately US \$8. Get off at Suburban Station. From Suburban Station, you can walk or take a taxi to Moore. For additional information and timetables, visit [www.septa.org](http://www.septa.org)

### **By Taxi**

Taxis can be picked up in Zone 5 at the Commercial Transportation Roadway by the baggage claim area.

### **By Limousine/Van Service**

There are many limousine/van services leaving from the airport terminals that will take you throughout Philadelphia. These can be arranged by visiting the ground transportation information desk near the baggage claim area.

## **Arriving at Moore**

### **Temporary Accommodations**

If you arrive to Philadelphia before the move-in date for your on-campus housing or plan on looking for off-campus housing when you arrive, you may need to find temporary accommodations. There are several reasonably priced hotels and temporary housing facilities close to Moore. [See the *BFA Student Handbook* for on-campus housing information or the Moodle Group for F-1 International Students for off-campus housing information.]

### **International House**

3701 Chestnut Street

(+1) 215.387.5125

[ihousephilly.org/student-housing](http://ihousephilly.org/student-housing)

International House is located close to University City. Temporary housing is not always available, so call before you arrive in Philadelphia.

There are also many hotels in Philadelphia, located near Moore and the airport. Below is a list of search engines to help you find the most appropriate and affordable hotel for you.

[www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)

[www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

[www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)

[www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)



## Registration in SEVIS

All international students must report to a DSO at Moore **immediately** upon arrival to validate their immigration record. While it is the responsibility of all international students to maintain their F-I status, the DSOs are responsible for maintaining F-I visa records in SEVIS. Please bring all of the following items with you to register:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-I visa
- I-94 Admission number (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>)
- Original I-20 Form
- Local U.S. mailing address or dorm room number at Moore
- Emergency contact information

If you are transferring from another school, also bring your I-20 from that school. This information helps Moore respond to inquiries from the USCIS regarding your compliance with immigration policies. Additionally, these photocopies help to replace lost important immigration documents.

## Clearance

Before attending classes, all new students must submit all of the required forms and documents, pay their tuition bill and be cleared by the following departments:

- Admissions
- Business Office
- Housing (if living on-campus)
- Nurse

**\*Very Important!\*** Students intending to live on campus will not be allowed to move into the residence halls until they have submitted acceptable health forms and been cleared by the school nurse. It is the responsibility of the student to make alternative housing arrangements until they are cleared. [See *Temporary Accommodations*, page \_\_\_\_, for more information]

## F-I Orientation

In addition to BFA New Student Orientation or Graduate Student Orientation, Moore will hold a mandatory F-I Orientation Session for all BFA and graduate international students before classes begin each term. You will meet other international students and office staff. F-I Orientation will also introduce you to immigration regulations, cross-cultural adjustment issues and academic expectations of students. It will familiarize you with important departments and procedures as well.

**Please note:** F-I and New Student Orientation information is vital to your studies at Moore; attendance is mandatory for students with F-I status. F-I students are also required to attend mandatory F-I Student meetings at the start of each academic year and on an as-needed basis. Students will be notified of F-I Orientation Sessions and mandatory F-I Student Meetings via their Moore email.

## Health Insurance

All undergraduate and graduate international students must purchase the college sponsored plan. This plan meets all recommendations for international students. The plan must be purchased immediately upon entrance into Moore and must be purchased for the full academic year. Once you graduate from Moore, you will no longer be able to purchase Moore's health insurance plan. You will be required to

purchase an alternative health insurance plan either through your employer or a private carrier.

### **Immunizations/Health Form**

Moore requires all incoming full-time undergraduate and graduate students to complete the health form, which can be found at <http://moore.edu/admissions/student-life/health-fitness6>. Residents without completed health forms may not move into housing and will be responsible for finding temporary accommodation until satisfactory health forms have been submitted. Students who do not complete health forms by the end of add/drop (the first two weeks of class) will have their account put on a Nurse Hold and will be unable to register for classes, see their grades, or receive official transcripts until their health forms are complete. [See *Temporary Accommodations*, page 8, for more information.]

## **Maintaining F-1 Status**

**Maintaining Status** is an essential part of being an F-1 Student. You are responsible for maintaining your F-1 status by abiding by all of the policies and requirements put in place by the United States Government and by the College.

Failure to maintain your status or any violations of status not only jeopardizes your ability to complete your program but it may affect your ability to travel to, work in, or reside in the United States in the future.

**\*Very Important!\*** NEVER THROW DOCUMENTS AWAY. Future U.S. immigration applications may require documents from any past stay in the United States. For example, if applying for a work visa 20 years from now, the consular officer may ask for old I-20 forms or other documents from a previous stay as an F-1 student visa holder. Please keep everything in one place and have a back-up copy of all immigration documents.

### **Important Documents:**

- Passport
- F1 Visa
- I-20 – sign and keep every copy you receive
- I-94 (Admission Number and record)
- Any additional documents and information, such as your Social Security card (if you obtain one)

### **Maintain a Full-Time Course of Study**

BFA Students must register for and complete at least 12 credits per semester. Graduate students must register for and complete at least 6 credits per semester.

- International students can and often will take additional courses and credits beyond the minimum requirements for a full-time course of study. Students must continuously make progress towards completion of their program.
- Students must be registered for the next semester or term by the last day of the current semester or term to be considered maintaining a full-time course of study.

### **Online Classes and Internship Credits**

F-I Students are required to take the majority of their coursework in a face-to face setting with the following exceptions:

- Only one online class, with a 3-credit maximum, can be counted towards a full-time course of study per semester.
- The second Internship class, taken by BFA students in the spring of their senior year, is treated the same as an online class when determining a student's full-time course of study. Only one Internship class (either 1.5 or 3 credits) can be counted towards a full-time course of study if the student is completing the second semester of that course.
- Courses that meet both face-to-face and online meet the face-to-face requirement. Examples: blended courses, the first semester of Internship for BFA students, and possibly others. If you have questions, please contact Cara (Primary DSO and Academic Advisor).
- F-I Students are permitted to register for additional online courses or Internship credits once they have fulfilled their registration requirements for full-time course of study for that semester/term.

### **Authorization to Drop Below a Full-Time Course of Study**

An F-I student may be permitted to drop below a full-time course of study or take a reduced course load if he or she obtains prior approval for any of the reasons listed (below). In order to obtain approval, the student must fill out a *Drop Below Full-Time Course of Study Request Form* to make the request.

**Please Note:** Once you are permitted to drop below a full-time course of study, you are no longer permitted to work on-campus until you resume a full course of study. The only exception is for students who are dropping below a full-time course of study because they are in their final semester. You may also lose authorization to participate in CPT.

#### **Definitions:**

Drop Below Full-Time: Any approval permitting student to take less than a full-time course of study.

Reduced Course Load: Less than full-time. Typically half of the full-time course of study (6 credits for BFA students and 3 credits for graduate students).

No Course Load: Taking zero credits in a semester or term.

### **Valid Reasons to Drop Below a Full-Time Course of Study:**

Final Semester/Term: A student in his or her final semester/term can be approved to register for less than a full-time course load if he or she is taking only the remaining required courses to complete their degree. Failure to graduate may be a violation of status.

Medical Issues: A student who is compelled by illness or other medical issues may interrupt or reduce their full course of study (not to exceed a total of 12 months per program level). Students must be approved to drop below their full-time course of study before dropping or withdrawing from classes.

Valid medical reasons must be documented with a letter from a medical professional (ex: medical doctor, licensed psychologist, etc.) stating the student cannot withstand the pressures of college at this time and that the medical professional recommends that the student take a reduced course load or no course load until he or she is able to recover.

A student who has been permitted to drop below full-time enrollment must take a full-time course of study during the semester/term following recovery.

**Please note:** Students seeking Medical Withdrawals from the Dean of Students, Ruth Robbins, may be required to provide additional documentation or be subject to additional requirements before withdrawing from or returning to the College.

Initial Academic Issues: A student may be approved to drop below a full-time course load for academic issues related to being an international student. Generally this can only be approved in his or her first semester/term for the following reasons:

- Initial difficulties with the English Language or reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course-level placement

A student who has been permitted to drop below full-time enrollment must take a full-time course of study during the following semester/term. Students will only be permitted to drop below a full-time course of study for Academic Issues once.

A student seeking to drop below a full-time course of study for academic issues must obtain a letter from the relevant Department Chair(s), Academic Dean, or Associate Dean of Educational Support Services.

### **Registration for SEVIS**

DSOs are required to register students in the SEVIS system within the 30 days from the start of the semester. The DSOs at Moore require F-I students to check-in, face-to-face, with a DSO within the first two weeks of class (the Add/Drop period) so they can be registered in SEVIS.

- Moore students are required to attend classes within the Add/Drop period in order to be considered an active student.
- F-I students must be available for mandatory, start-of-the-semester check in meetings to be registered in SEVIS.
- If an F-I student has an extenuating circumstance and cannot check-in with a DSO in the first two weeks but has attended classes, he or she must make alternate arrangements to check in and be registered in SEVIS.
- F-I students who do not attend class during the Add/Drop period or who do not check in to be registered in SEVIS should expect to have their I-20 terminated and may have other consequences.

## **Updating and Reporting Changes to Personal Information or Immigration Status**

F-I Students must report changes to their personal information or immigration status to a DSO at Moore as soon as possible.

- Any change to any addresses must be reported within 10 days.
- Any changes to their personal information (such as a legal name change) must be reported within 10 days.
- Any change to a student's major must be reported within 10 days.
- F-I Students should inform a DSO of any changes to his or her immigration status as soon as the change of status has been requested or adjusted,

## **Travel**

F-I students must have a valid DSO signature on page 3 of their I-20 in order to travel outside of and return to the United States. A DSO signature on page 3 of an I-20 is valid for one year from the date signed; however, we strongly recommend students ensure the DSO signature has been signed within 6 months from the date of travel.

Students must make an appointment to have a DSO sign their I-20 at least 7 business days in advance from their date of departure.

### **Documents Required for Travel:**

- o Valid Passport that is valid within 6 months beyond the date of re-entry to the United States
- o Valid F-I Student Visa in the Passport (except for students who are Canadian Citizens)
- o Current I-20 with travel endorsement
- o Optional documents supporting your F-I Status, please contact a DSO to discuss

**Please note:** Your I-20 becomes invalid if you have been out of the United States for more than 5 months.

### **Travel While Applying For or On OPT**

*[See Off-Campus Employment > Optional Practical Training, page 16, for more information.]*

## **Out of Status Students and Violations of Status**

Students who are Out of (F-I) Status are students who have violated the conditions of their F-I visa and have had their I-20 record terminated by a DSO or other relevant authority.

### **Definitions:**

Out of Status: The condition when a student has not maintained the requirements of his or her F-I status and their I-20 record has been terminated.

Failure to Maintain Status/ Falling Out of Status: The act of not maintaining the requirements of F-I status. Often times, this is preventable.

Violations of Status: Any act or condition which invalidates a student's F-I status and is grounds for termination of his or her I-20.

Termination of an I-20 Record: An I-20 record is made invalid when put in a "terminated" status by either a DSO, SEVIS, or other government authority. An I-20 record can be terminated for any number of reasons at any time, without notice to given to the student.

There are numerous ways that students can violate or fail to maintain their status. Here is a list of *some* status violations or situations that invalidate F-1 status and are cause for termination of an I-20 record:

- Registering for an incorrect number of credits per semester and/or not securing approval to take fewer credits than required.
- Failure to report changes to your personal or academic information within a timely manner.
- Unsuccessful transfer of your I-20 record to a new school.
- Interning or working off campus without prior authorization.
- Working more than your permitted time on- or off- campus.
- Being charged for, arrested, or convicted of a criminal offense (no matter how minor or serious).

DSOs are required to terminate a SEVIS records if an F-1 student violates his or her status. If you have questions about maintaining your status, you should consult with a DSO. If you have concerns that you have fallen out of status or committed a violation of your F-1 status, you may want to consider seeking professional council outside of Moore.

### **Resolving Out of Status Issues (Reinstatement)**

In some cases, students who fail to maintain their status may be eligible to regain their F-1 status.

#### **Two Options to Try to Regain Status:**

- o Remain in the United States and file for reinstatement\*
- o Travel outside of the United States and enter on a new I-20

Students must follow all U.S. immigration rules and regulations and are responsible for maintaining their status. Students who fail to maintain their status and become out of status may want to seek professional counsel outside of Moore (which may require additional costs).

**\*Reinstatement** is an acknowledgement submitted to the U.S. immigration authorities that a violation of immigration status has occurred; it is a request to grant F-1 status and a request to reinstate good visa status. Please be aware that the rate of reinstatement denials is high. If you are denied reinstatement, you must leave the U.S. immediately.

To be eligible for reinstatement, you must have not been out of status for more than 5 months and you must prove that the violation occurred due to circumstances outside of your control. Reinstatement required an expensive, non-refundable fee. The process is lengthy, risky, and you are required to return to your home country for any future visa applications.

To request a new I-20 for the purposes of reinstatement, please use the *I-20 Request Form* and make an appointment to talk with a DSO.

### **Employment & Internship Authorization**

There are four kinds of employment options F-1 students may be permitted to engage in:

- o On-Campus Employment
- o Off-Campus Employment
  - Employment Based on Unforeseen and Severe Economic Hardship
  - Curricular Practical Training (CPT) / Internship Requirements
  - Optional Practical Training (OPT) , Pre- and Post- Completion

## **On-Campus Employment**

F-I students are permitted to work on-campus for up to 20 hours per week during the school year and up to 40 hours per week during summer, winter, and spring breaks. Please be aware that designated breaks may be different for BFA and graduate students, per their respective Academic Calendars.

F-I students do not qualify for work-study positions. The number of on-campus jobs and available work hours are limited and not guaranteed. F-I students should not rely on the possibility of an on-campus job to pay for living expenses. Students must end on-campus employment on or by their program completion date (graduation.)

*[See the F-I International Student Moodle Group for more information about working on-campus.]*

## **Off-Campus Employment**

### **Unauthorized Off-Campus Employment**

You are not allowed to work off-campus without prior written authorization from a DSO. This is VERY important because working off-campus without approval is a very serious offense. If you are discovered to be working by U.S. Immigrations & Customs Enforcement (ICE), you will be stripped of your visa, sent home immediately at your own expense, and you may be banned from the U.S. for at least ten years.

### **Authorized Off-Campus Employment**

In order to apply for any off-campus work authorization including CPT and OPT, you must have been an F-I visa holder for at least one academic year and maintained your status. To request approval for authorized off-campus employment, please fill out a *CPT/OPT/ Off-Campus Employment Request Form*.

**Employment Based on Unforeseen and Severe Economic Hardship** is the only kind of authorized off-campus employment that doesn't fall under CPT or OPT. To file for this option, students must meet specific criteria in order to be recommended by a DSO. Additionally, the student will have to fill out Form I-765 and pay the fee (currently \$380 and non-refundable). Students who are granted approval for employment based on unforeseen and severe economic hardship can begin working only after they receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) which is good for one year. Students can re-apply each year but will need to secure a recommendation from a DSO, file an updated I-765 form, and pay the fee each time.

Students seeking eligibility to apply for off-campus employment based on unforeseen and severe economic hardship should meet with a DSO to discuss their options.

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** is work authorization that allows F-I students to participate in paid or unpaid off-campus employment/internships related to their program of study. The purpose of CPT is academic and is not just for employment purposes.

#### **Requirements for CPT:**

- Must directly relate to the student's program or major. CPT cannot be authorized for a student's minor.

- Students who are required to complete an internship or student teaching experience for their graduation requirements will need to secure CPT authorization before participating in these courses.
- Students may complete less than a total of 12 months of full-time CPT, however, most F-I students at Moore will not use close to their maximum hour allowance.
- Students must secure a position or have an internship lined up in order to apply for CPT authorization.

All BFA students are required to complete a 240-hour internship for a total of 4.5 credits for graduation, with the exception of Art Education majors. BFA Art Education majors must complete a 9 credit student teaching experience. Graduate Interior Design students are required to complete a 3 credit internship for graduation. In order to complete internship or student teaching requirements, F-I students must secure CPT authorization from a DSO.

*BFA Professional Practicum* is an optional elective course for seniors who have completed internship. F-I students who are granted approval for *Professional Practicum* will also have to secure CPT authorization to participate in this elective course.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)** is also known as work authorization. F-I students may be eligible for up to 12 months of off-campus employment directly related to their program of study. Students must secure a recommendation from a DSO, file the I-765 form and pay the fee (currently \$380 and non-refundable) for each OPT request they make. Employment cannot begin until Employment Authorization is granted and processing times vary.

#### **Pre-Completion OPT (Not Recommended)**

- Participation is *before* graduation (pre-completion)
- Part-time (20 hours a week or less) is permitted when classes are in session.
- Full-time (more than 20 hours per week) is permitted during college summer break and winter vacation.
- Time used for Pre-Completion OPT is deducted from Post-Completion OPT time allowances.
- Students can only participate in Pre-Completion OPT after they are granted their Employment Authorization Document.
- This option is not recommended for students may want to pursue employment in the U.S. immediately after graduation on Post-Completion OPT.
- This option may be advisable for students who are certain they will leaving the U.S. upon graduation and/or students who secure an employment opportunity they absolutely cannot pass up.

#### **Post-Completion OPT (Recommended!)**

- Participation is *after* graduation (post-completion)
- Full-time (more than 20 hours per week) is a required while on the OPT clock.
- The 20-hour per week full-time requirement may be obtained by securing more than one position. Students should ensure that they meet the requirements by tracking their hours.



- Students on OPT may be eligible for up to 12 months of authorized employment as long as they have maintained their status, not used more than 12 months of full-time CPT, and not engaged in Pre-Completion OPT.
- Students seeking Post-Completion OPT should consider applying no more than 90 days before graduation and before 60 days after graduation has passed.
- Students are permitted periods of unemployment while on OPT but cannot exceed a total of 90 days. Periods of unemployment must be reported to a DSO immediately and each day is counted, including weekend days. Students who exceed their total of 90 days of unemployment allowance lose employment authorization and must depart the U.S. immediately.

#### **Travel While Applying for or On OPT:**

- If you have graduated and applied for OPT *but have not yet been approved*, it is NOT recommended that you travel outside of the U.S. You are not restricted from travel outside of the U.S. but we strongly advise against it. In addition to the documents recommended/required for travel outside the U.S. you should also carry your Notice of Action showing your receipt number (beginning with the letters WAV) which shows you have applied for OPT. [See *Travel*, page 13, for more information.]
- If you have graduated *but have been approved for OPT*, you should be employed and carry proof of employment or you should be offered a job and carry a letter from the employer that states so before traveling in and out of the U.S. In addition to the documents recommended/required for travel outside the U.S. you must also carry your EAD to present it at immigrations. Your I-20 will need to have an up-to-date signature on Page 3 from a DSO. [See *Travel*, page 13, for more information.]

#### **Transferring Out of Moore to Another Institution**

There are two kinds of transferring-out for F-1 students that relate to their I-20s and SEVIS record: Transferring Out pre-completion and post-completion. Students should fill out the *Transfer I-20 Request Form* and meet with a DSO to discuss their options and the process. Once a SEVIS transfer process is complete, on-campus employment at Moore and/or CPT or OPT must cease immediately.

**Transferring Out: Pre-Completion** is when a student intends to transfer to another institution before completing their program at Moore. In order to be eligible to transfer a student's SEVIS record, the student must have gained acceptance to another institution and has completed at least one semester or term at Moore.

**Transferring Out: Post-Completion** is when a student intended to go to another institution after graduation from Moore. Students on OPT can be approved for transfer-out, however, they need to consider their Employment Authorization dates and new program start date to identify any gaps in time and ensure a successful SEVIS transfer.

#### **Graduation/Completion of Program**

Graduation dates are listed on the BFA and Graduate Academic Calendars. Graduating students trying to help their family members secure travel authorization to the US to attend graduation may request a letter verifying their graduation from a DSO by filling out a F-1 Letter Request Form.

F-1 students can see their program completion date on their I-20. Students residing in the U.S. after their completion date must still report changes to their personal information, such as change of addresses, within the 10-day time period.

Upon graduation, F-1 students have a limit of 60 days to do one of the following:

- Apply for Post-Completion OPT [*Post-Completion OPT, page 16, for more information.*]
- Transfer out of Moore and transfer in to another institution [*See Transferring Out: Post-Completion, page 17, for more information.*]
- Apply and receive a new I-20 for a new academic program at Moore.
- Apply for a change of status to another visa status.
- Depart the U.S.

# **Additional Resources**

## **Moore Resources**

For Links to your Moore e-mail, Moodle and Self Service:

<http://moore.edu/for/current-students>

Academic Calendars:

<http://moore.edu/for/current-students/academic-calendars>

BFA Student Handbook:

<http://moore.edu/for/current-students/student-handbook>

Graduate Student Handbook:

<http://moore.edu/academics/graduate-studies/graduate-handbook>

## **U.S Government Resources**

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services:

<http://www.uscis.gov/>

I-94 Reports:

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

Information about obtaining a Social Security Number:

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

# **F-I International Students Handbook**

Academic Year 2015-2016

BFA and Graduate Students



**Please refer to the BFA or Graduate Student Handbook, New Student Guide and International Student Page on Moodle for additional policies, forms and information.**