

## ***Resource Guide for International Students and Applicants***

### **Applying to Bank Street**

Thank you for your interest in applying to Bank Street Graduate School of Education! Below, you will find an outline of additional application requirements for international applicants. If you have questions about these requirements, please contact Melissa Nathanson at [mnathanson@bankstreet.edu](mailto:mnathanson@bankstreet.edu).

- Evidence of English Proficiency:** If your undergraduate coursework was not conducted in English and English is not the official language of your home country, you will need to submit proof of English proficiency. We will accept a score of 100 or higher on the internet-based TOEFL or a score of 7 or higher on the IELTS. Official score reports should be sent to Bank Street College and our school code is 2035.
- Course-by-Course Evaluation and Translation of Official Transcripts:** International transcripts must be translated and evaluated to determine whether your academic credentials meet our admissions criteria. Bank Street requires a comprehensive course-by-course translation and evaluation, and accepts certified transcript evaluations from World Education Services.
- Deadlines:** The application deadline for international students for the Spring term is September 15 and the deadline for the Fall term is February 1.

### **Receiving the I-20 document**

The I-20 document is required by the US Consulate to issue an F-1 Student Visa. By issuing you an I-20, we certify that you have been admitted to Bank Street as a full time student and that you can show sufficient funds to pay for tuition and living expenses while in New York. In order to issue you an I-20, we need several pieces of documentation from you as outlined below.

- Application Form for I-20:** After you are admitted, we will send you an application to complete. We are required to collect this information in order to issue you an I-20.
- Financial Documentation:** You will need to provide evidence that you or someone sponsoring you has the money to cover your tuition and living expenses. We will need proof of income, 6 months of bank statements, and recent pay stubs or tax returns for the individual(s) financing your study in the United States.
- Copy of your passport identification page**
- Copy of your Health Insurance Card:** While studying in the US, you will need a valid health insurance plan. If your plan does not cover you internationally, we can recommend external student plans for you. Please note that health insurance plans are not offered by Bank Street College.

After we receive all required documentation from you, we will issue you the I-20 and send it to your home address through express mail. You can then prepare for and schedule your visa appointment.

## Applying for an F-1 Student Visa

An F-1 Student Visa allows you permission to enter the country as an incoming student at Bank Street. At your Visa appointment, you will explain that you have been accepted to study in the United States and provide the following documentation required by the embassy.

- I-901 form and SEVIS fee:** The form and fee should be submitted online before the appointment
- Your passport**
- I-20 document:** You will need to present this as documentation that you have been given permission to study in the United States at Bank Street. You should bring the original document that we mailed to you.
- Financial documentation:** You will also need to bring the same documentation you sent to Bank Street before receiving the I-20.
- Admissions documents:** Bring a copy of your acceptance letter, so you have proof of your acceptance to Bank Street to present at the appointment.
- Compelling ties:** The embassy wants evidence of strong ties to your home country. This will serve as proof that you plan to return home after your course of study, as opposed to trying to remain in the US indefinitely.

## Arrival in the United States

There are several documents you will need to carry with you on the plane and present to Customs and Border Protection before you enter the country.

- Your passport:** Please make sure your passport expiration date is at least 6 months in the future, or you might have trouble entering the country.
- F-1 Student Visa:** This will be attached inside your passport.
- I-20 document:** This is the original document we mailed to you before you received your visa.
- Status:** Make sure they stamp your passport with “F-1 for D/S” (D/S means duration of stay)

- I-94:** After you arrive, print out the I-94 document from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) for your personal records. This document is a record of your entry to the United States. Students from Mexico and Canada might receive an I-94 card upon entry.
  
- Meeting with the PDSO:** After you arrive, contact Melissa Nathanson ([mnathanson@bankstreet.edu](mailto:mnathanson@bankstreet.edu)) to schedule a meeting. We will need to make a copy of your I-94 and visa documents as well as advise you on how to maintain your status while you study here.

**\*\*Please remember you cannot arrive more than 30 days before the start of the program. If you do, Border Patrol has the right to refuse entry to you.\*\***

## Maintaining your F-1 Student Status

What is status? Your permission to remain in the United States.

Students are responsible for making sure they maintain status while in the country. If you fail to meet the criteria to remain in status, Bank Street is legally required to terminate your status.

- Engaging in appropriate F-1 activity**
  - Full-time student (at least 9 credits) for each fall and spring term
  - Post-OPT employment
  - Refraining from engaging in any unauthorized employment
  
- Travel:** Be sure to get your I-20 signed for travel every time you plan to leave the country. Make sure you plan to do this in advance of your travel date.
  
- Program extension:** Your I-20 lists a program start date and program end date for your studies. If your course of study will take longer than the time given on your I-20, please notify the PDSO as soon as possible so we can begin the process for obtaining a program extension.
  
- Reduced Course Load:** If you need to drop a course or withdraw from school completely, please contact the PDSO **BEFORE** taking any action to withdraw from your courses. Based on the situation, you might be eligible to obtain permission for a reduced course load if you meet certain academic or medical criteria. However, if you withdraw from courses **before** speaking with the PDSO, we will be required to terminate your status.
  
- Update PDSO with any name or address changes**

- File Federal Income Tax:** Even if you aren't earning an income, you are still required to submit the Form 8843 by April 15 each year.

## What ends F-1 Status?

- Engaging in activities prohibited by the F-1 status (ie unauthorized employment)
- Failing to enroll in courses
- Dropping below full-time student status (9 credits is considered full time)
- Being absent from the US for more than 5 months

\*\*Depending on the situation, it might be in your best interest to continue taking classes full time while applying for reinstatement if you wish to regain your F-1 status. Contact the PDSO immediately to schedule a meeting.

## Travel

- Exit Procedures**
  - Surrender I-94 upon departure (unless traveling to a neighboring country for less than 30 days)
- Reentry Requirements**
  - Valid Passport
  - Valid F-1 Visa
  - Form I-20 with PDSO signature and any old I-20s
  - Best Practice: transcripts, proof of financial support, PDSO contact information, copy of I-94
- Time Restrictions:** When the PDSO signs your I-20, we will note the last possible reentry date for you. If you attempt to enter the country after the specified date, you might be refused entry.

## Completing your Program

After graduation, you have a 60 day grace period in which you must either start OPT, transfer to another institution or leave the country.

If more time is needed for program completion than what is listed on your I-20, be sure to meet with the PDSO to request a program extension.

## Applying for Optional Practical Training

At the conclusion of your program, you have the option of finding a job relevant to your course of study and working for 12 months on an extended F-1 status. You can apply for OPT no more than 90 days

before graduation. You can apply for OPT before finding a job and it normally takes 2+ months to receive employment authorization.

Please refer to the following checklist for materials required as a part of the OPT application.

- Form I-765: Application for Employment Authorization**
- Letter of Support from the PDSO**
- Form G-1145: E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance**
- \$380 fee: Check made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
- Copies of all previous I-20s**
- Two passport format photos: print your name and SEVIS ID# on the back in pencil**
- Copies of I-94, passport ID pages and previous EADs (if applicable)**

After you receive your employment authorization, schedule a meeting with the PDSO to copy your EAD card, get your social security letter and pick up your updated I-20.

## **Rules for maintaining status during OPT**

- Remain employed full-time**
- No more than 90 days of unemployment**
- May be paid or unpaid (ie volunteering)**
- Report interruptions of employment to P/DSO**
- Report changes in name or address**
- Traveling**
  - **Not advised while OPT application is pending**
  - **After OPT is authorized, you should travel with:**
    - **Proof of job offer**
    - **Employment Authorization Document**
    - **Passport valid 6 months into the future**
    - **Valid visa**
    - **I-20 endorsement**

If you have questions about any of the information outlined in this document, please contact Bank Street's PDSO, Melissa Nathanson, at [mnathanson@bankstreet.edu](mailto:mnathanson@bankstreet.edu).