

BOSTON
COLLEGE

OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AND
SCHOLARS (OISS)



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International Student Welcome Guide

Welcome New International Students!

On behalf of the Office of International Students and Scholars, congratulations on your acceptance to Boston College! As an international student at Boston College, you are joining a community of nearly 2,800 international students, scholars and their family members from more than 95 countries around the world. We hope that you will find Boston College a welcoming place and your home away from home. This guide has some of the basic information you will need as you prepare for your time at BC. **PLEASE BRING THIS GUIDE TO THE U.S.** to use as a resource until you are given additional information at International Orientation.

OISS International Student Orientation 2020

OISS International Student Orientation is **MANDATORY** for Undergraduate and Exchange students and **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** for all Graduate students. The event is designed to *supplement* other orientation programs and provide useful information specific to international students. The orientation will also provide you with the opportunity to meet other international students from different programs. Orientation is **free of charge** and some meals will be provided. Detailed daily schedules will be posted on the OISS website over the summer.

◆ Undergraduate Students: August 25-26, 2020

What is an "IA"? Undergraduate students who attended high school outside of the US will be matched with an International Assistant (IA). Being matched with an IA is optional for undergraduates who attended a US high school. IAs are international and U.S. upperclassmen who serve as mentors to new undergraduate international students. They will serve as a support network while you adjust to Boston College & life in the U.S. and will organize social activities throughout the year. Your IA will be in contact with you prior to your arrival.

Required English Writing Assessment: An English Writing Assessment will be given to all students whose first language is not English. The results of the assessment will determine your placement into core English courses during freshman year. For more information regarding the English Writing Assessment, please contact Lynne Anderson, Director of English Language Learning, at lynne.anderson@bc.edu.

◆ Graduate and Exchange Students*: August 26, 2020

We understand that some graduate students will have scheduling conflicts with departmental orientations. Please attend International Student Orientation events as your schedule allows. Graduate students are also invited to attend general Graduate Student Orientation on August 27. Please visit www.bc.edu/gsc for more details.

*Master of Law (LLM) exchange students should attend events for Graduate students

RSVP by August 7 at www.bc.edu/oiss, if you will attend Orientation.

Applying for a Visa

We recommend that you schedule an appointment at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate as soon as possible. The website of your particular Consulate or Embassy can be found at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Select the city and country where you will apply for a student visa to learn what the procedures are for your particular consulate. Information about student visas will be listed under the “non-immigrant visa” section. You can also find information regarding your visa application at the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>. Please note that Canadian students do not need to apply for a visa.

Required Documents:

***Requirements can change frequently. Be sure to check with your consulate or embassy for details!**

- Certificate of Eligibility: I-20 or DS-2019 form
- Passport valid for at least 6 months into the future
- Form DS-160
 - *The form can be filled out prior to your appointment by downloading it from your consulate’s website or at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
- Proof of admission to the U.S. university
- One 2 x 2 inch photograph
 - *For details, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/photos.html>
- Receipt for visa processing fee payment
- Receipt for SEVIS (I-901) fee payment
- Evidence of ties to your home country
- Evidence of financial support
- Evidence of sufficient knowledge of English during the visa interview
- Evidence of academic credentials qualifying you for admission (such as TOEFL scores, transcripts etc.)

Required SEVIS (I-901) Fee Payment:

ALL NEW students and exchange visitors are required to pay a **SEVIS (I-901) fee** to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security PRIOR to applying for an F or J visa. **On June 24, 2019, the I-901 fee for F-1 visa applicants increased from \$200 to \$350 and the fee for J-1 visa applicants increased from \$180 to \$220.** You must take the receipt with you to the visa interview. Proof of payment includes an internet receipt, Western Union Receipt, or a mailed receipt. Canadian students will be required to show this receipt at the port of entry. This fee is **in addition** to any other visa fees you will be required to pay.

- **Payment by internet:** It is strongly recommended that you pay the fee over the internet by credit card so that you can immediately print the receipt for your visa appointment. Payment by credit card can be done at www.fmjfee.com. The fee must be paid at least **3 business days in advance** of your appointment at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and presented at your visa interview.
- **Payment in local currency using Western Union Quick Pay:** You can submit your payment electronically using local currency. The Western Union receipt serves as proof of payment when you go to the U.S. Consulate. As of April 15, 2014 students are required to fill out Form I-901 at www.fmjfee.com prior to visiting Western Union.
- **Payment by mail:** (NOT recommended) You can download the PDF form at www.fmjfee.com. The form must be completed and mailed to the U.S. address indicated on the instructions. You must wait for the receipt to be mailed to you by airmail. Courier service is provided at an additional fee. Please contact our office if you are unable to download the form or do not have computer access.

Note: The following students and scholars **DO NOT** pay the SEVIS fee:

- Dependents (spouses and children)
- Continuing students
- F-1 students transferring between schools or on Optional Practical Training (Your I-20 form will state will state “transfer pending” under the ‘Form Issue Reason’ section under your name.)
- J-1 exchange visitors transferring between programs in the **same exchange visitor category**

Tips for a Successful Visa Interview

1. **TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY.** Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must, therefore, be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your home town, homeland, or current place of residence including a job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc.
2. **ENGLISH.** Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do NOT prepare speeches!
3. **SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.** Do not bring parents or family members into the interview room with you. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family.
4. **KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS.** If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.
5. **BE BRIEF.** Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.
6. **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION.** It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.
7. **NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL.** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.
8. **EMPLOYMENT.** Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program.
9. **DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME.** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence.
10. **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

Credit for this information is given to Gerald A. Wunsch, Esq., and the U.S. Department of State.

Common Visa and Immigration Questions

How far in advance can I apply for my F or J visa?

You cannot be issued a visa more than 120 days prior to the program start date on your I-20 or DS-2019 form.

When can I come to the United States?

You cannot enter the United States more than 30 days prior to the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019 form. If you try to enter any earlier, you could be refused entry at the border. If you have transferred your immigration form from another school in the U.S. and have a “transfer pending I-20”, you are not subject to the 30 day rule.

Do I need a visa if I am a Canadian Citizen?

Citizens of Canada are NOT required to obtain a visa to enter the United States as students. However, a U.S. immigration official will inspect your documents upon entry. You must have proof of Canadian citizenship, your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019 form), proof of SEVIS fee payment and proof of financial support. **Make sure your documents are marked F-1 or J-1 D/S upon entering, especially if you are driving into the U.S.!**

What if I have received an I-20 or DS-2019 form from another school?

DO NOT enter the United States using a college or university’s I-20 or DS-2019 form if you do not intend to enroll at that school. If you have been admitted to more than one school, you **MUST** enter the U.S. using the I-20 or DS-2019 for the school you plan to attend.

What if I am unable to attend BC or decide to attend another school?

You **MUST** inform your BC admissions office and the OISS immediately so that your I-20 or DS-2019 form can be cancelled. You **CANNOT** enter the U.S. using your BC immigration form if you plan to attend a different school!

What if I am in the U.S. in a status other than F-1 or J-1?

Please contact the OISS immediately to discuss your current status. **Those in B-1/B-2 or F-2 dependent status cannot start classes until their change of status to F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor is approved by the Immigration Service.**

What if I am going to another school in the U.S. before I come to BC?

You should obtain an I-20 from the **FIRST** school you will attend. When you are done with your program at the first school, you must request to have your immigration record transferred to BC. OISS will then issue an immigration form for your BC program of study. If you have received an I-20 or DS-2019 form from BC and will be attending another school first, please notify the OISS immediately.

What if I recently attended another school in the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status, or was recently working in the U.S. on Practical Training (F-1) or Academic Training (J-1)?

Your I-20 or DS-2019 must be electronically transferred from your previous school to BC. F-1 students must request this from their current school within 60 days of the program end date. J-1 students must request a transfer within 30 days. Please contact OISS for more information about this process.

Can I enter the U.S. using my tourist visa or tourist waiver (sometimes known as ESTA)?

NO!!! You will have to leave the country and re-enter in the appropriate status. You will not be allowed to study until you re-enter in the correct status.

What do I have to do with my immigration documents when I arrive at Boston College?

You must come to the OISS with all of your immigration documents **NO LATER than Friday, September 11.** This is an immigration requirement! Please bring your passport and your I-20 or DS-2019 form.

Arriving in the U.S.

Documents Needed to Enter the U.S.:

DO NOT pack these in your checked baggage!

1. **Passport with F or J visa stamp**
(Canadians are exempt from visa)
2. **ORIGINAL I-20 or DS-2019 form**
3. **Evidence of financial support**

Arrival by plane:

At the U.S. border, an immigration official will review the visa in your passport, as well as your I-20 or DS-2019 form. The border official should:

- Inspect your original I-20 or DS-2019 program dates and F-1 (or F-2 dependent) or J-1 (or J-2 dependent) visa.
- Stamp your passport with the date of entry, and write “F-1” or “J-1” and “D/S” on the stamp. D/S means “duration of status.” **If the immigration official does not write F-1/J-1 or D/S, politely remind them!**

Note: Upon entry, an electronic I-94 record will also be created for you as a record of your immigration status. OISS does NOT need a copy, however, you should keep a copy for your own records. **You can print your I-94 record at any time at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>.**

Arrival through a land/driving border:

Note: At the U.S. border, you will receive an I-94 card with the stamp “F-1” or “J-1” and “D/S” for “duration of status.” The I-94 card is a usually **small white card** stapled into your passport by the immigration official. Although it may appear insignificant, this card determines your immigration status in the U.S. and costs \$445 to replace! Be very careful with this document!

REQUIRED OISS IMMIGRATION CHECK-IN

This is an immigration requirement! You must come to the OISS with all of your immigration documents **NO LATER than Friday, September 11, 2020**. Please bring your passport and your I-20 or DS-2019 form.

Getting to Boston College from Boston Logan Airport

Directions to Boston College can be found at <https://www.bc.edu/offices/oiss/incoming/pre/getting.html>.

Logan International Airport is the closest airport to Boston College. The most common types of transportation used from the airport are taxis (including ride-share services such as Uber or Lyft), hotel shuttle buses, and the public transportation system. For more information regarding transportation at the airport, visit www.massport.com.

Taxi:

Taxis can be found at the Ground Transportation area outside each terminal. Fare to downtown Boston will cost about \$35, while fare to Boston College will cost about \$50, depending on traffic and the time of day. For good service, it is customary to tip about 15% in addition to the fare.

Free Public Transportation (The “T”):

Take the **Silver Line Train** to South Station and transfer to the **Red Line Train** heading towards Park Street Station. At Park Street, take the **Green Line - B Train** to Boston College. Stay on the train until the end of the line. For a faster route, you can take a **FREE Logan Express** bus from the airport to **Hynes Convention Center Station in the Back Bay Area**. At Hynes, take **Green Line - B Train** to Boston College Station. One-way fare on the “T” is \$2.90. For more information about Logan Express buses, visit <http://www.massport.com/logan-airport/to-from-logan/transportation-options/logan-express/back-bay/> More information on using public transportation is listed on page 6.

Shared Vans and Hotel Shuttles:

Many van companies offer shared van service to area hotels. Although it may take you a little bit longer to arrive at your destination, it is typically much cheaper, especially if you are traveling on your own (around \$15 per person). If you are staying in a hotel, call the hotel or visit their website for information about shuttle services.

Transportation Options

Public Transportation

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) www.mbta.com

To ride the subway, you can use a free rechargeable card called a “Charlie Card.” Cards are reloadable and offer discounts. When using a Charlie Card, subway fares are \$2.40, instead of \$2.90 when using cash. You can get a Charlie Card at certain major stations (**Downtown Crossing, North Station, and South Station**), and many local convenience stores. Money can be added to the Charlie Cards at most underground stations or online. **Regular monthly passes, or subway/local bus passes, can be purchased online or in major stations. Local bus fares are \$1.70 when using a pass, or \$2 when using cash.**

Discounted Semester-long “T-Passes” <https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/mbta.html>

Boston College students are eligible to purchase MBTA passes for the semester at an 11% discount. Passes must be purchased for the entire semester **in advance by credit card only** and must be picked up at Student Services. Passes offer unlimited rides during the semester. **The deadline to purchase passes for fall semester is typically in early June, but has not yet been announced for Fall 2020. Check for updates here: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/billing-student-accounts/mbta-passes-parking-permits.html>**

*A variety of different passes and transit routes are available. Please make your decision and purchase carefully. Double check the routes you anticipate needing to travel to insure that the pass you purchase allows for your intended route. **There is absolutely no cancellation, refund, or changing pass types after a purchase is made. The MBTA does not allow changes.*** Contact Student Services for more assistance with purchases, or the MBTA for information about routes.

Driver’s Licenses and Massachusetts Identification Cards

Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) www.mass.gov/id

Non-U.S. citizens who do not have a Social Security Number (SSN) and are not eligible for an SSN, may still be issued a learner’s permit, driver’s license, or ID card in some cases. **The RMV now requires visa documents be valid for a total of 12 months for an individual to be eligible for a license or ID card.** For more information, please consult the OISS or the RMV directly.

Boston RMV: 136 Blackstone St, Boston, MA

Watertown RMV: 550 Arsenal Street, Watertown, MA



On-Campus Transportation

Parking at BC: Department of Transportation & Parking www.bc.edu/transportation

Parking on campus is by permit only and is very limited. Please visit the Transportation website for details.

Eagle Transportation: BC Safety Escort Service www.bc.edu/offices/bcpd/services1/eagle-escort.html

BC offers van and walking safety escorts to on-campus and off-campus locations between 7pm- 2am for those with safety concerns. It is a good idea to use the service if you will be walking alone at night. Service is available when school is in session. Call 617-552-8888 for details.

BC Shuttle Service: www.bc.edu/transportation

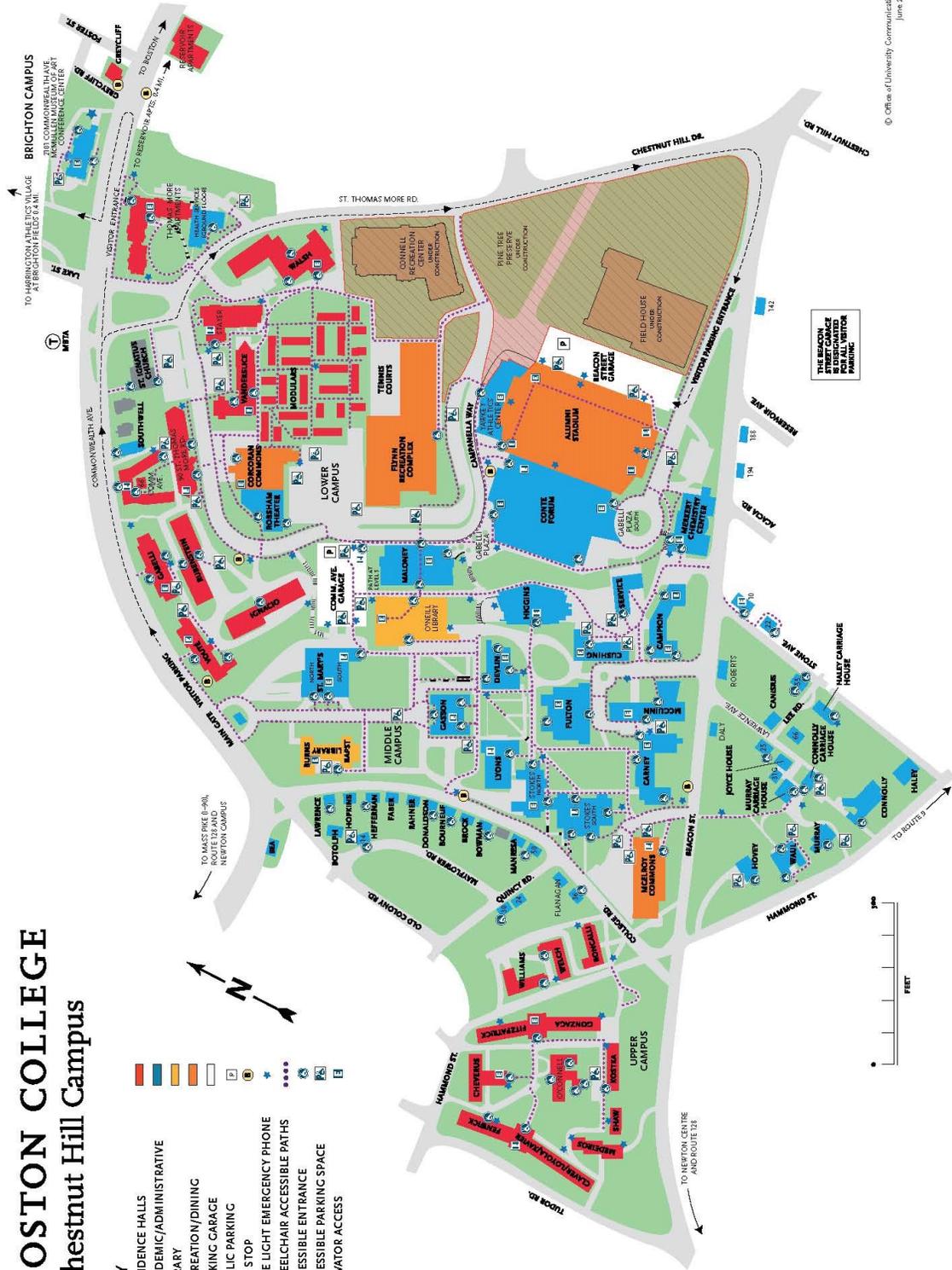
BC offers free shuttle service to the Newton Campus and to the surrounding Brighton area, including Commonwealth Avenue and Cleveland Circle. Many students choose to live close to the shuttle for convenience. Shuttle routes and real-time updates are available on the **TransLoc Rider app for iOS and Android** phones. Please contact the Transportation Office for more details.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY RAPID TRANSIT/ KEY BUS ROUTES MAP



BOSTON COLLEGE Chestnut Hill Campus

- KEY**
- RESIDENCE HALLS
 - ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE
 - LIBRARY
 - RECREATION/DINING
 - PARKING GARAGE
 - PUBLIC PARKING
 - BUS STOP
 - BLUE LIGHT EMERGENCY PHONE
 - WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE PATHS
 - ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE
 - ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACE
 - ELEVATOR ACCESS

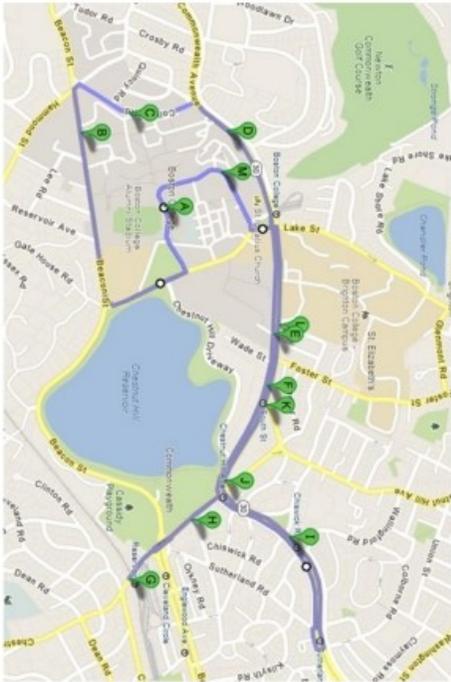


Campus Shuttle Bus Routes



Commonwealth Avenue Route

www.bc.edu/shuttle



Commonwealth Avenue Direct

- Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Every 10-15 Minutes
- A. Conte Forum
 - E. Evergreen Cemetery
 - F. 2000 Commonwealth Ave.
 - G. Reservoir MBTA stop
 - H. Bank of America – Chestnut Hill Ave.
 - I. Chiswick Rd.
 - J. Corner of Commonwealth Ave. and Chestnut Hill Ave.
 - K. South Street
 - L. Greycliff Hall
 - M. Robsham Theater
- Please Note: There is no service to the Robsham Theater Stop between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

All Stops

- Monday – Friday, 5:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m.
Saturday – Sunday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.
- A. Conte Forum
 - B. McElroy Commons – Beacon St.
 - C. College Road
 - D. Chestnut Hill Campus – Main Gate
 - E. Evergreen Cemetery
 - F. 2000 Commonwealth Ave.
 - G. Reservoir MBTA stop
 - H. Bank of America – Chestnut Hill Ave.
 - I. Thal Bistro - Chiswick Rd.
 - J. Corner of Commonwealth Ave. and Chestnut Hill Ave.
 - K. South Street
 - L. Greycliff Hall
 - M. Robsham Theater



Newton Campus Route

www.bc.edu/shuttle



Eagle Direct

Monday – Friday
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

- Newton Campus – Stuart Hall
- Newton Campus – Main Gate
- Chestnut Hill Campus – Main Gate

All Stops – Weekday

Monday – Friday
6:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m.

- A. Newton Campus – Stuart Hall
- B. Newton Campus – Main Gate
- C. Chestnut Hill Campus – Main Gate
- D. Robsham Theater
- E. Conte Forum
- F. McElroy – Beacon St.
- G. College Road
- H. Newton Campus – Duchesne Hall

Limited Stops – Week

Saturday – Sunday
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Departs each stop every half

- A. Newton Campus – Stuart H
- E. Conte Forum

Limited Stops – Weekday

Monday – Friday
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

- Newton Campus – Stuart Hall
- Newton Campus – Main Gate
- Chestnut Hill Campus – Main Gate
- McElroy – Beacon St.
- College Road
- Newton Campus – Duchesne Hall

All Stops – Weekend

Saturday – Sunday
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.

- A. Newton Campus – Stuart H
- B. Newton Campus – Main Gate
- C. Chestnut Hill Campus – Main Gate
- D. Robsham Theater
- E. Conte Forum
- F. McElroy – Beacon St.
- G. College Road
- H. Newton Campus – Duchesne Hall

Please send feedback to shuttle@bc.edu

BC Shuttle Service: www.bc.edu/transportation

BC offers free shuttle service to the Newton Campus and to the surrounding Brighton area, including Commonwealth Avenue and Cleveland Circle. Many students choose to live close to the shuttle for convenience. Shuttle routes and real-time updates are available on the **TransLoc Rider app for iOS and Android** phones. Please contact the Transportation Office for more details.

Housing

Office of Residential Life www.bc.edu/reslife

Open: Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

Maloney Hall, Suite 413, 617-552-3060

Email: reslife@bc.edu



On-Campus Housing: www.bc.edu/offices/reslife/lifeinhalls.html

⇒ **Graduate Students:** Because of the shortage of on-campus housing at Boston College, on-campus housing is unfortunately not available for graduate students.

⇒ **New undergraduate/transfer students:** First-Year Orientation Session 7 is scheduled to be held August 23-25, 2020. Contact the First-Year Experience Office for more information and updates about orientation and early move-in procedures. www.bc.edu/fye, bcfye@bc.edu

⇒ **Exchange students:** Limited on-campus housing is awarded by lottery. Contact the Office of International Programs for more information. www.bc.edu/international; oipecth@bc.edu

Off-Campus Student Living: www.bc.edu/offices/reslife/offcampus/international.html

Boston College has staff within the Office of Residential Life dedicated to helping students find off-campus housing. Their website has very useful information about living off-campus including information about apartment leases, short-term housing options, utility services, and furniture. Off-Campus Student Living also maintains a list of apartments available for rent and a message board to contact prospective roommates (www.offcampushousing.bc.edu/). To use the site, create a “Guest” account and staff will approve you. Many students also find apartments through online services like Craigslist www.craigslist.org. However, be aware of potential internet fraud and never give payments or financial information before meeting in-person and seeing the rental unit when you arrive. Visit the “Warning Signs of Scams” section on the off-campus housing website for more information.

Hotels: <https://www.bc.edu/admission/undergrad/visits/campusvisit/hotels.html>

This website provides a list of hotels, bed and breakfasts, hostels and short-term housing in the area. Room-share services like Airbnb (www.airbnb.com) may also be an option for short-term housing.

Local Utility Companies:

- **Eversource** (Electric)
1-800-592-2000 www.eversource.com
- **National Grid** (Gas)
1-800 233-5325 www.nationalgridus.com
- **AT&T Broadband** (VOIP, Internet, wireless)
1-800-222-0300 www.att.com
- **Verizon** (phone, internet, TV)
1-800-870-9999 www.verizon.com
- **Comcast** (high speed Internet and digital cable)
1-888-633-4266 www.comcast.com
- **RCN** (phone, cable TV and high speed Internet)
1-800-7464-726 www.rcn.com

Other Helpful Information:

- **Off-Campus Housing Welcome Letter**
mailchi.mp/443611ee63e1/international-exchange-students-welcome-newsletter?e=7be6f0fd9a
- **Guide to Boston Neighborhoods near BC**
http://web.offcampuspartners.com/files/resources/resource_3085.pdf
- **Know Your Rental Rights**
www.boston.gov/departments/neighborhood-development/know-your-rights-when-you-rent-boston
- **Housing Vocabulary**
bcoffcampus.blogspot.com/2017/07/housing-vocabulary.html

Grocery Stores



Stop and Shop (C1) (smaller store)
155 Harvard Street, Brookline - Take the "C" line to Coolidge Corner

Star Market (C2) (VERY large grocery store)
1065 Commonwealth Ave Allston Take the "B" line, Packards Corner

Star Market (C3) (smaller store)
1717 Beacon St. Take the "C" Line to Tappan St.

Trader Joe's (C4) (Organic and prepared food at great prices)
1309 Beacon St.. Take the "C" Line to Coolidge Corner

Whole Foods (C5) (Organic and specialty foods, somewhat pricey)
15 Washington Street, Brighton- Take the "B" Line to Washington Street.

Wegman's Large grocery store in Chestnut Hill

Super 88 (C6) (Asian Supermarket and Food Court)
One Brighton Ave. Allston—On the "B" Line- Packard's Corner Stop

Pharmacies/Drug Stores

CVS and Walgreens are the most common drug store chains in the Boston Area. They carry everything from cosmetics to snacks to personal items and also most also have a pharmacy if you have a prescription you need to fill from a doctor.

Pharmacy closest to BC:
1927 Beacon Street (B1), Cleveland Circle



Map Key

- A. Banks**
A1. Bank of America
A2. Citizen Bank
A3. Sovereign Bank
- B. Pharmacies**
B1 CVS
B2 Walgreens
- C. Grocery Stores**
C1. Stop & Shop
C2. Star Market
C3. Star Market
C4. Trader Joe's
C5. Whole Foods
C6. Super 88
- D. Cell Phone Companies**
D1. AT&T
D2. Verizon
D3. T Mobile
D4. Sprint
- E. Book Stores**
E1. BC Bookstore
E2. Barnes & Noble
- F. School Supplies**
F1. BC Bookstore
F2. Staples
- G. Computers/Electronics**
G1. Best Buy
G2. BC Bookstore
- H. Dorm/Apartment**
H1. Target
H2. Bed Bath & Beyond
- I. Hospitals**
I1. St. Elizabeth's
I2. Longwood Medical Area

Shopping Neighborhoods

"T" Accessible:

Landmark Center- (Green D Line to Fenway or take B or C line to Kenmore and walk 5 min)

201 Brookline Ave, Boston

Bed Bath and Beyond www.bedbathandbeyond.com

Bedding, kitchen accessories, appliances, limited furniture and more!

Best Buy www.bestbuy.com Electronics, computers and appliances

Staples www.staples.com School supplies (pens, paper etc), Electronics, and office furniture

Coolidge Corner - Take "C" Line to Coolidge Corner

Small shops, a variety of cell phone stores and a bookstore.

Allston Village Take the "B" Line to Harvard St.

A BC/BU student area with lots of furniture stores (used and new).

(Tip: For used furniture check out Craigslist www.craigslist.com)

By Car

Arsenal Mall and Watertown Mall (Across the street from each other)

10-15 minute drive from BC and about a \$15 dollar taxi ride from BC

Arsenal Mall: 615 Arsenal Street Watertown **Watertown Mall:** 550 Arsenal St. Watertown

Home Depot www.homedepot.com Tools, appliances, some home furnishings

Target www.target.com Has everything you need at reasonable prices.

Natick Collection and Shopper's World (on Route 9- 25 minutes west of BC by car)

Natick Collection: 1245 Worcester St. Natick MA **Shoppers World:** 1 Worcester Rd. Framingham MA)

If you have a car there is almost every store that you can think of in this area!

IKEA | IKEA way, Stoughton MA www.ikea-usa.com (45 minute drive from Boston)

Cheap furniture and things for your apartment!

Health Care and Employment

What if I get sick?

- **DO NOT** go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an emergency! You will wait a long time and it will be very expensive.
- We recommend that you use the Health Services at Boston College located in 2150 Commonwealth Avenue. Hours are M-F 8:30am-4:30pm. They also have 24-hour emergency hours during the academic year. For more info visit www.bc.edu/offices/uhs or call 617-552-3225.
- Make sure to bring your Insurance card or insurance information with you. Health care is very expensive in the U.S., which is why you are required to have insurance!
- **Dial 911** for any severe safety or medical emergencies.

Health Care

Health Insurance Information www.bc.edu/uhs

All international students are automatically enrolled in the Boston College Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan under Blue Cross Blue Shield. **You are covered under the policy from August 7, 2020 - August 6, 2021.** (Note: J-1 students must also meet additional Department of State insurance requirements.)

Getting Your Insurance Card www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/

Insurance cards will be mailed to your on-campus or U.S. address in August. Make sure you have updated your LOCAL address in Agora if you live off-campus!

What if I need to go to the doctor before the card arrives? Go to the BC Health Services website and find the contact information under “Medical Insurance 2020-2021.” You can find a participating doctor on the website and print out the contact information to give to the doctor’s office.

Waiving Your Health Insurance www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/

International students are NOT allowed to waive their BC health insurance.

Immunization Requirements www.bc.edu/offices/uhs/forms/immunization/

Contact Health Services at uhs@bc.edu or 617-552-3225 for more details. Forms are **due by the start of classes on August 26th.** Please contact Health Services for more information if required vaccines or tests are not available in your home country.

Employment

On-Campus Employment:

- ⇒ **Undergraduate Students:** If you are transferring from another U.S. university or are an exchange student, you may be eligible to begin working your first semester. All other incoming freshmen will NOT be eligible to work until their second semester.
- ⇒ **Graduate Students:** If you have an assistantship or have attended a U.S. university prior to BC, then you are eligible to begin working your first semester. If not, you will need a letter from your academic department stating that you are capable of working in addition to your studies in your first semester. (Graduate School of Management students are allowed to work first semester without a letter from their department.)
- ⇒ **Jobs are posted on the Student Services website at www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/**
All international students MUST receive permission from OISS before any work on-campus. You are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during breaks.

Off-Campus Employment:

Working off-campus requires permission from the Immigration Service and must be DIRECTLY related to your degree. In most cases, students are not allowed to work off-campus until they have been a full-time student in the U.S. for a full academic year. Please consult the OISS for more information.

*****IMPORTANT! ALWAYS remember to consult the OISS BEFORE considering any employment, especially any work off-campus. Working without permission can have VERY serious consequences for your immigration status!**



Why am I frequently asked for a Social Security Number?

- SSNs are ONLY given for employment purposes. **You cannot apply for an SSN unless you have secured a job and have obtained a Work Permission Letter from OISS.**
- Although many institutions, such as landlords, banks, or cell phone companies, will ask for an SSN for ID purposes, by law you are not required to have one. Tell them that you are not eligible.
- **Note:** The identification number given to you by BC is NOT an SSN. It should not be given out to anyone!
- For more information, visit www.ssa.gov.

Phone Calls and Introduction to Boston

Mobile/Cell Phone Companies

Most cell phone companies have 1-2 year contracts. Students who are studying in the U.S. for a semester or academic year may want to purchase a pre-paid plan which is offered by most companies except for Sprint. Please be aware that many companies charge high deposit fees for students without a Social Security Number (See page 9 for details). AT&T and Verizon typically have the best coverage in the Boston area. However, T-Mobile does not require a deposit or SSN. If you are unhappy with the T-Mobile service, you may have 30 days to cancel your plan and change to another service provider.

ATT : www.wireless.att.com/

Sprint : www.sprint.com *No prepaid plans*

T-Mobile: www.t-mobile.com

Verizon Wireless: www.verizonwireless.com (Please note that Verizon does not support SIM cards, so if you have a phone you are bringing from home you will not be able to use it with Verizon.)

CampusSIMS: www.campusSIMS.com (A free SIM card is available for international students at OISS. Please note that CampusSIMS is not affiliated with BC and is a private company.)

Calling Cards and Other Resources

Calling Cards: Calling cards can be purchased at most convenience stores including Campus Convenience located at the BC “T” stop. Some services are online. For basic information: <http://www.internationalstudent.com/phone-cards/>

Skype: <http://www.skype.com/> You call land lines and cell phones using Skype for as low as \$5.95 per month.



City of Boston

www.cityofboston.gov

Boston is the capital of Massachusetts and the largest city in New England, with a population of over 500,000. It is considered a “college city” with a student population of over 200,000 students from all areas of the United States and the world representing over 50 colleges and universities. Living in Boston will give you an excellent opportunity to experience one of the oldest cities in the U.S. and to get a first-hand glimpse of American history. Many of the most important events of the American Revolution and the founding of this country took place in or around Boston, and historical monuments and museums can be found all throughout the city. There are museums, performances, restaurants, bars, clubs and sporting activities to suit every interest and taste.

Climate “*If you don’t like the weather, just wait a minute! It will change!*”

Weather in New England can be variable and unpredictable. There are four seasons with distinct weather conditions: autumn (or “fall”), winter, spring and summer. The most enjoyable weather is typically the spring months of April - June when flowers bloom and temperatures are moderate and the early fall from September - early November. Summers can be very hot and humid. The coldest and snowiest months are January and February.

Average Boston Temperatures

Autumn	46-60°F (8-15°C)
Winter	0-37°F (-17-3°C)
Spring	38-60°F (3-15°C)
Summer	60-95°F (15-35°C)

Arrival Checklist

- ⇒ **Find a Place to Live: Housing** www.bc.edu/offices/reslife/offcampus.html
Office of Residential Life, Maloney Hall, Suite 413, 617-552-3075, open Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm. The Office of Residential life offers a listing of available apartments and students looking for roommates.
- ⇒ **Check in with your immigration documents (passport and I-20 or DS-2019 form) at the OISS by Friday, Sept. 11.**
- ⇒ **Get Your ID Card: Eagle One Card** www.bc.edu/eagleonecard
Office of Student Services, Lyons Hall 112. Bring proof of identification, such as your passport. Exchange Students and Freshmen who have submitted a photo will get their ID cards at orientation.
- ⇒ **Pay for School: Account Questions and Tuition Payment** www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/
Office of Student Services, Lyons Hall 112, 617-552-3300 or 1-800-294-0294
*Fall tuition is due **August 9** for undergraduate and law students, and **September 6** for grad and Woods College students.
*flyWire is recommended by BC to pay for school tuition. www.flywire.com/pay/bc
- ⇒ **Get your Username and PIN** www.bc.edu/help
Each BC student has a unique username and password in order to gain access to various computer services at BC. Undergraduates who did not receive their username by mail should contact Student Services in Lyons Hall. Graduate students should contact their department if they don't receive them. Exchange students will receive their username and password from the Office of International Programs (oipexch@bc.edu, www.bc.edu/international). For additional assistance, call 617-552-HELP (617-552-4636).
- ⇒ **Visit AGORA and update your Local (U.S.) address if you are living off-campus:**
AGORA is BC's student computer system. You can log on to AGORA using your username and pin to confirm your student account information including contact information, financial aid, register for classes, email etc. Once you find a place to live you will need to update your Boston LOCAL address. NOT Home- home address is your address abroad. If you are living on-campus, your local address will be updated automatically for you.
- ⇒ **Buy Your Books: BC Bookstore** www.bc.edu/bookstore
Located in McElroy Commons. **Be sure to save your receipts for book refunds in case you decide to change classes.** Many students also buy their books online at websites like www.amazon.com which can sometimes be cheaper.
- ⇒ **Open a Bank Account** www.bankofamerica.com
Many BC students choose Bank of America for their banking needs. There are several Bank of America ATMs on campus. The closest branch location is at 350 Chestnut Hill Ave in Brighton. Additional major banks in the Boston area include Santander, Citizens Bank, and Citibank.
- ⇒ **Attend Orientations**
Orientations are important to get information and meet other students.
*Undergraduate Orientation: August 25-27, 2020
*Graduate and Exchange Student Orientation: August 26, 2020
- ⇒ **Submit Immunization Forms to Health Services** www.bc.edu/uhs : uhs@bc.edu
University Health Services (2150 Commonwealth Avenue). All immunization forms must be completed PRIOR to the start of classes or you will be charged a fee on your student account.
- ⇒ **Apply for a Social Security Number if you will be working on-campus.**
If you already have a Social Security Number, you will still need documentation from the OISS. Please visit OISS for more information.

BOSTON COLLEGE

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Don't forget to
check our website
for the latest news
and information at
www.bc.edu/oiss!

Important Dates

August 25	Exchange Student Orientation (OIP)
August 25-26	International Undergraduate/Transfer Student Orientation (OISS)
August 26	International Graduate and Exchange Student* Orientation (OISS)
August 27-30	Undergraduate Student Orientation Events (Visit bc.edu/orientation)
August 31	Classes Begin
August 31	Immunization Forms are due to Health Services
September 9	Drop/Add period ends
September 11	Deadline for Immigration Check-In with OISS

*Exchange students must attend both OISS International Student Orientation and OIP Orientation sessions. Each session will include different information. Contact OIP at oipexch@bc.edu for details.

The last day of exams is December 21, 2020. If you are arranging your round-trip tickets **DO NOT** book your return flight until **AFTER** the last day of exams. For a complete academic calendar, visit

Helpful Boston College Websites

Office of International Students and Scholars: www.bc.edu/oiss

Boston College Web Directory: www.bc.edu/a-z/

Student Services (ID Cards, Insurance, Tuition) : www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/

Residential Life: www.bc.edu/reslife

Bookstore: www.bc.edu/bookstore

Technology Help Center: www.bc.edu/help

Health Services: www.bc.edu/offices/uhs/

Student Clubs and Organizations: www.bc.edu/osi

Academic Help and Tutoring: www.bc.edu/connors

Graduate Student Life: www.bc.edu/gsc

Graduate International Student Association: www.bc.edu/offices/gsc/graduate_student_association/senate.html

BC Language Laboratory: www.bc.edu/langlab

BC Transportation: (including shuttle and parking info): www.bc.edu/transportation

Counseling Services: www.bc.edu/offices/counseling/