



Northeastern University
Global Services

The J-1 Handbook

Information for J-Exchange Visitors



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Welcome Message



Jenn Christ (she/her)

Senior Director of the
Office of Global Services (OGS)

Welcome to Northeastern University! The Office of Global Services (OGS) provides support to over 20,000 international students and scholars throughout our Global Campus Network. Building a diverse and inclusive community is central to Northeastern University's mission because diversity of thought, culture, and viewpoint is essential to learning and growth. We have a strong tradition of engaging with the world, creating a distinctive approach to education and research, helping thousands of learners become global citizens. We are looking forward to your engagement with our community.

Through our programs, services, and advising, OGS is here to assist you with your transition to the United States and advise you on maintaining your status as a J-1 exchange visitor. We are excited to welcome you to our engaging global community and to support you in finding your home-away-from-home at Northeastern University.

We have developed this pre-arrival guide to assist you with this transition, so that you are well prepared for the tasks and journey ahead. In addition to reading through this document, be sure to regularly check your Northeastern Email as you prepare to arrive on campus. We will send you additional information about upcoming webinars and information about preparing to arrive in the U.S.

Most importantly, please view the recorded J-1 Scholar Orientation below as soon as possible. You are required to view this orientation to receive important information regarding maintaining your J-1 non-immigrant status during your program. You will be required to attest that you have viewed the orientation when you complete the Researcher Confirmation of Arrival e-Form.

We wish you safe travels and we look forward to welcoming you to Northeastern.

Sincerely,

Jenn Christ
Senior Director, Office of Global Services
Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) | Responsible Officer (RO)
Office of the Chief Enrollment Manager



The **Office of Global Services (OGS)** is an active resource to over 20,000 international students and scholars from 147 different nations across the world. We provide the professional expertise and support you need to maintain compliance through immigration, academic, and your employment experiences, helping you remain a valuable member of the Northeastern community

OGS supports J-1 scholars who are coming to Northeastern by:

- Providing support for maintaining J-1 visa status
- Connecting scholars with programs throughout the year to become more accustomed to campus
- Understanding the different J-1 categories and how they impact program length and eligibility

Email OGS_Scholars@northeastern.edu for any general J-1 Scholars questions

Address
 Office of Global Services
 354 Richards Hall
 360 Huntington Avenue
 Boston, MA 02115

Office Hours
 Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 5pm

Contact
 Phone: +1 (617)-373-2310

In order to be eligible for the J-1 Short-Term Scholar or J-1 Research Scholar/ Professor category, you must have a temporary academic appointment or a job offer for a benefited, non-tenure track position at Northeastern University

Temporary academic appointments include the following:

- **Visiting Scholar:** Has a doctoral degree, holds a non-faculty position at another academic institution or non-academic institution, agency, or company
- **Visiting Faculty:** Holds a faculty position at another academic institution
- **Visiting Student:** Participates in an approved educational or training program

Benefited, non-tenure track positions eligible for a J-1 visa must be research-based (e.g. Postdoc, Assistant Teaching Professor). Please contact the **Human Resources Contact** in your college if you have any questions about your job offer

The following categories are used for exchange visitors conducting research or teaching at Northeastern University. Once you receive your DS-2019 from Northeastern, you can find your J-1 category listed in Section #4 in the middle of page 1 of your DS-2019. It is important that you understand the maximum program length and other details of your specific program category

	Professor	Research Scholar	Short-Term Scholar	Student Non-Degree
Minimum Program Length	3 Weeks	3 Weeks	None	3 Weeks
Maximum Program Length	5 Years	5 Years	6 Months	2 Years
Purpose	Exchange visitors mainly engaged in teaching	Exchange visitors mainly engaged in research	Exchange visitors who are researching or teaching at Northeastern for a short time	Visiting and exchange students
12- or 24- Month Bar?	24-Month	24-Month	None	12-Month*

*For programs that are 6 months or longer

J-1 Status Changes

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Change of Status

If you are inside the U.S. under a different immigration status, you may be eligible to change your visa status to J-1 to participate in your program at Northeastern University. There are two options for changing your status to J-1. Please [click here](#) to read more about these options and to check the eligibility requirements

- Consular processing (traveling and re-entering with J-1 visa status)
- Applying for a change of status inside the U.S. via USCIS, without departing the U.S.

The more common method of gaining J-1 status is through traveling and re-entering the U.S. in your new J-1 visa status. In this case, you must apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad. Applying at the local Embassy/Consulate in your home country is recommended. You can enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the DS-2019 program start date. Depending on your situation, you may prefer to leave the U.S. to obtain the J-1 visa instead of proceeding with the change of status process in the U.S.

Transferring from Another Institution

You may be eligible to transfer your SEVIS record to Northeastern from another institution if:

- You are currently in the J-1 Research Scholar/Professor category
- You have not reached the five-year maximum program duration by your transfer date to Northeastern
- There will be no change in the program objective
- There is no gap between the program end date at the transfer-out institution and the program start date at Northeastern

In addition to steps 1-3 above, transfer-in J-1 Scholars must also submit the SEVIS Record Transfer-In Form in addition to the required e-forms

Obtaining a J-1 Visa

1 Coordinate with HR Contact

2 Obtain a DS-2019

3 Pay Required Fees

4 Complete Visa Application

5 Schedule Visa Interview

6 Attend Visa Interview

7 Wait for Visa Approval

Obtain a DS-2019

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A **DS-2019** or “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) status is the main document that confirms your admission into a program by a U.S. government-approved organization. With this document, you will become eligible to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. The following steps are taken in order to apply for a J-1 visa at Northeastern:

1 The Human Resource Contact will initiate the Initial DS-2019

The **Human Resources Contact in your college** will initiate the Visiting Scholar Request for Initial DS-2019 once your appointment is approved by the Provost’s Office. Postdocs and other posted positions are not subject to approval by the Provost’s Office

For more information on the visiting appointments approval process, please visit the Office of the Provost’s website or reach out to the HR Contact in your college

2 Initial DS-2019: 10 business day processing time

Initial DS-2019 requests are subject to a 10 business day processing time from the date the HR Contact submits the entire request to the Office of Global Services (OGS). Once your DS-2019 is ready, you will receive an e-mail that contains Northeastern’s J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Number and your SEVIS ID. This information is required to schedule a visa appointment at the United States Embassy or Consulate

If you requested a DS-2019 for your dependent(s) (spouse or unmarried children under age 21) to apply for a J-2 visa, their DS-2019(s) will be included with yours. Your DS-2019 approval email will include important information about next steps for making your visa appointment, housing resources, and what to expect as your start date is approaching

3 Carefully Review the DS-2019

Carefully review the DS-2019 immediately upon receipt and contact OGS if there are any errors or anything is missing (e.g. dependents’ DS-2019s). Sign and date in blue ink where indicated on the bottom of Page 1. J-2 dependents must sign their own DS-2019, with the exception of children under the age of 16; you must sign their DS-2019 for them

4 Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee

The SEVIS fee is required for prospective J-1 Scholars who are applying for an initial J-1 visa from outside the U.S.

The SEVIS fee is **not** required:

- If you are currently in active J-1 status in the U.S.
- If you are transferring to a new J-1 sponsor
- For J-2 dependents

Obtain a J-1 Visa

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The following documents are typically required for the J-1 visa application:

• Online Non-immigrant Visa Application Form (DS-160) confirmation page

- If your address in the U.S. is not available yet, you can use the Northeastern University address:
 - Office of Global Services, 354 Richards Hall, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115
 - Email: OGS_Scholars@northeastern.edu
- For a contact person, you can put the name of the person who signed your DS-2019. You can find this information in Section 7 on Page 1 of your DS-2019. Phone: +1-617-373-2310

• Visa application fee payment receipt (visit the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate website for instructions)

• Form DS-2019 issued by OGS at Northeastern University

• Passport (valid for at least 6 months after your date of entry into the U.S.)

• Evidence of financial support

• Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) I-901 fee payment receipt

• Copy of appointment/offer letter to Northeastern University

• One photograph (see the U.S. Department of State website for photo requirements)

Obtain a J-1 Visa

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Please note the following about the J-1 visa application process:

- **Expedited Appointments:** if you make a J-1 visa appointment but the appointment date is after your DS-2019 program start date or does not give you sufficient time to arrive in the U.S. by the start date, please contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate where you will be applying or check their website for their expedited appointment requirements
- J-1 Scholars must obtain their J-1 visa prior to traveling to the U.S. In anticipation of your visa appointment, please follow the J-1 visa application instructions specific to your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate. **Requirements may differ among Embassy or Consulate locations**
- Possession of a DS-2019 does not guarantee a J-1 visa
- Citizens of Canada or Bermuda are not required to obtain a J-1 visa stamp, but you must carry and present their J-1 documents, including the SEVIS fee receipt, when entering the U.S.

OGS strongly advises against purchasing flights or making other arrangements prior to receiving your J-1 visa. OGS will not expedite DS-2019 requests based on flights or living arrangements

J-1 Transfers to Northeastern

If your J-1 SEVIS record is being transferred to Northeastern University, you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again, if you have already paid it. If you are transferring from a U.S.-government sponsored Exchange Visitor program (indicated by a program code starting with "G," such as G-1-0001) to Northeastern University, you are required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee upon completion of the transfer process and before applying for a new J-1 visa

If you are traveling internationally after your transfer to Northeastern is completed, you must plan to apply for a new J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad the next time you travel internationally

Please note: you can remain in the U.S. with the J-1 visa stamp noting the previous institution as long as your new Northeastern DS-2019 remains valid. You do not need to depart the U.S. simply to renew the visa stamp unless you have a requirement to travel internationally. Please note that it is not possible to apply for a J-1 visa in the U.S.



Arrival for J-1 Scholars

Entering the U.S.

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In order to board your flight to the U.S., you will need to show your passport, valid J-1 visa, and DS-2019 in most cases

Please have the following documents in your carry-on luggage (not in your checked bags) to present to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the port-of entry to demonstrate your eligibility to enter the U.S. in J-1 status:

- **Passport** (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
- **J-1 Visa**
- **DS-2019 (printed out and signed)**
- **Northeastern Appointment Letter**

If a CBP Officer needs to speak with an official at Northeastern University to confirm your eligibility, please request that the CBP officer calls the university to speak to an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO), using the following contact information (The operations center is staffed 24/7 for this purpose):

- **International Safety Office**
 - **+1.617.373.2121 (NUPD)**
 - **mytravelplans@northeastern.edu**
 - Open even outside of normal business hours
- **Office of Global Services**
 - **+1.617.373.2121 (NUPD)**
 - Please see our **contact page** for opening hours

Arriving in the U.S.

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J-1 Scholars must confirm their arrival date at Northeastern with the **Human Resources Contact in the host college**

If you are experiencing delays due to visa processing, you must notify the HR Contact in the host college and the Office of Global Services (OGS) as soon as possible (email: **OGS_Scholars@northeastern.edu**)

J-1 Scholars can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before and after the program start date on the DS-2019. However, if your arrival will be delayed for more than two weeks from the program start date, please contact the HR Contact in the host college to amend the program start date. Per federal regulations, OGS is required to provide orientation and validate your SEVIS record within 30 days after the program start date

Once you have entered the U.S., submit the OGS “Researcher Confirmation of Arrival e-form” as soon as possible. You will receive emails from OGS with instructions to submit this e-form as your start date approached. This allows OGS to validate your SEVIS record, which must be done to confirm your arrival within 30 days of the start date listed on your DS-2019

J-1 Scholar Orientation

After you have arrived in the U.S., please **view the J-1 Scholar Orientation as soon as possible**. You will be required to attest that you have seen the orientation when you complete the Researcher Confirmation of Arrival e-Form. Email **OGS_Scholars@northeastern.edu** if you have follow-up questions



J-1 SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

For International Researchers and Visiting Faculty

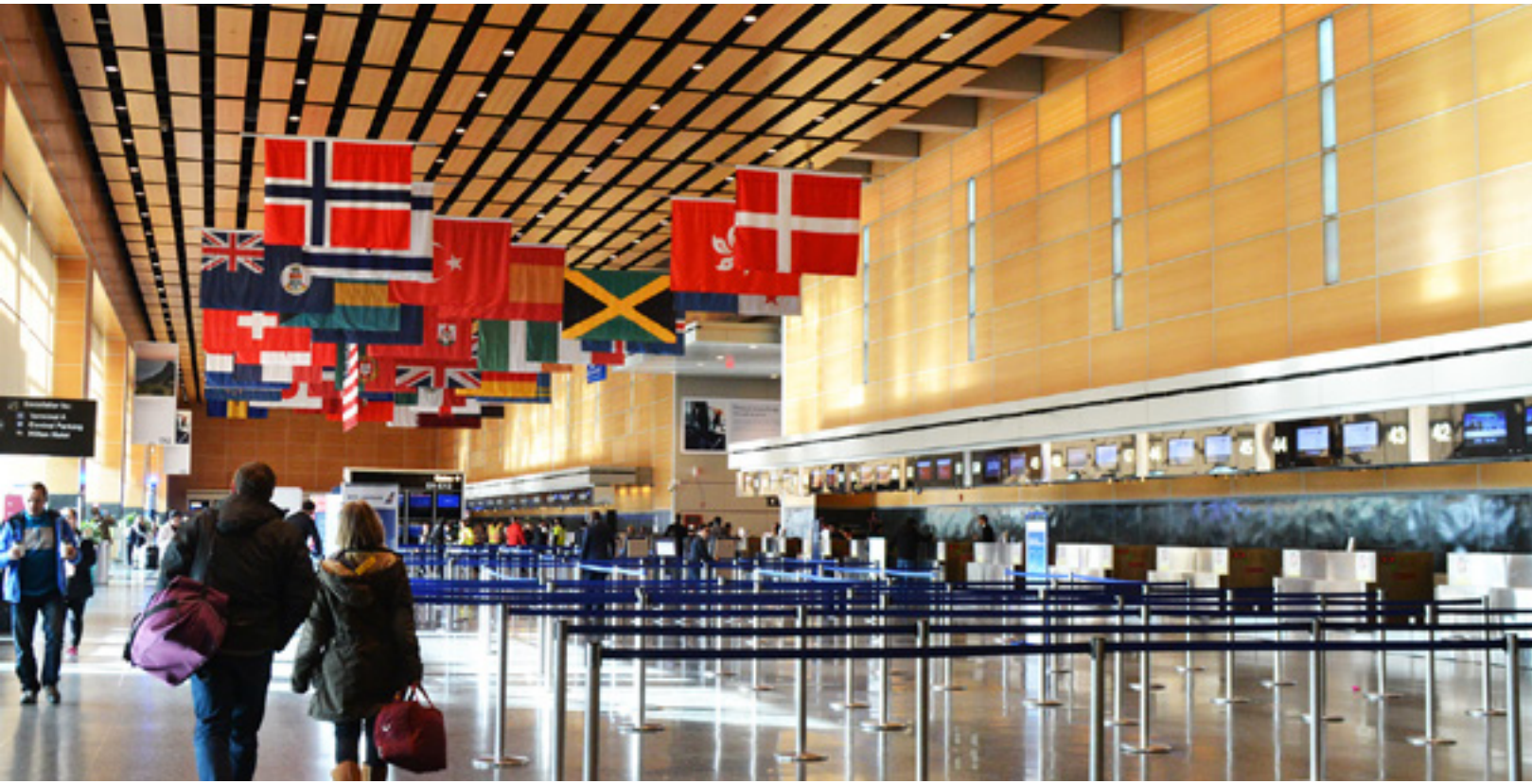
Updated April 2023



More information about the J-1 Scholar Orientation can be found here

Arriving at Boston Logan

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Once you arrive at Boston Logan Airport, there are multiple options for traveling to Northeastern's campus:

Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)

You can download the Uber and/or Lyft app to schedule a ride to your destination. Boston Logan has a Ride App pickup area for passengers booking a ride through Uber or Lyft. After collecting your luggage from baggage claim, follow the signs to go to the pickup area before you book your ride. Check that the license plate of the car matches the information in the app to ensure you get into the right car

Taxi Cabs

You can pay with cash or credit/debit or a prepaid card. Some taxis can be found at the airport without needing to call ahead of time. It is worth checking with the taxi company to double check what forms of payment are accepted

- Boston Airport cab: 617-576-9800
- Logan Airport: 617-997-4777
- Boston Logan Taxi cab: 617-499-4800
- Premier Logan Taxi: 781-558-0222

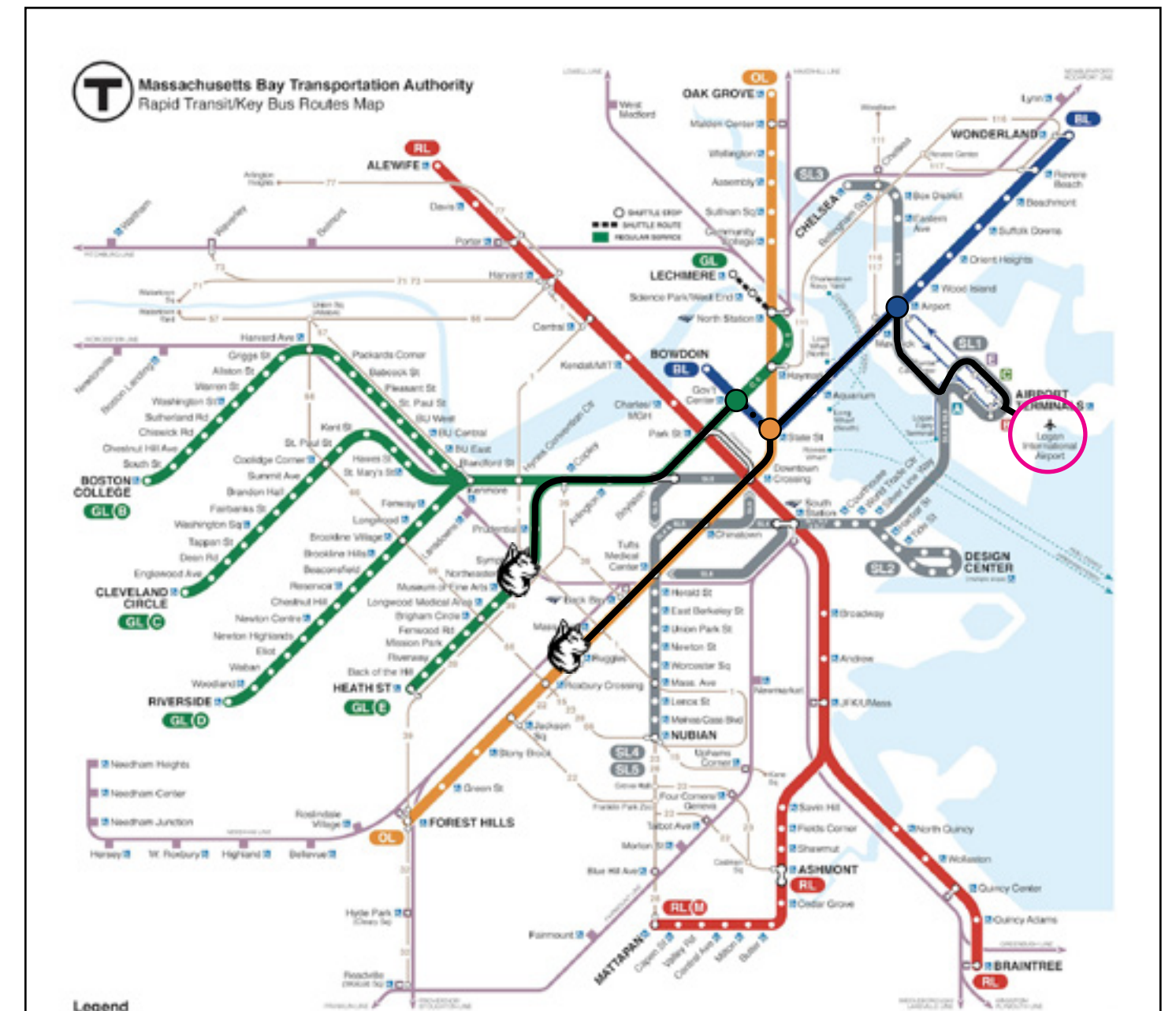
Arriving at Northeastern

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Transit (MBTA)

Board a free Massport shuttle bus (Route 22, 33, or 55) at any airline terminal to the **Blue Line Airport Station**. From there, purchase a ticket and take one of two routes to get to Northeastern (see map and directions below):

- Transfer from **Blue Line** to **Orange Line (State St. towards Forest Hills)**
 - Go from **State Street** to **Ruggles**. This drops you off at Centennial Commons, which is on the Northeastern campus
- Transfer from **Blue Line** to **Green Line (Government Ctr. towards Heath St.)**
 - Go from **Government Center** to **Northeastern**. This drops you in front of Krentzman Quad on the Northeastern campus



Traveling as a J-1 Scholar

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J-1 Scholars and their dependents must have a valid travel signature on their DS-2019 prior to traveling outside the United States. This signature is valid for one year or program duration of the DS-2019, whichever is earlier. To travel outside the U.S., you will need:

- **Passport** (valid for at least 6 months after your date of entry into the U.S.)
- **J-1 Visa** (valid past the return date)
- **DS-2019** (document expiration cannot be past return date)
- **Valid travel signature** (signed within the last year from the date of your return to the U.S.)
 - You do not need a travel signature to enter the U.S. for the first time to begin your program. You will only be able to request a travel signature after you have arrived and completed confirmation of arrival
 - If you need a new travel signature, please submit the **J-1 Travel Signature Request e-form in myOGS**. Please allow 10 business days for travel signature processing
 - Once approved, you will receive a new digitally-signed DS-2019 for you (and any J-2 dependents on your record) with a valid travel signature to your Northeastern email address

Automatic Revalidation

If you travel to Canada, Mexico, or certain Caribbean islands for less than 30 days, you may be eligible to re-enter the U.S. with an expired J-1 visa. Please refer to the Department of State website for more details prior to traveling

If you travel within the U.S., you should carry your passport, I-94, and DS-2019



Maintaining J-1 Scholar Status

Maintaining J-1 Scholar Status¹⁸

As a J-1 Scholar, there are many requirements that you must fulfill in order to maintain lawful presence on a J-1 visa in the U.S. Below is a summary of the **requirements for maintaining J-1 status** for the duration of your program. More details are provided on the following pages:

Report to OGS Upon Arrival

J-1 Scholars must report to the Office of Global Services (OGS) upon arrival to the United States or transfer to Northeastern by attending J-1 Scholar Orientation. J-1 Scholars must attend orientation within 30 days after the program start date

Updated Documents

J-1 Scholars must always have:

- Passport (valid 6 months into the future)
- A valid DS-2019
- An accurate I-94 admission record

The J-1 visa stamp does not need to be valid to maintain lawful presence in the U.S. However, J-1 Scholars must have a valid J-1 visa to enter the U.S. anytime they travel internationally

Information Changes

J-1 Scholars must report any changes to their address and/or U.S. phone number to OGS within 10 calendar days of the change by submitting a Contact Information Update e-form in their myOGS account. If there are proposed changes to your Northeastern appointment title, site of activity, or funding, you must notify OGS in advance

Incidental Employment Authorization

J-1 Scholars are only authorized to engage in the activity for which their DS-2019 has been issued. J-1 Scholars may be eligible to engage in additional, incidental employment if they request authorization from OGS in advance and if the requested activity meets certain eligibility requirements

Health Insurance

Federal regulations require all J-1 Scholars and J-2 dependents to obtain health insurance for the duration of their program. J-1 Scholars who extend their program duration must ensure that their health insurance is extended to cover their stay. **Please see Health Insurance Requirements** for J-1 Scholars for more details

Please note that willful failure to have and maintain health insurance that meets the J-1 visa requirements may result in program termination

Hybrid and Remote Work

Per Department of **State Guidance Directive 2023-01** released on June 8, 2023, effective July 1, 2023, exchange visitors in the research scholar, professor, and short-term scholar categories **must engage in their activities at Northeastern in-person, on-campus, a minimum of 60% of the time.**

This means that you may work remotely no more than 40% of your regular work hours (a max of 2 out of 5 regular work days per week)

Out-of-Country for More than 30 Days

J-1 Scholars must report to the Office of Global Services (OGS) upon arrival to the United States or transfer to Northeastern by attending J-1 Scholar Orientation. J-1 Scholars must attend orientation within 30 days after the program start date. Please see J-1 Scholar Arrival for more details

Two-Year Home Residency Requirement for J-1 Scholars¹⁹

In some cases, J-1 Scholars are required to return to their home country or country of legal permanent residence for two years before being eligible to apply for certain non-immigrant (H and L) and all immigrant visas. J-1 Scholars subject to the 212(e) are also not eligible to request a change of status to another non-immigrant status while inside the United States, with the exception of A and G classifications. If you are subject to 212(e), this is normally noted on your J-1 visa stamp and the DS-2019 returned to you after your visa interview

The 212(e) applies to J-1 Scholars in one of the following situations:

- You received direct government funding, either from your home country or the U.S., for the purpose of international exchange
- Your country has an Exchange Visitor Skills List and your field of research is on this list
- You came to the U.S. in the J-1 Alien Physician category to participate in medical residency

The 212(e):

- Is determined by the home country or country of legal permanent residence
- Can affect Exchange Visitors in all J categories, regardless of program duration
- Applies to both J-1 Scholars and J-2 dependents
- Does not prevent individuals from returning to the U.S. in any visa status other than H, L, K, or green card

Advisory Opinion

If the J-1 Scholar believes they have been incorrectly subjected to the 212(e) per the reasons above, or the 212(e) information on the J-1 visa does not match the DS-2019, they should request an advisory opinion from the Department of State

The Office of Global Services (OGS) is not able to directly assist or prepare documentation for this process

Health Insurance

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J-1 Scholars are able to select an insurance policy that best fits their and their dependents' needs. Federal regulations require all J-1 Scholars and J-2 dependents to obtain health insurance that meets the following requirements:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness
- In case of death, repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses in the amount of \$50,000 associated with the medical evacuation of the J Exchange Visitor to his or her home country
- A deductible amount not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
- Continuous coverage for the duration of the program

For benefited Northeastern J-1 Scholars (such as Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Associates, and Non-Tenure Track Faculty)

- You will have the option of selecting a health insurance plan through Northeastern
- **Please note that the Northeastern health insurance plans do not cover repatriation or medical evacuation.** J-1 Scholars will either have to purchase repatriation and medical evacuation insurance separately or select a health insurance plan through a provider other than Northeastern (see next section below)
- If your appointment start date is not on the first day of the month, please note that your Northeastern health insurance plan may not go into effect until the following month. We strongly recommend you have a separate private insurance plan to cover you from your date of entry to the U.S. and for the first few months of your program until you have confirmation of the effective date of your NU benefits

If you purchased health insurance in your home country or have insurance from your home institution or home government, please ensure that it covers all of the J-1 requirements listed above and the covers you during your period of time in the U.S.

We strongly recommend that you ensure you have valid health insurance from the day you enter the U.S. (even if this is during the 30 days prior to your program starting)

For more resources, [visit the health insurance requirements page](#)

Health Insurance

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The Department of State requires the Office of Global Services (OGS) to confirm that all J-1 Scholars have health insurance that complies with the federal regulations. OGS reserves the right to request proof of health insurance at any time during the J-1 Scholar's program

The following vendor has created a health insurance plan specifically for Northeastern J-1 visitors that meets all of the J-1 visa requirements:

- **Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk**

The additional vendors below also offer plans for international students and visitors. OGS is **not** affiliated with these companies and does not endorse any one specific provider

- **Cultural Insurance Service International (CISI)**
- **Compass Benefits Group**
- **Gateway**
- **The Harbour Group, LLC**
- **HCC Medical Insurance Services**
- **Insubuy**
- **Insurance Services of America (ISA)**
- **International Student Protection (ISP) Visitor Insurance**

Evacuation/Repatriation Coverage-Only Plans: The vendors above may offer plans that exclusively cover the evacuation/repatriation requirement. The vendor below also has a standalone plan that only covers evacuation/repatriation. If your health insurance does not cover this requirement (i.e. Northeastern benefits-eligible employees with NU employee health insurance), you will need to also purchase a standalone plan to meet this requirement

- **Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk**

Below, please find additional health-related resources:

- **CVS Pharmacy**
- **Walgreens Pharmacy**
- **Health insurance terms**
- **Hospitals in the greater Boston area**
- **Health Insurance and Healthcare in the US Explained**

Tax Information

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All J-1 Scholars are required to file a U.S. federal tax return. Since you will receive a U.S. source income, including wages, stipend, or scholarship, you will likely have federal and state tax withheld from your check

U.S. taxes is a pay-as-you-go system in that there may be automatic tax withholdings from your paycheck, stipend, or financial aid. This means that in some instances your available income will be reduced by the tax withholdings. When you file your tax return in April each year, you will calculate the exact amount of tax due

Generally, most J-1 scholars are considered **nonresidents** for tax purposes. J-1 Scholars and Researchers on J visas are automatically considered nonresidents for two out of the last six calendar years

The last day to file federal tax returns for the previous calendar year is typically in April each year

Sprintax

The Office of Global Services has arranged access to **Sprintax** for you. Sprintax will guide you through the tax preparation process, arrange the necessary documents and check if you're due a tax refund

The code can be used for Federal taxes. If you have a state filing requirement, this will not be covered by the code and you must also mail this to the tax authorities. You are not required to use Sprintax and can use a different tax preparation software (or complete it on your own) if you prefer

OGS also encourages scholars to utilize resources on Sprintax's blog. You can use the search bar to seek information about the most frequently asked tax-related questions!



Social Security Numbers

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A Social Security Number (SSN) is a unique identification number that is given to U.S. citizens and some residents for income and tax purposes. As a J-1 Scholar, you will need a SSN in order to work in the U.S. and at Northeastern

You cannot apply for a SSN until you have submitted the Researcher Confirmation of Arrival e-form and OGS has validated your SEVIS record. The SSA recommends waiting at least 10 business days after your SEVIS record is validated at the start of your program to ensure your status is updated in all relevant government databases

Please reference the instructions for how to apply for a SSN on **Northeastern's Social Security Number page**

Where to Apply

After collecting all required documentation, you can apply for your Social Security Number with the Social Security Administration. The Social Security Administration has a few locations in the Boston area. When applying for your Social Security Number, you will need to go in person to one of the Social Security Administration locations

Generally, there are three convenient locations for Northeastern students studying at the Boston campus:



Boston
10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222



Cambridge
10 Fawcett Street
Boston, MA 02138



Roxbury
10 Malcolm X Blvd.
Roxbury, MA 02119



Due to the high cost of living, finding accommodations in Boston can prove to be challenging. Northeastern aims to make the process of finding housing in Boston easier through the **Off Campus Engagement and Support office**

Off Campus Engagement and Support at Northeastern provides support and education related to off-campus housing, renter’s rights knowledge and off-campus responsibilities. They offer many resources to help you find off-campus housing in Boston, including an apartment search database and guidance on finding leases

Use the **Off-Campus Housing** website to find Boston-area apartment, roommates, and sublets

Contact Information
 Off Campus Engagement and Support
 151 Speare Hall
 360 Huntington Avenue
 Boston, MA 02115
 Phone: +1 (617)-373-2310
 Email: offcampus@northeastern.edu

Rental Costs

When moving off campus it is important to consider your budget. How much money do you have to spend on rent, utilities (often not included), cable, internet, food, transportation, etc.? Do you have enough money for upfront fees?

Upfront Fees

You must also consider the upfront cost to rent an apartment. There are generally four fees you will need to pay when you sign a lease: first month’s rent, last month’s rent, security deposit, and realtor’s fee. Do not complete the application or pay an application fee or any other deposits until you have seen and agree to the lease, all addenda, and applications clauses

Apartment Cost Range

The following chart lists the cost range you can expect for various apartment types within and near Boston (as of 2024)*:

City	Studio	1-Bdrm	2-Bdrm	3-Bdrm	4-Bdrm
Allston	\$1,400-2,500	\$1,900-3,000	\$2,400-3,000	\$3,300-4,100	\$4,200-6,200
Back Bay	\$1,900-2,400	\$2,400-3,500	\$3,000-4,600	\$4,700-5,200	\$6,000-7,000
Brighton	\$1,800-3,000	\$1,800-3,000	\$1,800-3,000	\$3,100-4,800	\$3,200-5,800
Brookline	\$1,800-2,200	\$2,200-2,600	\$2,600-3,800	\$3,900-4,700	\$4,000-5,000
Cambridge	\$2,000-2,600	\$2,200-2,800	\$2,200-2,800	\$3,400-5,000	\$4,200-6,500
Fenway	\$1,800-2,800	\$1,800-3,400	\$1,900-4,000	\$3,400-5,000	\$5,400-8,000
Jamaica Plain	\$1,600-1,900	\$1,700-2,100	\$2,700-3,100	\$2,800-3,500	\$3,400-3,800
Mission Hill	\$1,300-2,500	\$2,600-3,200	\$2,500-3,300	\$3,200-4,400	\$4,300-6,000
Roxbury	\$1,300-1,600	\$1,400-1,900	\$2,500-3,500	\$3,200-4,400	\$3,500-4,500
South End	\$2,000-2,600	\$2,100-2,600	\$3,000-4,200	\$3,700-4,700	\$4,400-5,200

*Most units are listed as unheated; furnishings are generally not included. Prices may change based on the number of occupants

Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers you and your possessions as a renter of an apartment or house. A standard renter's policy protects your personal property, in many cases of theft or damage, and may pay for temporary living expenses if your rental is damaged and unlivable. It may also protect you from personal liabilities

As long as you are renting, it is highly suggested you purchase renter's insurance. Under most circumstances, the landlord's policy will not pay for losses to tenants' personal property or damages caused by the tenant. Property losses are usually unexpected. Insurance is a means of protection in case such losses should occur. [Northeastern's rental insurance page](#) addresses other questions concerning how to find coverage that fits your needs

Utilities

Utility costs vary greatly depending on usage, how many roommates you have, and if any utilities are included in your rent. Before you move in, ask your landlord or property manager which companies currently manage your utilities so you can call the companies for an estimate of the monthly bills. More information on utilities can be found here, alongside options for comparing Internet plans and utility bundles

Furnishing

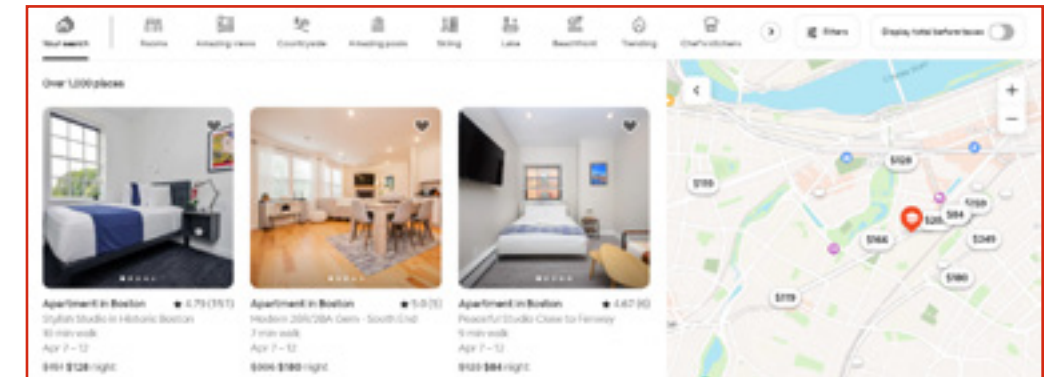
Not all apartments will come with furnished rooms and require you to purchase or lease furnishing separately. If you want to avoid purchasing, moving, or storing furniture for long-term use, **renting furniture can be a great option**. Additionally, online shopping and local stores can save you time and effort by delivering items straight to you!

According to the cost of living index, nearly all of the cities and towns surrounding Boston are significantly more expensive than the national cost of living. Much of this stems from housing costs, so make sure that you budget accordingly to cover your financial needs

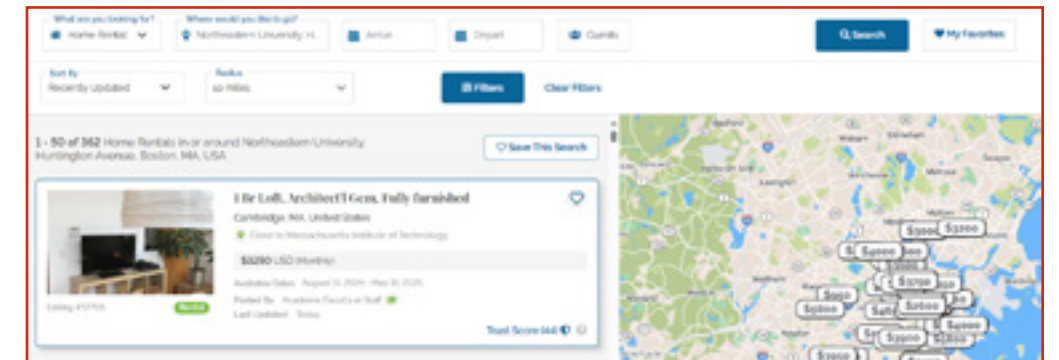
Short-term housing generally refers to housing for a period less than one year, but it can also be as short as a few days. It is recommended that you secure temporary housing prior to arriving in Boston so you have a place to stay once you arrive and while you look for long-term housing. Visit [Northeastern's temporary housing page](#) for contact info and pricing of several options

Many long-term housing websites will include short-term housing options. There are also additional options for short-term housing:

AirBnB
AirBnB is a source for rooms or apartment rentals for a few days, weeks, or months



Sabbatical Homes
Sabbatical Homes is a source for the academic community for home exchanges, rentals, and sharing opportunities

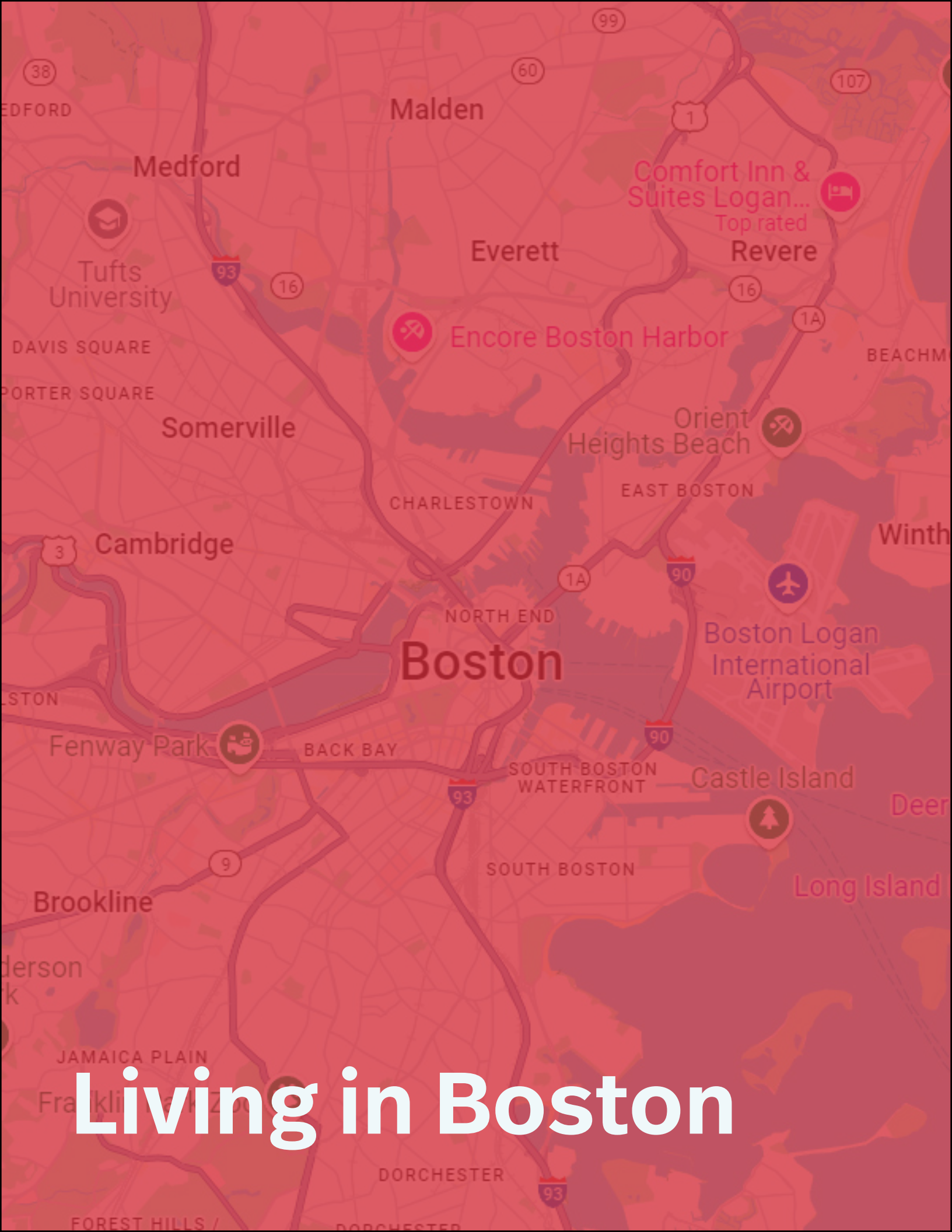


General Pointers

When making contacts about housing you will be speaking with a landlord, potential housemate, outgoing tenant, etc. Be sure to mention that you are a researcher. Researchers are generally perceived as highly responsible, thus desirable tenants

In a first email you may want to include the following information:

- Bio information: age, gender, nationality
- Workplace info: location, start date, length of stay, schedule, expected arrival date
- Educational background
- Hobbies and interests
- Experience living in shared spaces
- Roommate preferences
- Basic contact info



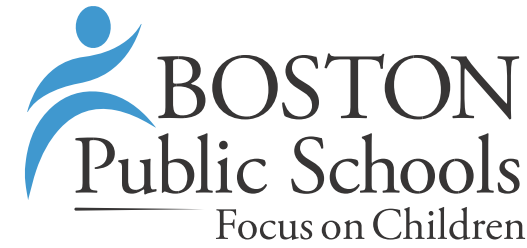
Living in Boston

Family Matters

Some J-1 Scholars travel for work with their families, and their well-being is important to us as they adapt to living in Boston. The Office of Global Services has a comprehensive list of resources that you and your family may find helpful

Education

Primary and secondary education in the U.S. falls under the umbrella of each state:



The **Boston Public Schools website** offers practical information on how to register children for school and enroll them for the academic term



The **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website** offers general information about the state's education structure

Childcare

If you are exploring childcare options, some helpful resources include:



The **Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care**



Child Care Choices of Boston

Resources for Spouses/Partners

There are a variety of resources that Northeastern provides spouses or partners that can be utilized while in the U.S. A **list of additional resources is available on the OGS website**

Study at Northeastern

Spouses and partners with J-2 visas are able to study part-time or full-time at Northeastern University and may be eligible to receive work authorization. **Reach out to OGS** for more details

Husky Card

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The Husky Card is the official identification card at Northeastern University, and it is issued to students, faculty, and other individuals affiliated with the school

Along with identification, the Husky Card is also used for building access, parking, printing, dining services, and more. The Husky Card can also be used as a debit card. When you add money to your Husky Dollar account, you will be able to pay for food and services at many locations in and around the university

Please note that you are eligible to apply for a Northeastern ID card, called a 'Husky Card' to access services on campus. You can find information about where and how to apply [here](#)

Northeastern Husky Card



Address

Husky Card Services
4 Speare Commons - Lower Level
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Contact Information

Phone: +1 (617)-373-8740
Email: huskycard@northeastern.edu

State Issued IDs

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To be eligible for any of the State Issued IDs, your DS-2019 must be at least 12 months in length. Massachusetts offers three different types of IDs:

Driver's License

To obtain a Massachusetts driver's license, you must go to a Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) office and obtain a learner's permit by taking a written test. Later on, you will need to take a road test to obtain the actual license. For more information, [click here](#)



Massachusetts ID Card

Massachusetts ID cards are issued to non-drivers who are residing in Massachusetts. In order to apply for a Massachusetts ID card, you must apply in person at a RMV office. Please note that the 12-month immigration document rule does not apply. For more information, [click here](#)



Liquor ID Card

Liquor ID cards are for individuals 21 years or older who want to purchase alcohol. In order to apply for a Liquor ID, you must apply in person at a RMV office. Please note that the 12-month immigration document rule does not apply, for more information, [click here](#)



Required documents for obtaining a State Issued ID:

- Proof of visa status (DS-2019)
- Copy of most recent I-94
- Social Security Number or Denial Letter
- Proof of Massachusetts residency (except for Liquor ID Card)
- Proof of date of birth
- Proof of signature
- Completed application
- Payment

Banking

Having a U.S. bank account will make managing your finances much easier. When you open a bank account in the U.S., there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Look at the location of the branch offices and ATMs
2. Compare banks' monthly fees, writing check fees, and whether a bank requires a minimum balance
3. Most bank operations can be done online, but it is advised to go to a nearby bank office and speak to a customer service representative if you want to open an account
4. Present two forms of identification to open an account. Passports and visas can be accepted documents, as well as proof of a local address or bill
5. Ask for an international operations sheet that includes the American Bankers Association (ABA) Routing, SWIFT code, and an address to receive foreign wire transfers

Banks offer checking accounts, savings accounts, debit cards, and credit cards to their customers

- Checking accounts can be used to write paper checks to pay bills or to pay bills online
- Savings accounts do not usually have check-writing privileges
- Debit cards take funds in your checking account for cash withdrawals at ATMs

Credit Cards

For getting a U.S. credit card, check the credit terms carefully. You will most likely need a Social Security Number. Recommended commercial banks include:



Bank of America
133 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02115



CitiBank
532 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215



Citizens Bank
141 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02115



TD Bank
535 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116



Santander Bank
279 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02115



Chase Bank
280 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

MBTA

The **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)** is one of the largest public transit systems in the country. Northeastern University's Boston campus is directly served by the MBTA's Orange and Green subway lines, and multiple bus lines. The Green Line E train stops at Northeastern on Huntington Ave in front of the Marino Center. The Orange Line stops at Ruggles. The Franklin, Needham, and Providence/Stoughton Lines of the Commuter Rail also stop at Ruggles



Biking

Biking is a great way to exercise and save money on your commute to campus. Your safety and convenience are important to Northeastern, as we provide bike racks throughout campus and offer bike registration through the NUPD. There is also the convenience of Boston's bike share program with BlueBikes for those who want the flexibility it offers





Northeastern University Police Department numbers

NON-EMERGENCY: 617-373-2121

EMERGENCY: 617-373-3333

Northeastern has **NU ALERT**, a service that allows the administration to reach all students and staff with time-sensitive information during unforeseen events or emergencies. The system uses voice, e-mail, and text messaging to broadcast pertinent information and, when appropriate, provide directions. Your myNortheastern information is your link to NU ALERT, so please keep your information up-to-date.

General safety tips for walking and exercising:

- Avoid walking or jogging alone (especially at night)
- Use well-lit, familiar streets. (Never take poorly lit shortcuts through alleyways or wooded areas)
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Avoid using cell phones or listening to music with headphones. (Plan your route and walk confidently)

The **Northeastern University Police Department** also offers assistance with all areas of campus and personal safety, including sexual assault and harassment, identity theft, and online safety. Register your laptop with the STOP Theft Registration [here](#)

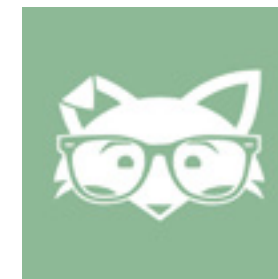
When choosing a cellular plan, there are many options available that can fit your needs. This includes contract and prepaid plans across multiple phone companies. Below is a brief overview to help you navigate your options:

- A prepaid plan means that you pay for your phone usage from the start of a billing cycle, depending on how much data you plan to use. These plans can be customized based on the number of minutes, texts, or gigabytes of data you want to use
- A contract plan is a fixed contract that provides you service for a period of time (typically 2 years) and allows you to choose monthly plans that give you certain amounts of cellular coverage and data. This is a common option from many of largest cellular networks, including Verizon and T-Mobile

Some carrier options include:



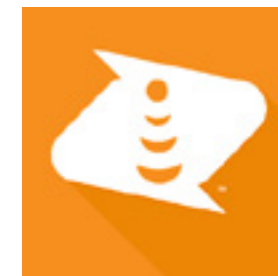
AT&T



Mint Mobile



T-Mobile



Boost Mobile



Verizon



Tracfone



**We hope you have a wonderful
and fulfilling experience at
Northeastern!**

