



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

ISO VIRTUAL FORUM: VISA PROCESSING/ TRAVEL

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022
9:30AM – 10:30AM



ISO VIRTUAL FORUMS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The MIT International Students Office will host several Virtual Forums this summer for **all incoming and continuing international students** to provide information on visa and travel questions, as well as address general issues and questions. In addition to prepared remarks, the ISO will address any pre-submitted questions in advance of the Virtual Forums, and, if time available, will answer questions posed during the Virtual Forums.

Zoom link: <https://mit.zoom.us/j/91868510207>

Pre-submit questions: <https://tinyurl.com/bmk7anz2>

*Same recurring Zoom link and same link to pre-submit questions each time. Kerberos required.

VISA & TRAVEL ISSUES

Thurs, June 23

9:30 - 10:30am

OPEN FORUM

Wed, July 27

7:00 - 8:00 pm

*All times listed are in
Eastern Time Zone
(Cambridge, MA time)

ISO Virtual Forum – Slides/Recordings

- ❑ Slidedecks and Audio/Video Recording of the 2022 ISO Virtual Forums can be accessed on the ISO Student Content Access webpage:
<https://iso.mit.edu/testing-publication-page-behind-kerberos/>
- ❑ Will also post a link on the ISO “Orientation Program” webpage: <https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/orientation-program/>
- ❑ Slidedecks/recordings will be posted a few days after each session



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Student Visa Types

<https://iso.mit.edu/visas-and-travel/visa-categories/>

- All incoming students who are not legal US Permanent Residents (Green Card holders). or US citizens, are required to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility to undertake a program of study in the US. Canadian citizens are exempt from having to apply for a visa at a US Consulate or Embassy abroad prior to entry to the US; however, they are required to enter the US on a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form or DS 2019 and be granted the student **visa status**.

- **F-1** student visa requirements to apply for an **I-20 form** (Certificate of Eligibility for an F-1 visa application)
 - **Funding** can be from any source.
 - No home residency requirement after graduation before being eligible for other visa statuses.
 - Dependents apply for F-2 visa [only spouses (with Marriage certificates) and dependent children are eligible].
 - Dependents (F-2) are **ineligible** to apply for any type of work permission.
 - Dependents (F-2) can study **part-time** in a degree program in the US.
 - F-1 may apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) upon completion of first two semesters (Fall + Spring) to pursue an academically approved internship during the summer semester (only); dates restricted to summer semester. **Authorization** is always required.
 - F-1 students may apply for 12 months Optional Practical Training (OPT) in their major field of study upon completion of degree program, to pursue an internship or work experience in their field of study, **providing the student did not apply for OPT after completion of a former degree at the same level**.



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Student Visa Types

<https://iso.mit.edu/visas-and-travel/visa-categories/>

- **J-1** student visa requirements to apply for a **DS-2019 form** (Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 visa application)
 - ▣ **Funding** must be substantially (51%) funded by **non-personal/family** funds (loans are considered personal funds and cannot be used to fulfill the J-1 funding requirement).
 - ▣ Dependents apply for J-2 visa [only spouses (with marriage certificates) and dependent children are eligible].
 - ▣ Dependents (J-2) are **eligible** to apply for work permission anywhere in the US. It takes approximately 3 months to obtain approval from USCIS, applying for work permission only after arrival to the U.S. (must have approval prior to beginning any employment activity).
 - ▣ Dependents (J-2) can study **part-time or full-time** in a degree program in the US.
 - ▣ J-1 students may apply for up to 18 months or length of academic program, whichever is shorter, of Academic Training work permission in their major field of study
 - ▣ Potential restrictions after graduation – 212E (Two-year Home Residency requirement), that applies to some J visa holders, must be fulfilled or waived before being eligible for certain other visa statuses in the US.



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New Admit Visa Documents

- Newly Admitted Student Information – “Getting Started” (<https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/>)
- iMIT (<http://imit.mit.edu>)
 - ▣ MIT ISO Online Portal
 - ▣ Log in to “Full Client Services for Students”
 - ▣ “Admission” menu to request visa document
 - “New F-1 Student Application” (Form I-20)
 - “J-1 Application for New Student” (Form DS-2019)
 - Complete ALL eforms in the application menu
- International students will need MIT Kerberos ID before submitting their application for a Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019) on **iMIT**
- Document requests can be submitted in iMIT for Fall 2022 arrival as of **April 15, 2022**



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New Admit Visa Documents

- ❑ Certificate of Eligibility processing time = 15 business days
- ❑ Students will be sent electronic copy of Form I-20 to download, sign, print and use to apply for entry visa and enter the U.S.
- ❑ J-1 visa applicants will be express mailed a paper original Form DS-2019
- ❑ New students can arrive to the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the start of their first term at MIT
 - ❑ Fall 2022 Registration Day on September 6, 2022
(arrive to U.S. no earlier than August 7, 2022)



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“Getting Started”



[Pre-Arrival Checklist](#)

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Congratulations on your admittance to MIT!

As you begin to think about your trip to Cambridge, we would like to offer you some important information that will be helpful in your planning. This entire “Getting Started” section of our web site, including “Requesting an I-20 or DS-2019,” “Obtaining a Visa,” and “Arrival at MIT Checklist,” will be useful to you. We hope that you will take the time to review this online guide carefully, as it should answer many of the questions that you may have. While you read, keep in mind that information often differs for undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree students. We will try to present procedures clearly for all groups of students. Upon arrival, you will receive much more information and have opportunities to attend orientation sessions. Best wishes as you plan your travel to MIT. We look forward to seeing you in Cambridge.

iMIT: ISO International Student Portal



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iMIT Services Home Page

Technology is key to our proactive approach. Our information services and experienced staff enable efficient management of student data, and our portal provides individualized, web-based services. The following are the types of online services available for international students: Update your institutional information, update your I-20/DS-2019 forms, work authorization, sign-up for sessions, and more.

****IMPORTANT NOTICE:****

- The "**Save Draft**" and "**Cancel**" options are currently out of service on most eForms. **We kindly ask that you do not utilize these buttons.** We will update you once they are fixed. Any questions or issues, please contact iso-help@mit.edu.
- **Fall 2021 Applications will not be open in iMIT until April 15th, 2021.**

 **Notifications**



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iMIT: ISO International Student Portal

**MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**



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Financial Support Documentation

<https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/requesting-an-i-20-or-ds-2019/financial-documentation-requirements/>

- ❑ Costs of Attendance
 - ❑ Tuition
 - ❑ Student Activity Fee
 - ❑ Health Insurance
 - ❑ Living Expenses for Students
 - ❑ Additional Living Expenses and Health Insurance for dependent family members (required)
- ❑ Guidance on accepted documentation, for both I-20/DS-2019 issuance and to present to U.S. Embassy/Consulate at visa interview and to U.S. Customs and Border Protection upon entry to the U.S.
- ❑ Financial documentation must be submitted at time of Form I-20/DS-2019 request in iMIT
 - ❑ If financial support changes, students notify ISO in iMIT to request an updated Form I-20/DS-2019



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Estimated Costs of Attendance

- Tuition for at least the first 12 months (or length of program if shorter)
- Health Insurance for 12 months
- Student Activity Fee
- Living Expenses for student for at least 12 months (\$3,205 per month for student only)
- Additional Living expenses for spouse (or no spouse and child only) - approximately \$12,800 per year (required by regulations)
- Additional Living expenses for 1st child - approximately \$6,000 per year
 - \$3,500 per year for each additional child (required by regulations)
 - Plan for additional costs for childcare services
- Additional Health insurance for dependents (required by regulations) – approximately additional \$3,200 per year for family plan



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New Admit Visa Documents

- Individuals already in the US
 - F-1: Coordinate process of SEVIS Transfer
 - J-1: Determine if SEVIS Transfer or Change of Exchange Visitor Category is necessary
 - H-1B or other status: Change of Status to F-1 application within U.S.
 - Certain statuses can start classes while COS application is pending, but cannot pursue any employment until COS is approved
 - B-1/B-2: may NOT begin classes until COS is approved
 - F-2 to F-1: may only pursue part-time study until F-1 is approved



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SEVIS Transfers

- Only students currently in the U.S. on Student visas (F-1 and J-1 status, including ESL programs), and not planning to depart the U.S. before starting the MIT program of studies, are eligible to have their current school **Transfer** their SEVIS record to MIT (for same visa status to study at MIT).
- Start date at MIT must be within 5 months of end date of previous degree program completion or end date of previously approved F-1 OPT/J-1 Academic Training
- “Other information for MIT” eform in iMIT Certificate of Eligibility Request must be completed; forwards electronic notification to current school
- Students who have already departed the US are not eligible for a SEVIS transfer



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Change of Status

- (1) **Apply Change of Status to USCIS from inside the U.S.**
 - Students currently in the US may be eligible to apply for a Change of Status to a student visa type (F-1 or J-1), by filing application to USCIS (Form I-539)
 - Change of Status applications with USCIS currently taking approximately 12+ months for approval. On-campus work is not permitted until COS to F-1/J-1 status has been approved.
- OR**
- (2) **Depart the U.S.**
 - Alternatively, an applicant can depart the US, apply for the student visa at the US Embassy/Consulate abroad, and enter the U.S. to have the student visa status granted upon entry
- H-1B, L-1A and L-1B visa holders who want to remain in this status are required to upload to iMIT a letter from their employer stating that as part of the visa status a full-time course of study in the MIT is permitted. Consultation with the employer/employer's immigration counsel is advised.
 - Please remember that student visa benefits are not permitted for non-student visa holders (including on-campus/off-campus employment).



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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- ❑ Instructions on scheduling visa interviews, and status updates, can be accessed on the US Embassy/Consulate website where you will apply (<http://usembassy.gov>)
- ❑ Canadian Citizens are NOT required to get a student entry visa from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate (require Form I-20/Form DS-2019)
- ❑ Consulates resuming visa services will depend on staffing levels and any COVID-19 stay-home regulations in the host country
- ❑ Also see ISO “Obtaining a Visa” webpage: <https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/obtaining-a-visa/>
- ❑ Per U.S. Department of State, consulates will attempt to prioritize student visa applications based on resources and local conditions.



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Visa Interview Guidance

- ❑ Once receive your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from the ISO, you can then schedule your visa interview appointment
- ❑ Schedule interview time for whatever time is available, even if after your planned program start date at MIT
- ❑ Procedure to request earlier visa interview time (“Expedited Interview Appointment”) only possible when have an initial time scheduled (no guarantee time can be changed)
 - NOT “Emergency Appointments”
- ❑ MIT is NOT able to request an Expedited Interview on a student’s behalf



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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- ❑ Visa Applications still subject to security check procedures (Administrative Processing)
 - ❑ NOT possible to request expedite of Administrative Processing (security checks)
 - ❑ Embassy/Consulate does NOT have control over Administrative Processing (U.S. State Department and other government agencies in the U.S. responsible for these security check procedures) – Embassy/Consulate also waiting for a decision
- ❑ Consulate cannot issue visa more than 120 days prior to program start date listed on Form I-20/DS-2019
- ❑ Students who attended a previous U.S. institution, and the Student visa issued in passport is still valid, could use that visa to enter the U.S. (as long as entering the U.S. in the same status) – please consult your ISO Advisor
- ❑ Students may NOT enter the U.S. in tourist visa status and pursue studies (would be required to depart the U.S. and re-enter in Student visa status)



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Administrative Processing

- Any visa application at US Embassy/Consulate, or application for immigration benefit (with USCIS), may undergo Administrative Processing (also called “Security Advisory Opinion”)
 - Application information forwarded to U.S. Dept. of State, then forwarded on to an undisclosed number of security agencies (e.g. FBI, CIA, NSA, DNI, DOS, DHS, etc.)
 - Multiple levels of Administrative Processing based on:
 - Country of birth/citizenship
 - Field of Study or Research / purpose of visit
 - Travel history
 - Employment history
 - Academic background
 - Family
 - Administrative Processing is not cleared until all security agencies respond back to U.S. Dept of State affirmatively that the individual has cleared their security check procedures
 - no maximum time limit – no path to expedite



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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

□ Tracking New Student Visa Processing

- ▣ ISO developing two eforms for New Students to report status of visa processing:

- Visa Interview Scheduled

- Date of Visa Interview
- Visa Status Requested
- Consular Post City and Country

- Visa Issued (visa and passport received from U.S. Embassy/Consulate)

- Date visa granted / date visa and passport returned to student
- Issue and expiration date of the visa



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iMIT: ISO International Student Portal

**MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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COVID-19 Vaccine/Testing Requirement

- ❑ COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement still in effect
 - ❑ Must have completed full COVID-19 vaccinations required at least 10 days prior to travel to the U.S.
 - ❑ COVID-19 Vaccination guidance:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html>
 - ❑ U.S. Citizens are exempt from this requirement
- ❑ [Effective June 12, 2022](#), a negative COVID-19 test prior to travel to the U.S. is **no longer required**
- ❑ CDC Quick Reference Guide for Travel to the United States: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel/index.html>

No Religious Exemption, Limited Medical Exemption, to Vaccine Requirement

- ❑ Presidential Proclamation/USDHS Guidance does **NOT provide a religious exemption, and very limited medical exemptions**, to the vaccine requirement for entry to U.S.
- ❑ International students currently on-campus and not vaccinated, with either a religious or medical exemption, are advised to meet with their [ISO Advisor](#) before planning travel abroad. Under these terms, travel may not be recommended at this time.
- ❑ For questions about accepted vaccines, please see the following list provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html#covid-vaccines>



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Eligibility for Entry From Countries with Limited COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

- In the Presidential Proclamation, individuals who are citizens of countries where there is a designated limited COVID-19 vaccine availability, may be granted entry and be vaccinated within 60 days of arrival to U.S.
- ONLY AVAILABLE to citizens on list of countries with “Limited COVID-19 Vaccine Availability” as posted by CDC
 - https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html#anchor_1635183102468
- Attestation **NOT** available for anyone who is not yet fully vaccinated due to religious/medical exemption and not on country list above
- Attestation **NOT** available to anyone that is vaccinated by a vaccine not recognized by the CDC or the World Health Organization (WHO) and not on country list above



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Travel Considerations to the U.S.

- Be sure to check airline for specific requirements as you make travel arrangements
- MIT Medical: <https://medical.mit.edu>
- MIT COVID-19 information page, policies: <https://now.mit.edu/>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "International Travel During COVID-19" website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel/index.html>
- MIT will notify students of any updates issued by the U.S. Federal Government or from the Commonwealth (State) of Massachusetts



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Arrival to the U.S.

- ❑ New students may arrive to the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the program term start date
 - ▣ Summer 2022 – within 30 days of start date of your program as listed on your Form I-20
 - ▣ Fall 2022 - arrive August 7, 2022 or later
- ❑ Must arrive to MIT no later than September 28, 2022 for the Fall 2022 semester
 - ▣ ISO must report student arrival and enrollment within 30 days of start of term
 - ▣ Student must arrive, complete orientation, complete registration for classes prior to SEVIS/government reporting
 - ▣ Summer 2022 admits – must arrive by June 27, 2022 (due to the holiday)
- ❑ If cannot arrive by this deadline, must speak with academic program about deferral options



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New Student Eligibility for On-Campus Employment

- International students are eligible for on-campus employment after arrival to the U.S. and the start of their academic term as long as they are enrolled full-time
 - ▣ Work for MIT, at MIT, and paid by MIT
- Eligible for 20 hours per week maximum while school is in session (usually during fall and spring semesters)
- Eligible for more than 20 hours per week during Institute vacation periods (IAP, summer term)
 - ▣ For academic programs that have required coursework during Institute vacation periods, maximum on-campus employment is 20 hours per week
- See detailed info on [ISO Employment](#) webpage



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New Student Eligibility for Off-Campus Internships/Employment

- To be eligible for F-1 CPT or OPT, students must first be enrolled as a full-time student in F-1 status for at least “one full academic year” (combination of Fall + Spring semesters)
 - ▣ Must establish their F-1 student visa status by physically arriving to the U.S. and pursuing on-campus instruction
 - ▣ A remote instruction term abroad does NOT currently count towards eligibility for F-1 CPT or OPT
- J-1 visa holders must meet academic training eligibility requirements
- See detailed info on the [ISO Employment](#) webpage



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ISO Online Resources

- ❑ ISO Website: <https://iso.mit.edu>
- ❑ ISO “Getting Started”: <https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/>
- ❑ ISO “Visas and Travel”: <https://iso.mit.edu/visas-and-travel/>
- ❑ ISO “Employment”: <https://iso.mit.edu/employment/>
- ❑ MIT Immigration Alerts & Updates: <https://iso.mit.edu/news-and-announcements/major-immigration-updates/>
- ❑ ISO Advisor Point-of-Contact: <http://iso.mit.edu/about/student-advisor.shtml>
- ❑ ISO Knowledge Base: <https://iso.mit.edu/knowledge-base/>



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ISO Summer Office Hours

- ISO Staff working Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, with a hybrid in-person/remote schedule
- **ISO In-Person/Walk-In Office Hours**
 - ▣ June 27-August 5, 2022
 - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays: 10:00am-3:00pm
 - Wednesdays, Fridays: ISO Staff Fully Remote /No Walk-In Hours
 - ▣ August 8, 2022 onward
 - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 10:00am-3:00pm Eastern U.S. Time
 - Wednesdays: 1:00pm-3:00pm Eastern U.S. Time
- Online services continue to be primary service mechanism (document processing, Advisor appointments via Zoom, iMIT, programming)
- ISO, and most MIT offices, CLOSED on the following dates:
 - ▣ Friday, July 1 and Monday, July 4 (Independence Day Holiday)



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Life at MIT Resources

- ❑ “Life at MIT” webpage: <https://iso.mit.edu/life-at-mit/>
- ❑ Transitioning to MIT
 - ❑ Connect with Student Cultural Groups
 - ❑ Obtain SIM card before arrival to US
 - ❑ Understanding Tipping
- ❑ Cultural Adjustment
 - ❑ Understand Culture Shock and the 4 adjustment phases
 - ❑ Americanisms (Hi, how are you?...and what it really means, etc.)
 - ❑ Idioms (The ball is in your court, etc.)
- ❑ Programs & Events
 - ❑ Orientation events in conjunction with GSC; Grad Welcome Social
 - ❑ ISO Programs - “Navigating MIT” Series and Afternoon Breaks
 - ❑ Partner Programs- Language Conversation Exchange (LCE)
- ❑ Subscribe to ISO Newsletter (you will automatically be subscribed in Fall 2022, but you can subscribe for summer)



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Pre-Submitted Questions



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Pre-Submitted Questions

Must I arrive in the US within the 30 days before the start of the program even if I have a valid B1/B2 visa?

- ❑ Do NOT enter the U.S. in tourist (B-1/B-2/Tourist Visa Waiver) status – would need to leave the U.S. and make new entry in your F-1 or J-1 student status, with that entry visa for that status issued by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate,, before start of academic term
- ❑ F-1 and J-1 visa holders may enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to program start date (for Fall 2022, may enter no earlier than August 7, 2022)



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Pre-Submitted Questions

Do we need to receive our I20 on the mail to proceed with booking the Visa Interview Appointment? I still haven't received my I20 and interview slots are very scarce over the following months. I'm afraid I won't be able to book it before my departure date (Aug 26th). Can F-1 visa students receive priority when booking interviews?

Forms I-20 will be provided electronically for students to download, print, and sign to use as the original document. No separate paper copy will be mailed to students by the MIT ISO.

For students being issued Forms DS-2019 to apply for J-1 visas, the Forms DS-2019 cannot be sent electronically (by regulation) and will therefore be express mailed.

While the U.S. Embassy/Consulate will try to prioritize student visa applications, it is dependent upon staffing and interview availability at each Embassy/Consulate.



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Pre-Submitted Questions

I need to apply for emergency visa appointment. Can the ISO provide a letter of support stating why I have to be in the US before classes start and attend the orientation in August? If so, how do I request the letter?

As mentioned earlier in the presentation, some U.S. Embassies/Consulates may have available the ability for students to submit a request for an “Expedited Interview” if the interview appointment you are originally able to schedule is after your needed arrival date at MIT. (NOTE: “Emergency Appointments” are different and not available for student visa applications).

No letter from MIT is required; students can present a copy of their letter of admission to MIT, and the ISO Welcome Letter, which includes the term arrival date.



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Pre-Submitted Questions

What documents should I bring to my F1 visa interview in addition to the ones mentioned on my DS160 confirmation page?

Please follow the instructions provided by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate for your visa interview. Additional information is available on the ISO “Obtaining a Visa” webpage (<https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/obtaining-a-visa/>).



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Pre-Submitted Questions

How does the Customs check during immigration at the airport look like? Is there anything we need to prepare for it?

The ISO does provide guidance on our “Entering the U.S.” webpage (<https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/entering-the-us/>).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) also provides the following helpful resources:

*Travel Guidance for International Visitors (including students):

<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors>

*The CBP Inspection Process infographic:

https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cbp_inspection_proces_2.pdf

*A general video to see what entry to the U.S. may be like at your U.S. port-of-entry is available here: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/video-gallery/2015/01/youve-arrived>



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Pre-Submitted Questions

I have a valid F-1 entry from my previous degree program in the U.S., can I use it to enter the US with my new I-20 from MIT? The SEVIS ID on my valid F-1 does not match that on my new I-20, is this OK?

Yes, you can use a previously valid visa, for the same status, to enter the U.S. to begin your program of study at MIT

- <https://iso.mit.edu/knowledge-base/i-have-a-valid-f-1-visa-issued-by-the-us-consulate-from-attending-my-previous-school-do-i-need-to-apply-for-a-new-visa-at-the-us-consulate-before-starting-at-mit/>



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Pre-Submitted Questions

I just got admitted into SDM graduate program. I will have an in-person orientation from 8/22-9/1 this year. However, I am going to study remotely for the next year. I will come to campus in-person the following year. In this case, when should I request the I-20 form? Should I request it next year or I should request it now?

Please contact your ISO Advisor for the SDM program to discuss details. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) has indicated that an individual entering the U.S. to pursue a degree program must enter the U.S. in student visa status (F-1 or J-1), and therefore would need to request a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 to apply for a student entry visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate to enter the U.S. for study. Canadian Citizens would not need to apply for an F-1 or J-1 entry visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate, but would need to have the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from MIT ISO to enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 student visa status.



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Pre-Submitted Questions

When will I be able to move into my on-campus housing? Is it possible to move in earlier?

Once you accept your on-campus housing assignment, your move-in date will be confirmed. In many cases, it is not possible to accommodate an earlier arrival, so please plan your arrival to the U.S. and your housing accordingly. If you have questions, or wish to inquire about an earlier arrival date, please see the following contact resources for MIT Housing & Resident Services resources:

Graduate Students: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing>

Undergraduate Students:
<https://studentlife.mit.edu/undergraduates>



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Pre-Submitted Questions

When is the last day I can be employed in another country based on F1 visa restrictions and based on MIT's rule for PhD students if there are any? (I'm wondering whether I can use unused vacation days from my current fulltime job during the first week at MIT.)

Students are expected to arrive to the U.S. in time for mandatory orientation activities. Once students are inside the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 student visa status, you are **NOT** allowed to pursue employment (even with your employer abroad). If you are physically inside the U.S. you must have employment authorization to pursue any employment not at MIT, for MIT, and paid by MIT. As new students are not eligible to pursue any other employment in their first academic year of their program of study, students will need to end employment before arriving to campus.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

My visa was checked and in this case, the visa only have 1-year validity. I was wondering how might that impact my entry to the US after one year, for example, when I travel during my OPT extension periods.

Entry visas issued by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate are issued on a “reciprocity” schedule (same length as a U.S. Citizen would get a similar visa to enter your country. The entry visa may not be issued for the full length of your program of study, and that is fine. The entry visa is for entry purposes to the U.S. – like a ticket to enter the U.S. Once you are inside the U.S. your entry visa can expire and you can remain in the U.S. as long as you are maintaining your Student status as long as they are enrolled as a full-time student, have a valid passport, valid Form I-20/Form DS-2019, and a valid I-94 arrival record. You would just need to apply for a new entry visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad the next time you depart the U.S. and would need to re-enter the U.S. in your student visa status (including during a period of Post-degree-Completion Optional Practical Training).

Additional guidance is available in the following ISO Knowledge Base article:

<https://iso.mit.edu/knowledge-base/my-entry-visa-in-my-passport-is-expiring-soon-do-i-need-to-leave-the-u-s-and-obtain-a-new-visa-before-it-expires/>



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

When is the last day that I can be on OPT (authorized through my current institution)? I'm currently in the US and planning to transfer my SEVIS records around 8/1. Is this a reasonable timeframe or should I plan an earlier transfer?

The last day you can work on your OPT authorization will be the day before you must be on-campus at MIT to attend your mandatory orientation programs.

If you are finishing your OPT authorization, or degree program, within 5 months of the start date of your first day of classes at MIT, you can transfer your SEVIS record to MIT and remain in the U.S. between your finishing date of degree/OPT and your start date at MIT. Note that you cannot work between the end date of your previous degree/OPT and your start date at MIT, but you can remain in the U.S. until you start at MIT.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

Do we need health insurance? What types are acceptable? I have a policy from my home country (or from a sponsoring organization), will this policy be accepted and can I waive the MIT Student Extended Health Insurance Plan?

All full-time students in Massachusetts are required to have health insurance coverage that meets certain minimum requirements. J-1 visa holders have additional requirements as per U.S. Department of State regulations.

MIT does make available a health insurance plan that meets all requirements for international students (the combination of the Basic Student Plan + Extended Student Plan).

More details on the health insurance requirement and the available Student Health Plans at MIT are available here: <https://medical.mit.edu/mit-health-plans/student-health-plans>

If a student has a health insurance plan not from MIT, and wants to request a review to see if that plan will meet MIT, Commonwealth of Massachusetts requirements, and, if required, U.S.

Department of State requirements, a request for a Waiver of the MIT plan can be submitted.

Guidance on requesting a waiver is available here: <https://medical.mit.edu/faqs/faq-waivers>

If the plan will not meet all requirements, an international student will be billed for the MIT Basic Student Plan + Extended Student Plan to meet health insurance requirements.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

My I-20 was issued by MIT without a signature on page 1 (under school attestation). Can I still use this to apply for a visa?

Please contact your ISO Advisor (<https://iso.mit.edu/about-iso/student-advisors-by-program/>) so that we can review your document and see if a corrected document needs to be issued to you. The Form I-20, or Form DS-2019, must have a signature from an MIT ISO official on Page 1 of the document to present at your visa interview and to enter the U.S.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

I paid the SEVIS fee for my F1 visa to enter as a college student. I need to re-do the F1 visa application process for grad school at MIT as I travelled outside the US and my visa expired after college. Do I need to pay the SEVIS fee again too?

If the SEVIS ID number on your MIT Form I-20 (or Form DS-2019) is the same as on your previous entry visa (and Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from your previous degree program), then you do NOT need to pay the SEVIS Fee again.

If your MIT Form I-20/Form DS-2019 has a different SEVIS ID Number, then yes, you will need to pay the SEVIS Fee again after you receive your MIT Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 and prior to applying for your new visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate and entering the U.S.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

My in-person visa interview requirement was waived (I am a British citizen using the London US Embassy), and instead they placed me in a "virtual queue" to wait for the Consular Section to tell me they're ready to review my application. The email said it could take "several weeks or months" before I am contacted to mail them my documents for review. Is MIT able to help expedite this in a similar process to the in-person interviews?

Unfortunately, MIT is not able to assist in requesting an expedite of a visa interview. However, we do advise that if it has been more than 30 days since you were last contacted by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate about your status in the "virtual queue", then we recommend you contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate for an update.

Please note that if you were informed your visa application is currently under Administrative Processing, then you will need to wait at least 60 days from that notification to contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate for an update.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

My I20 from undergrad (4 yrs) in an US institution expires on July 2023. Do I need to apply for a new visa and obtain a new SEVIS to enter once I leave for the summer? I will have completed the SEVIS transfer before I leave but will not have obtained the new I20. With the SEVIS transfer successful, will my new I20 have the same SEVIS ID as the one I currently have?

Please contact your [ISO Advisor](#) directly to review your documents and the timing of when your SEVIS record/Form I-20 will be transfer released to MIT so that we can issue your MIT Form I-20. If an I-20 transfer is able to be processed, then the SEVIS ID Number will remain the same on your MIT Form I-20.

If you have a valid F-1 entry visa from your undergraduate program that is still valid for when you plan to re-enter the U.S. to start your MIT program, then you would not need to apply for a new F-1 entry visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate but will need the MIT Form I-20, proof of admission to MIT, and your financial support documentation for your MIT program of study, to be able to enter the U.S. to begin your program at MIT. NOTE: If you have left the U.S., even if a transfer Form I-20 is generated, you would not be able to enter the U.S. any earlier than 30 days prior to the start date of your MIT degree program as listed on the Form I-20.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

Does MIT cover for your travel if you're on a full scholarship? If so, how is it done?

Generally, MIT does not provide additional funds to cover travel expenses as it would be [factored in to a student's financial aid award](#). If you have concerns about being able to afford travel expenses to the U.S., please contact MIT Student Financial Services (SFS) to see about possible options available to assist.

Similarly, Graduate students may contact their admitting department/program to see if additional assistance is available.



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Pre-Submitted Questions

In my I20 form: How to answer to the question "will you attend MIT with your spouse"? Our wedding will be 4 days before the flight to MIT and at the beginning of the semester we will not be officially married in our country (it takes a few months to change the status..). My partner doesn't need a dependent visa.

Additional information is needed to be able to answer this question. Please contact your ISO Advisor (<https://iso.mit.edu/about-iso/student-advisors-by-program/>) for assistance.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

My I-20 is until May, but my program length is longer. Will I need to re-apply for a new I-20 by May?

Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 issued to a newly admitted student should reflect the standard expected program completion date for students in your degree program.

If you are a new, incoming international student, and your Form I-20/Form DS-2019 does not reflect the correct expected program completion date, please contact your ISO Advisor (<https://iso.mit.edu/about-iso/student-advisors-by-program/>) for assistance.



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Pre-Submitted Questions

When can we collect our student IDs?

New students can obtain their Student ID card at the MIT Atlas Service Center after arrival on-campus.

Detailed information is available on the Atlas Service Center website: <https://idcard.mit.edu/>



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

Will we have to open a US bank account and if yes will we get some infos/tips on it?

It is recommended that student's open a U.S. bank account after arrival on campus. New students should prepare to have sufficient funds for their first few weeks in the U.S. while they set up their account (note that wire transfers from banks abroad can take a few days).

Information on banking are available on the ISO "Life At MIT" webpage available here:

https://iso.mit.edu/how_to_guide/banking/



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

Is it preferable to get a SIM card before arrival to the U.S.?

Students have advised that if they have their own phone that they are bringing to the U.S. that it may be beneficial to have a SIM card prior to arrival so as to have service as soon as you arrive to the U.S. Some students will continue with that service, or may look to other providers if they are looking to purchase a new phone after arrival to the U.S. It is up to you.

Additional information about cellphones/SIM cards are available on the ISO website:

https://iso.mit.edu/how_to_guide/obtain-a-us-cell-phone/



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

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Pre-Submitted Questions

Will we have to pay taxes/How do we proceed?

Students are subject to taxes on income earned in the U.S. Everyone in the U.S., whether you have earned income or not, are also required to file an annual income tax return each year (filing date is on or about April 15 each year).

The ISO provides access to free software to file your annual income tax return forms.

MIT also has great resources and payroll and tax issues impacting international students (<https://vpf.mit.edu/tax-guidance-for-nonresident-aliens>), which can also be accessed on the ISO Tax Information webpage:

<https://iso.mit.edu/maintaining-status/taxes/>



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

Can campus transportation be provided from Logan International Airport to MIT on-campus facilities?



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

Is there a list of items that we should preferably get from our country for the US?



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-Submitted Questions

I graduated in May but my OPT doesn't start until end of July. Can I leave the US if I am working on a startup idea and don't have a letter of employment?

To re-enter the U.S. on Post-Completion OPT, you must have your Employment Authorization (EAD) card in-hand showing your OPT approval, Form I-20 with travel signature, valid passport, and proof of employment (such as a job offer letter or confirmation of employment). Students who are self-employed, and/or working on their own startup, may find it challenging to document their employment on OPT since they are working for themselves. In these cases, students need to have documentation showing they are working on the startup on OPT. This could be articles of incorporation, documentation of any production or orders for the project that is the startup, proof of fundraising, a lease for office space, order requests and/or payments for services, etc. It can be difficult to document this as a startup, so in certain cases travel may not be recommended.

We recommend you contact your [ISO Advisor](#) to set up an appointment to talk about your travel plans as well as the status of your startup as it relates to documenting your active work actions on OPT.



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ISO Online Resources

- ❑ ISO Website: <https://iso.mit.edu>
- ❑ ISO “Getting Started”: <https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/>
- ❑ ISO “Visas and Travel”: <https://iso.mit.edu/visas-and-travel/>
- ❑ ISO “Employment”: <https://iso.mit.edu/employment/>
- ❑ MIT Immigration Alerts & Updates: <https://iso.mit.edu/news-and-announcements/major-immigration-updates/>
- ❑ ISO Advisor Point-of-Contact: <http://iso.mit.edu/about/student-advisor.shtml>
- ❑ ISO Knowledge Base: <https://iso.mit.edu/knowledge-base/>



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Questions?



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