



New England
Conservatory



2020-2021

*International
Student Handbook*

Dear International Student

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the United States and to New England Conservatory. You should feel proud of attending a world-class institution comprised of students and faculty from all over the globe. Each year we welcome over one hundred new international students from more than thirty different countries. You will be joining a diverse group of international students, which comprises over thirty-five percent of the student population at NEC.

This handbook will provide you with important information about issues relevant to you as an international student. Please read it carefully before you arrive at NEC. We are happy to help you with any questions you may have during your preparations to travel to the United States. One of the best parts of our jobs is finally meeting in person the students we correspond with by email and telephone all summer!

Once again, congratulations on your acceptance to New England Conservatory. We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Teeters, Laura Messina, and Yukii Ntumba



Rebecca Teeters
Senior Associate Dean
of Students



Laura Messina
Academic and International
Student Advisor



Yukii Ntumba
Academic and International
Student Advisor

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Before You Leave for the USA: Pre-Departure Preparations

This section discusses immigration procedures you must follow to enter the US. It also provides information on how to get to NEC and suggestions for overnight accommodation.

The F-1 Visa

NEC sponsors international students through the F-1 visa, which is for students who have been accepted for full-time academic study at educational institutions in the US.

You are eligible for the I-20 visa sponsorship form after you have paid the tuition deposit and provided International Student Services with appropriate financial documentation. The I-20 is not a visa. It serves as verification from NEC that you are expected to attend the Conservatory as a full-time student. You must have this form to apply for your visa.

Obtaining your Visa

To obtain your visa, you should go to the nearest US embassy or consulate in your home country. Check the State Department website (<https://www.travel.state.gov>) for specific information about embassy business hours and procedures as these can vary in different countries.

If this is your first student visa application, you will be responsible for paying the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee. This is a \$350 fee that is used to fund the web-based tracking system of all student and exchange visitors. For additional information on

paying this fee, or to find out if you are exempt, visit the SEVIS fee website at <https://www.fmjfee.com>.

You should bring the following documents to your interview:

- Your passport
- Your SEVIS fee receipt
- Your I-20 form
- Proof of financial support (i.e. bank statements, affidavit of support, etc.)

If everything is in order, the immigration official will grant you the visa, and place the visa on one of the pages of your passport. Once you have received the visa, you are legally permitted to enter the US as a student.

While the majority of our students have no difficulty obtaining student visas, there are instances when a student with the right documents listed above will be denied. The most common reason for student visa denial is that the immigration official is not convinced the student plans to return to their home country. Remember: student visas are not granted as a step toward permanent residency in the United States. The best way to prove that you intend to return to your home country is by demonstrating strong family ties there. Again, our students are rarely denied visas, but if you experience any difficulty you should ask for a written reason for the denial and contact International Student Services immediately.

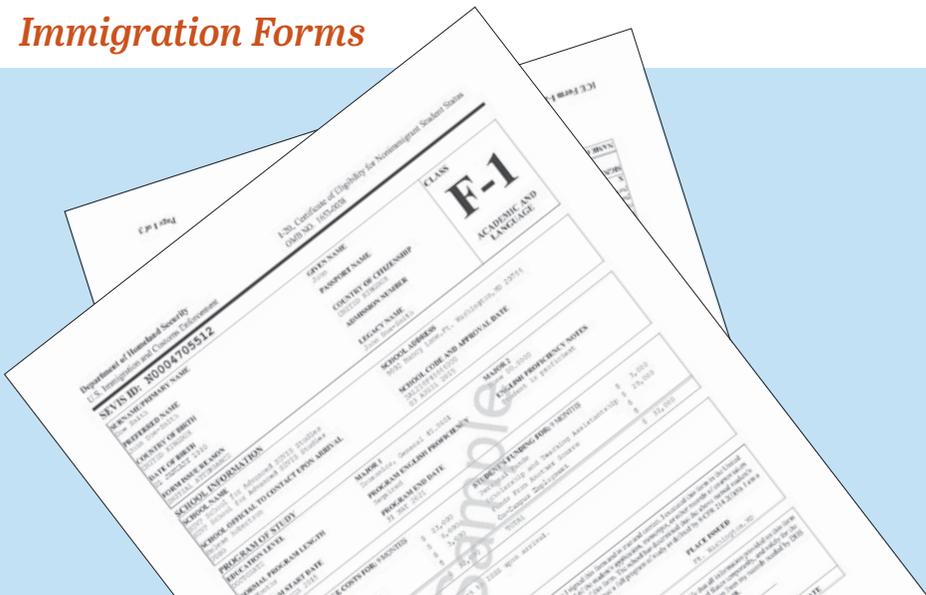
Coming to the United States

When entering the United States, you will pass through an immigration area. Your passport, visa and other documents will be officially reviewed.

You should have the following documents with you; do not check them with your baggage:

- Your passport
- Your visa
- The I-20 form
- Proof of financial support (i.e. bank statements, affidavit of support, etc.)

Immigration Forms



I-20 FORM:

DO NOT LOSE YOUR I-20 FORM. You will receive your own personal admission number on the Form I-20. No one else will receive this number. It will be entered into the SEVIS computer files so that DHS will have a record of your stay in the US. All of your immigration records will be filed under this number; for your own records and safety, you should record this number and keep it separate from your I-20 form.

Transfer students: You may remain in the US on an F-1 visa from another school provided that you transfer your visa sponsorship to NEC. To do this, you must have your previous school release your SEVIS record to New England Conservatory. You will then be issued a "transfer I-20" from NEC, which you may use for travel even if the unexpired visa stamp in your passport is from another school. You must report to your International Student Advisor within the first two weeks of the semester to complete the transfer process.

I-94 FORM AND “DURATION OF STATUS:”

When you travel into the US, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers will review your documents and will indicate the length of time you are permitted to stay in the US and what status you have entered the US CBP will issue you an I-94 number associated with your SEVIS record. If traveling by land, the I-94 will be a white card to be stapled into your passport. If traveling by air or sea, the I-94 will be stamped into your passport as well as online at <https://www.cbp.gov/I-94>. Please be sure to check both the stamp and your online record to ensure that the information matches.

You will probably be admitted to the US for “duration of status.” This means that there is no specific date by which you must leave the US. Instead, you are allowed to remain in the US as long as you maintain your student status with a valid I-20, remain enrolled full-time, and make progress toward your degree or diploma. The CBP officer will mark “D/S” (duration of status) in your passport as well as your visa type (F-1, F-2, J-1, O-1, etc).

The online record at <https://www.cbp.gov/I-94> will also state the information provided on the stamp in your passport. You should confirm that the stamp and the online record match and provide a copy of both to your International Advisor. If the records do not match or there is wrong information on it, see International Student Services immediately.

Customs

Before you land, you will receive customs declaration and immigration forms. Fill these out on the plane, and then submit them to the appropriate US customs authorities after you have landed. If you do not understand the form, ask your flight attendant for assistance.

You will pass through the immigration area, collect your baggage and then go through customs. A customs inspector will ask you to declare what you have brought into the country, inspect your bags, and review the forms you filled out on the plane. Penalties for concealing declarable items can be very severe, so be honest and make a full declaration.

You may bring items for your personal use into the US without paying duty (import taxes). Technically, you are required to pay duty on any other items (such as gifts) not intended for your personal use. However, customs inspectors usually permit a few inexpensive gifts to enter the US duty-free. The individual customs inspector who inspects your baggage makes this determination.

You must declare the amount of money you have with you, but you do not have to pay any duty on it. Money in any amount may be brought into and taken out of the US, but anyone bringing more than \$10,000 into the US must file a report with the customs official.

Coming to NEC

If you will be coming directly to NEC from the airport, you can take either a taxi-cab or the subway (called the "T"). If you have a lot of luggage, a cab will be easiest, but at approximately \$45.00 for a one-way fare, will be considerably more expensive than the subway.

Logan International Airport is served by subway and bus routes operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (known as the MBTA or the "T"). You can take the Silver Line bus service to South Station. From there you can take a subway train on the Red Line Inbound to the Downtown Crossing stop. Here, you can switch to the Orange Line Outbound/Forest Hills train and get off at the Massachusetts Avenue stop. Exit the platform to your right, and NEC is one block up on your right.



Overnight Accommodations

Midtown Hotel

220 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA
(800) 343-1177
One block from NEC

Boston Marriot Copley Place

110 Huntington Ave.
Boston, MA
(800) 228-9290
Three blocks from NEC

Westin Copley Place

10 Huntington Ave.
Boston, MA
(800) 228-3000
Four blocks from NEC

Sheraton Boston

39 Dalton Street
Boston, MA
(800) 325-3535
Three blocks from NEC

The Colonnade

120 Huntington Ave.
(800) 962-3030
Two blocks from NEC

If you arrive at night or before the residence hall opens, you may want to stay in a motel or hotel. The Ramada Airport Hotel ([617] 569-9300) and the Logan Airport Hilton ([617] 569-5250) are located at the airport. To the left are the addresses of hotels close to NEC.

Department of Homeland Security Regulations

You should direct all issues related to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) to your International Student Advisor. Visa regulations change frequently, and may be different depending on your own situation so it is crucial that you get accurate information from the appropriate sources. Be familiar with <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>.

The Boston USCIS office is located at the John F. Kennedy Building in Government Center. Student issues are addressed on the third floor. The telephone number for USCIS is (617) 565-3879. Visit the website at <https://www.uscis.gov>.

The following summary of USCIS regulations applies to all international students who are in the United States on student visas.

Documents

PASSPORTS: Your passport, issued by your government, allows you to leave and re-enter your country. Your passport should always be valid at least six months into the future; if necessary you should have it re-validated by your country's consulate six months before it expires. You can do this within the United States, but do not mail your passport to USCIS.

F-1 (STUDENT) VISA: This visa allows you to travel to the United States. The expiration date on your visa indicates the last day you can enter the United States. If the visa expires while you are studying in the United States, you do not have to get a new visa until you leave; however

you must have it renewed before you may re-enter the US.

You may obtain a visa only outside the United States at a US Embassy or Consulate. To qualify for the F-1 visa you must have an updated I-20 form from NEC.

Please note: If you are a Canadian student, you do not have to apply for a visa stamp at the US Embassy. Simply enter the US with your valid I-20 and Canadian passport.

THE I-94 WITH THE "D/S" STAMP:

You may remain in the US for as long as you maintain your student status, regardless of the expiration date on the visa in your passport. Please see page 4 for details on the I-94.

To remain in legal F-1 status, an international student must:

- Have a valid passport, I-20 Form & I-94 Record
- Register with Student Services and International Student Services at the beginning of each semester
- Be a full-time student during both the Fall and Spring semesters; and
- Participate in off-campus employment only with USCIS permission.

FULL-TIME STATUS: Students must be registered for full-time status during their entire period of study. Exceptions can only be made for medical reasons (with a doctor's written explanation) or during a student's last semester if he/she does not need full-time status to complete degree requirements.

Travel Issues

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENTS: If you are traveling outside the US I-20 forms must be validated every 6 months, or once per semester. You must see your International Student Advisor well in advance (at least one week prior to departure) since it may take time to prepare your I-20 Form. Students who fail to obtain the endorsement signature must have the I-20 Form sent to them in their home country and will be charged for any express mail services. Traveling without a properly endorsed I-20 form may result in a fine and a 30-day entry into the US.

If you leave the United States, make sure you have the following items in your possession:

- Your passport valid for at least six months after your return to the U.S.
- A valid F-1 visa
- An endorsed I-20 Form
- Documentation of financial support.

Travel to Canada: Contact the Canadian Consulate General to see if citizens from your home country are required to obtain a Canadian tourist visa. (Canadian Consulate General, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd fl., New York, NY 10020-1175), or visit the website at <https://www.canadianembassy.org>.

On-Campus Employment

International students are allowed to work in certain on-campus positions for a maximum of 20 hours per week. Any



position titled “student aid” is open to international students. Students must obtain a social security number before they can begin working. In addition, international students must register with the International Tax Advisor in the Business Office. There is no special immigration authorization necessary to work on-campus, however international students should be aware that they must pay state and federal taxes on any money which they earn.

Off-Campus Employment

As an F-1 student, you may be eligible to work off-campus in the field of music as practical training. There are two types of Practical Training available to students. Both types of Practical Training require authorization by USCIS prior to the employment. See your International Student Advisor for authorization details. Both are designed to give students the opportunity to gain meaningful, practical experience that will enrich their academic program. Employment authorization is automatically terminated when the student fails to maintain status.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING:

Curricular Practical Training is a benefit of the F-1 student visa that allows international students to apply and engage in practical training off-campus during their program that is directly related to their programs of study. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) will only be approved if the position is deemed an integral part of the required studio instruction. Students must go through an application process with their International Student Advisor if they wish to pursue off-campus employment. Applications and instructions are provided in International Student Services.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING:

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit of the F-1 student visa that allows international students to apply and engage in optional practical training off-campus during or after their program of study. USCIS authorizes OPT for a period of 12 months per higher degree program. Students must not be unemployed for more than 90 days during OPT. Students must be in F-1 status for at least 9 consecutive months to be eligible for Pre and/or Post Completion OPT. Students must watch the OPT instructional video, pass the OPT quiz, submit their OPT application through their International Student Advisor and USCIS 8-11 weeks prior to the proposed start date of their Practical Training. Full details on OPT are available in International Student Services.



Employment Regulations

Curricular Practical Training

Must be in student status for 9 months (unless graduate student)

Must be sustained employment approved by studio instructor integral to student's studio

Maximum of 20 hours per week during semester. 40 hours during vacation

No maximum on number of months worked

Apply directly to International Student Services

No application fee

Approximately one week waiting period

Must submit documents BEFORE employment starts

Pre-Completion Practical Training

Must be in student status for 9 months

Must be in the field of music

Maximum of 20 hours per week during semester, 40 hours during vacations

Maximum 12 months per higher degree (part-time accrues at 50% rate)

Receive endorsement from International Student Services, apply to USCIS

\$410 application fee

8-11 week waiting period

Post-Completion Practical Training

Must be in student status for 9 months

Must be in the field of music

Maximum of 40 hours per week

Maximum of 12 months per higher degree

Receive endorsement from International Student Services, apply to USCIS

\$410 application fee

8-11 week waiting period

No unemployment for more than 90 days

Economic Hardship Work Authorization

Must demonstrate drastic change to financial circumstance

Does not have to be in the field of music

Maximum of 20 hours per week during semester, 40 hours during vacations

No maximum on number of months worked

Receive endorsement from International Student Services, apply to USCIS

\$410 application fee (may request waiver)

8-11 week waiting period

Program Extensions/Reinstatement of Status

EXTENSION OF STAY:

All international students are expected to complete their program before the expiration date noted on their I-20. This period is four years for non-transferring undergraduates and two years for non-transferring graduate students. Any student who is unable to complete their program before the expiration of their I-20 must request an extension of stay BEFORE the expiration date noted on the I-20 form.

Extensions of stay are granted for legitimate academic problems, changes of major or program, or officially documented medical reasons.

Students may only apply for an extension of stay if they have continuously maintained F-1 status. A student who is unable to complete a program by the date of completion indicated on the I-20 Form because of suspension or academic probation must apply for reinstatement (see below).

Requests for extensions may be done in Student Services through your Academic and International Student Advisor.

REINSTATEMENT OF STATUS:

Students who fall out of status must apply for reinstatement of status through USCIS. Students who need program extensions due to academic probation and/or suspension must also apply for reinstatement of status through USCIS. Students who fail to maintain their status may be denied re-entry to the US.

Students are eligible for reinstatement if:

- The student intends to pursue a full-time course of study;
- The student has not engaged in unauthorized employment; and
- The student is not deportable,
- The circumstances for not completing a program were beyond their control
- The failure to receive reinstatement would result in extreme hardship

To apply for reinstatement of status, submit Form I-539 (available in the Office of Student Services) and a new I-20 Form to the USCIS service center in Vermont.

Student Exchange Visitor Program

The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an international database that stores information on all F-1/F-2 visa holders. Since both the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department have access to this database, it is crucial that the students keep their records updated and accurate. Failure to do so will result in invalidation of the student visa, which may lead to deportation or a ban on re-entering the United States.

The most important thing to remember about your SEVIS record is that you must be in constant communication with your International Student Advisor.

Please see the table below for a listing of activities that must be reported to your International Student Advisor and the deadlines for reporting:

Activity	Reporting Deadline
Check-in/SEVIS Registration	Within two weeks of beginning each semester
Change of Address	Within 10 Days of move
Change of Program/Major	Before change becomes effective
Request to Drop Below Full-Time	Upon Receipt of Dean's Approval
Withdrawal from Program	Before effective Withdrawal Date
Curricular Practical Training	At least 7 days before employments begins
Optional Practical Training	Pre-completion: 8-11 weeks before employment start date Post-completion: 8-11 weeks before employment start date Employer update within 10 days Address within 10 days
Program Extension	Before end date on I-20

NEC Website



There are so many great resources for you here at NEC. One of the best ways to stay informed is to continually check your NEC email and browse through the NEC website. Here are some recommendations to get you started.

Campus Life at NEC: (<https://necmusic.edu/campus-life>) Tons of information on The Penguin (our monthly newspaper), Orientation, Commencement, Student Activities, Housing, Technology, Facilities, Penguin Pass (your student ID), and more!

International Student Website: (<https://necmusic.edu/international-advising>) Continually updated with changing visa regulations, deadlines, and international student focused workshops. Under here, you can find information on staying in status, renewing your F-1 visa, transferring your SEVIS record, and how to apply and obtain Practical Training work authorization.

Entrepreneurial Musicianship (EM): (<https://www.necmusic.edu/em>) Our EM department is a vital resource throughout your studies here at NEC. Through them, you can get connected to career advising, project grants, internships, fellowships, performance projects, paid opportunities, and workshops!

Concerts and Events: (<https://www.necmusic.edu/concerts-events>)

Academic Expectations

American Classes

Deciding to attend college in the US is a big change in your life. It will be highly rewarding but also challenging. There are many cultural differences and small day-to-day changes that you will need to make to be successful. Throughout each semester you will be expected to meet the high musical and academic standards of NEC. Even if you have prior experience of studying in an US institution, international school, or previous college years, there will be many things about NEC that will be different.

There are two semester periods at NEC—Fall (August–December) and Spring (January–May). You are expected to meet with your Academic Advisor, register for courses, attend every class, complete your required assignments, and sit for all required exams. Your academic classes will change every semester based on your program requirements and appropriate level. Some classes will be performance-based while others will be focused on critical-thinking skills and analysis. To be successful at NEC, you will have to balance many different styles of classes and use various study skills in every class.



Grades and Attendance

Grades are very important for your success at NEC. A student's grades receive considerable attention when applying for scholarships, fellowships, graduate programs, and sometimes jobs. The US grading system is different from many countries and can be confusing. You will receive an Academic Catalog at Orientation that explains the NEC grading policies. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your teachers and your Academic Advisors.

Attendance is very important in the US Classroom. You are expected to attend all classes and participate in the classroom discussions. This will earn you points towards your final grade in the class.

On the first day of classes, you will receive a syllabus from your teacher in every class. This syllabus is a contract between you and the teacher that outlines all of the work expected for the entire semester. It will include all of the required readings, what you will be studying, all assignments, and all tests. Read it carefully. It is your job to make sure that you understand the information and you meet all course requirements.

International students sometimes struggle with assignments, particularly if they involve significant reading or writing. Teachers are very understanding of these difficulties but expect for you to ask for help when you need it! They will work with you and help you to find a tutor. NEC has a great Writing Center on campus that provides individual tutoring for you to work on

your writing skills. All students use this resource, not just international students, and find it to be very helpful.

For a complete description of the grading system, see the Academic Catalog.

Academic Advice

You are encouraged to:

- Ask questions! Don't hesitate to ask questions of your teacher either during or after class.
- Ask for extra help from teaching assistants, tutors, or teachers.
- If you find it helpful, ask teachers if you may record lectures. Then you can listen to the lecture again and insure that you have understood the material.
- Take notes, not only during lectures, but also for readings, essays, and homework assignments. When reading required materials use a marking pen or highlighter to identify important points.
- Ask your teacher to identify important information, such as study questions, either in handouts or on the blackboard.
- Ask for help with essays.
- Use the NEC Writing Center.
- Communicate with your Academic Advisors throughout the year.

New England Conservatory Support Services

Office of Student Services & International Student Services

St. Botolph Building, Rm 224 PHONE: (617) 585-1310 FAX: (617) 585-1315

Nick Tatar

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Tom Handel

Chair of D.M.A. Program

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thomas.handel@necmusic.edu

*The Dean, Senior Associate Dean, and
Academic Advisors help students plan
their programs of study, answer curricular
questions, and assist students with any
academic or personal difficulties.*

*Academic and International Student
Advisors help NEC's international
students with immigration regulations,
travel and employment, and sponsors
special programs.*

Registrars's Office

PHONE: (617) 585-1310

*The Registrar's staff maintains
students' academic files and provides
students with transcripts, enrollment
certifications and other documents
related to their academic record.*

Robert Winkley

Registrar

PHONE: (617) 585-1282

Alexander Wolniak

Associate Registrar

PHONE: (617) 585-1281

Intensive English Program and English as a Second Language Program

Room 215, Liberal Arts Office, St. Botolph Building PHONE: (617) 585-1327

Ben Martin-Bean

Intensive English and ESL Instructor

Health and Counseling Center

241 St. Botolph Street, Room 112

NEC's Health and Counseling Services provides timely, comprehensive and high-quality care to both graduate and undergraduate students. We are here to help you stay healthy; physically and emotionally.

Leah McKinnon-Howe

*Administrative Director of Health Services/Nurse Practitioner, DNP, ANP-BC
PHONE: (617) 585-1284*

Squire Paige

*Director of Counseling
PHONE: (617) 585-1284*

Student Housing and Activities Center

241 St. Botolph Street, Room 224

The Student Housing and Activities Center is responsible for operating student organizations, student activities, events and benefits.

Steven C.Sweat

*Director of Residence Life and Housing
PHONE: (617) 585-1284*

The Director of Residence Life and Housing helps residents and students with all aspects of student life at NEC. He works together with six resident assistants assigned to the six floors of the ResHall and two graduate assistants to organize social and cultural activities at the Conservatory.





English Language Requirements

NEC requires a certain level of English competency from non-native speakers of English. We use the TOEFL exam to determine your level of English proficiency. English proficiency can affect your ability to enroll in certain academic classes with the music history and liberal arts departments. Please consult the Academic Catalog and your Academic Advisor for more details.

The below information outlines what TOEFL score and/or ESL classes you will need to take to achieve the required English proficiency at NEC. You may also be required to meet with the ESL Language Instructor for further assessment.

All graduate and undergraduate international students who have earned a TOEFL score of at least 88 at the time of enrollment will be exempt from the Intensive English program and ESL courses at NEC. Please ask your Academic and International Student Advisor for your exact placement.





GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Graduate students who enter NEC with a TOEFL score of 76-81 will be placed into ESL III and those with a score of 82-87 will be placed into ESL IV and may be restricted from certain academic courses until after the ESL requirement is met.

Graduate students who enter NEC with a TOEFL score below 76 will be enrolled in the Fundamentals of ESL (FESL) and may not take other academic courses during the first semester. **This may delay your expected date of graduation.**

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:

Undergraduate students who enter NEC with a TOEFL score of 76-87 will be placed into ESL III and IV courses and may be restricted from certain academic courses until after the ESL requirement is met.

Undergraduate students who enter NEC with a TOEFL score of 61-75 will be placed into ESL I and II courses and may be restricted from certain academic courses until after the ESL requirement is met.

Undergraduate students who enter NEC with a TOEFL below 61 will enroll in the Fundamentals of ESL (FESL) and may not take other academic courses during the first semester. **This may delay your expected date of graduation.**

All international students who have not met NEC's English language requirement are highly encouraged to study English during the summer and submit a new TOEFL score before the start of NEC Orientation.

NEC's school (institutional) code for the TOEFL is: 3659.

TOEFL information is available at <https://www.toefl.org>

Housing and Transportation

Housing

NEC RESIDENCE HALL:

All undergraduate students live in the NEC Residence Hall the first 4 semesters of enrollment at NEC. Other students live in the Residence Hall as space permits. Approximately 30% of the Residence Hall is made up of international students.

Each of the floors has a resident advisor to help students. One is always available in the evenings and during the weekend. The Director of Residence Life and Housing is available weekdays between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

The Residence Hall has a number of student activities throughout the year including ice cream socials, movies, speakers and group discussions.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING:

The Off-Campus Housing Guide is avail-

able on-line through the Student Life link at <https://necmusic.edu/off-campus-housing>. This guide provides important information about pricing, neighborhoods, real estate agents and leases.

Outside listings for apartments or persons seeking roommates appear daily in the Boston Globe, and the Boston Herald and weekly in the Boston Phoenix. On-line listings can also be found at <https://boston.craigslist.org/> and <https://www.bostonapartments.com>.

Please note that New England Conservatory neither accepts nor creates any responsibility for the reliability of the information that is provided from these sources. Students must accept responsibility for contacting, negotiating, or communicating with rental agents, property owners, potential roommates, or others listed in the off-campus housing information at any time before, during, or after any off-campus housing agreement.





Transportation

Boston is a pedestrian friendly city and NEC is located right near the center of it all. Bikes are hugely popular in Boston, and the city just opened a bike share program at <https://www.bluebikes.com/>. Students are cautioned to be aware of their surroundings while traveling through the city and watch out for car, bike, bus, and pedestrian traffic.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

The MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority)-a system of subways and buses-operates between 5:30am and 1:00am. Stations link Boston and surrounding suburbs. There are many kinds of passes that are subway-only to combo passes for transportation on the city's entire network of subways, buses, and commuter trains. For information, maps, and schedules, visit the MBTA online at <http://mbta.com>. NEC offers discounted MBTA Link passes at <https://necmusic.edu/t-pass-program>. Passes must be ordered in advance of each semester. Students living on or very close to campus probably do not need a T-Pass and would be better advised to purchase a pay-as-you-go Charlie Card upon arrival to Boston.

DRIVING IN BOSTON:

The Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) provides a list of approved international

driver's licenses at <https://www.massrmv.com/rmv/forms/21317.pdf>. If on the list, you are permitted to drive in the US with your foreign driver's license and 1-94 record for 1 year after each time you arrive in the US. If you wish to obtain a Massachusetts's Drivers License, you may do so by passing the written test and road examination at the RMV. Check their website <https://www.mass.gov/rmv> for more information.

EXPLORING GREATER BOSTON AND BEYOND:

Boston is a great city but sometimes you want to get out! You can easily get to the airport for flights, to North or South Station for Amtrak trains, or find inexpensive bus routes to New York City, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and New England. You can also rent a car for short-term travel of a few hours to several days. Check out Zipcar.com for a popular car sharing company which allows foreign drivers to sign up.

Medical Insurance and Health Care

Medical Insurance

In the United States, medical care is not publicly funded; patients must either have full medical insurance or pay the costs - often quite high - themselves. The US government therefore requires all students to have comprehensive medical health insurance policies.

Due to Massachusetts state health care regulations and NEC policy, all international students are required to enroll in the New England Conservatory Student Health Insurance plan through Gallagher Student Health Insurance. For more details about this plan, please visit <https://necmusic.edu/student-health-insurance-plan>.

International students must also purchase health insurance for spouses or children accompanying them to the United States. Dependents are not automatically included in the individual health plan. There will be an additional charge for dependents' insurance.

THE NEC HEALTH AND COUNSELING CENTER:

provides licensed medical and psychological care to all NEC students. A doctor and nurse practitioners are on site to provide basic and preventative care. A staff of trained mental health professionals is available by appointment. All counseling services are free of charge, private and confidential.

The NEC Health and Counseling Center is located in Room 112 at the 241 St. Botolph Street Building. To schedule an appointment with the Health and Counseling Center, call (617) 585-1284.

OFFICE HOURS ARE:

Monday 9am-4pm

Tuesday 9am-4pm

Wednesday 9am-4pm

Thursday 8:30am-5pm

Thursday Urgent Care Walk-in Hours

9am-11am

Friday 9am-4pm

WALK-IN HOURS ARE:

Monday 12pm-1pm

Tuesday 12pm-1pm

Wednesday 1pm-2pm

Thursday 11am-12pm

Friday 1pm-2pm

Banking, Taxes and Social Security Numbers

Banking

One of the first things you should do after your arrive in the United States is establish a bank account. It is not a good idea to carry large amounts of cash or keep it in your living quarters.

It is relatively simple to open a bank account in the US. However, you should remember that banks are private businesses. Each offers different services and each wants your business. You should check with several banks to determine which one best meets your needs. During Orientation Central there will be representatives from local banks available to open accounts.

PHONE:

It is highly encouraged to purchase a US cell phone within the first few weeks of your program. Some cell phone carriers will require a social security number to activate the plan, so be sure to shop around as needed. Common carriers are AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, TMobile, and Virgin Mobile. You may also want to check with current students for recommendations on coverage, rates and benefits.

Taxes

All international students are required to file Form 8843 Statement for Exempt Individuals. Those students who have earned money must also file both federal and state tax forms. Tax returns are due on April 15th. NEC Staff is not licensed

to advise or assist students in preparing these forms. Since most international students do not earn a substantial amount of money, these forms are fairly easy to complete. Each year International Student Services provides free access to online tax preparation services designed specifically for international students.

Social Security Numbers

A social security number is a government issued identification number. Some students mistakenly believe that this number gives them permission to work. In fact, international student employment is limited to on-campus, or off-campus with special prior permission. You may only apply for a social security number after you have been offered employment, either on- or off-campus. To do so, visit International Student Services to obtain the Social Security Application packet.

IDENTIFICATION:

Many students may wish to obtain a Massachusetts ID or Liquor License to explore Boston's nightlife. You may do so by visiting the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) with your passport, I20, and F-1 visa. The Boston RMV is at 630 Washington Street, Boston, MA. Hours are Monday-Wednesday, Friday 9am-5pm; Thursday 10am-6pm.

Legal Rights and Protections

LEGAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE US:

International Student Services assists international students in understanding and fulfilling their legal obligations while they are in the US. The staff is not responsible for enforcing immigration law, but is responsible for reporting any violation of student status through the SEVIS system. In case of any problem with immigration or other US laws, students should contact the International Student Services immediately. If the situation warrants it, the student may be referred to a private attorney for expert help and advice.

International students must maintain the student status under which a visa was granted. They must also observe immigration requirements and obey immigration laws and regulations. Recent changes in immigration laws make it imperative that each student stays in status by enrolling full-time and not working illegally. Students who fail to register with the International Student Services at the beginning of each semester may be terminated from the USCIS database (SEVIS). Breach of immigration status could result in revocation of your student visa and a ban on entering the United States for the foreseeable future.

Students who violate NEC's rules face suspension or dismissal. For international students, that would mean the loss of student status. Therefore, although an international student cannot be deported for disobeying Conservatory rules, the

possible loss of student status might lead to deportation. Similarly, if a sponsored student violates the regulations of the sponsoring agency, the agency might withdraw visa sponsorship, thereby putting the student in jeopardy.



PRIVATE AND IMMIGRATION ATTORNEYS:

There are times when NEC students will require the assistance of an immigration attorney to resolve issues or to apply for different visas. Students can consult with their International Student Advisor to determine if an attorney is required. Students should choose their attorney carefully based on their specific needs and make sure that the attorney is registered with the American immigration Lawyers Association (<https://www.aila.org>). International Student Services will host immigration attorneys on campus throughout the year to educate students on visas options in addition to the F-1 visa.



Books and Music

There are several music stores in the Boston area. NEC students often use the stores listed below:

Books and scores for all NEC courses may be obtained at Music Espresso.

Music Espresso

(The Music Store at NEC)
33 Gainsborough St.,
1st Floor, Boston
(617) 424-9322

Carl Fischer of Boston

156 Boylston St.,
Boston
(617) 426-0740

Yesterday Music Service

1906 Massachusetts Ave.,
Cambridge
(617) 547-8263



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