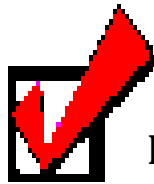




METHODIST
UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012



Checklist for new International students

- Check in to your residence hall
- Check in with International Programs Office
- Turn in your passport, I-94, visa stamp, I-20 or DS-2019
- Turn in the medical form
- If you are a F-1 student transferring from another U.S. institution, turn in your transfer release form
- Get MU ID
- Sign off your award at the Financial Aid Office
- Register for classes
- Attend the International Student Orientation
- Attend the MU Orientation
- Fill out tax forms
- Apply for the social security card—ten days after your arrival at the U.S port of entry
- Secure your work-study positions and start earning money!

----- INSIDE -----	
IPO Mission and Services.....	1
IPO Staff and Hours.....	2
Report to IPO.....	3
Social Security Number (SSN).....	3
Banking.....	3
Public Transportation & Driver License.....	4
SEVIS.....	5
F-1 Students' Rights and Responsibilities.....	6
Travel.....	7
Maintaining F-1 Status.....	8
Employment on Campus.....	8
Federal Work Study Program.....	9
Employment off Campus.....	10
Internship with an International Organization.....	10
Curricular Practical Training (CPT).....	11
Optional Practical Training (OPT).....	11
OPT Extension.....	13
Taxes.....	15
Taxable Scholarship.....	15
IRS Tax Forms.....	17
NC State Income Tax.....	18
Living in the U.S.....	19
Int'l Students' Statement of Responsibilities.....	22

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE (IPO)

MISSION AND SERVICES

It is the mission of International Programs Office (IPO) to provide the educational, professional, and cultural needs for international students from pre-arrival correspondence to postgraduate concerns. IPO recognizes the responsibility of increasing international and multicultural understanding and serves as the primary liaison, and resource center for international students. We currently provide services to more than 100 international students. Our services include:

- Advising and providing information to international students and MU staff and faculty on F-1 and related immigration regulations
- Creating a positive environment to support student success
- Increasing diversity awareness of MU faculty and student body
- Assisting international students with problems and concerns related to academic and social life

IPO services which do not require an appointment:

- I-20 signature for travel
- Program extension
- Transfer from MU
- Emergency medical matters and claims
- Work study contracts
- Updates of changes in SEVIS **excluding CPT and OPT**

IPO services which require an appointment:

- Curricular & Optional Practical Training authorization (two business days)
- Reinstatement to student status (one business day)*
- Off-campus employment authorization
- Advice on personal and confidential matters
- Advice on taxes
- Invitation letters for visitor visas (one business day)*
- Recommendation letter for student workers (one business day)*

Transportation for appointments (IPO will consider it case by case only. Students should notify IPO staff at least one week in advance.)

**During busy times, it may take longer than one business day. Please come prepared.*

STAFF AND HOURS

Hours during the Academic Year

Monday	0800—1730
Tuesday	0800—1730
Wednesday	13:00- 1730
Thursday	08:00—1730
Friday	08:00—17:30

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IP Director

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Birthplace: United States of America



REPORT TO IPO

The International Programs Office maintains international student files for all international students enrolled at Methodist University. You are required to bring the following documents issued to you within 72 hours of your arrival on campus:

1. passport and visa
2. I-94 form
3. I-20
4. medical form

Copies of these documents will be made for your file and the original will be returned to you. The IPO is required by law to maintain the up-to-date information of international students. Therefore, you must update us if there are any changes.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

The social security number (SSN) is the 9-digit number issued to citizens, permanent residents and temporary working residents who are employed in the U.S. and required to file for taxes.

Students on F-1 status who plan to work will need a SSN. You must apply in person at the local social security office at least 10 business days after the IPO has registered you in SEVIS.

What is needed to apply for a SSN? Passport, visa stamp, I-94, I-20 and a letter of eligibility from the IPO.

BANKING

For security reasons, students should not carry large amounts of cash or hide money in your residence hall. The IPO highly recommends students to establish a savings and/or checking account at a bank that is convenient for you. Because banking fees and services vary, visit several banks to compare services, types of accounts and costs before making your decision.

What is needed to open a bank account? Passport and/or a driver's license, I-20, and I-94.

Nearby institutions

Bank of America	3722 Ramsey St, Fayetteville, NC - (910) 487-2260
BB&T 4220	5137 College Center Dr., Fayetteville, NC - (910) 482-
First-Citizens Bank & Trust Co	3604 Ramsey St, Fayetteville, NC - (910) 307-9190
Omni National Bank	4841 Ramsey St, Fayetteville, NC - (910) 630-6665
RBC Bank	454 Ramsey St, Fayetteville, NC - (910) 868-7516

Checking Accounts: A checking account is an account provided by financial institutions (banks, S&Ls, credit unions, etc.) which allows monetary deposits and withdraws from a federally-protected account. Typically, account holders can use personal checks in place of cash. He or she can also use electronic debit cards or ATM cards to access accounts or make cash withdrawals.

Savings Accounts: Savings accounts earn interest. Saving account transactions are mostly deposits, except when withdrawal is necessary for special purchases.

Cash cards and check (debit) cards: Cash cards and check (debit) cards look like credit cards. They allow you to withdraw money from your account 24 hours a day from ATM machines. Check with your bank for the terms of use for a cash card or debit card.

Currency: Common denominations of U.S. currency are \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

- Penny = 1 cent
- Nickel = 5 cents
- Dime = 10 cents
- Quarter = 25 cents
- Half-Dollar = 50 cents
- Dollar = 100 cents

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN FAYETTEVILLE

Fayetteville is a “car city.” The Fayetteville Area System of Transit or FAST is available and operates 10 bus routes around Fayetteville. Cost for a one way trip is \$1. Buses from MU run every hour. Some tips for getting around:

1. Share a ride with friends
2. Buy your own vehicle. Your friends can help you search for second-hand cars online or with the dealers once you arrive.

Please visit <http://www.fayettevilleonline.com/fast/> to learn more about bus routes and schedules. Start exploring the city! If you want to go to the downtown of Fayetteville, you can simply take the FAST #5 bus from MU to the Main Post Office on Green St., which is 3 minute walk from downtown shops and restaurants.

The International Programs Office provides a ride to Wal-Mart and banks on Ramsey Street. Please check the IPO calendar at www.methodist.edu/int for the schedule.

NC Driver License: In the U.S., a driver license serves two purposes: permission to drive and identification. If you are 18 years of age or older you may apply for a North Carolina driver license or a learner permit. To apply, you will need:

1. Proof of identity: All items are required
 - Passport with valid visa date
 - I-20
 - Social Security Card (SSN card)
 - I-94 card (should be inside your passport)
2. Proof of residency (it can be one of the following documents—must be the original)
 - Utility bill or bank statement addressed to you
 - Your signed lease agreement for local house/apartment
 - A letter from your Residential Coordinator (RC) stating that you live on campus.

3. Proof of automobile insurance
 - DMV form DL-123
 - Original liability insurance policy binder
 - An insurance card with: your name, policy number, issue and expiration date
4. Cash or check for the driver license

Learner permit: You are required to present all the documents listed above except the auto insurance. You CANNOT drive alone with this license. You must drive with a licensed driver over the age of 18.

NC Identification Card: It is recommended for International Students to get the NC state ID card. Having a North Carolina state ID card will prevent you from having to carry your passport at all times. To apply, you will need:

1. Proof of identity: All items are required
 - Passport with valid visa date
 - I-20
 - SSN card
 - I-94 card (should be inside your passport)
2. Proof of residency (it can be one of the following documents—it must be the original)
 - Utility bill or bank statement addressed to you
 - Your signed lease agreement for local house/apartment
 - A letter from your Residential Coordinator (RC) stating that you reside on campus.
3. Cash or check to pay for the ID

In order to avoid inconveniences make sure you have all necessary documents before making your visit to the Drivers License Office.

Local Department of Motor Vehicles Offices: Location and Hours

Fayetteville, DMV Building 2439 Gillespie Street, 28303 (910) 486-1353 Monday – Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM	Eutaw Village North 831A Elm St, 28303 (910) 486-1331 Monday – Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM
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SEVIS

The Student Exchange and Visitor System is the database that allows SEVP to track international students and visitors and ensure that they are in the United States for the purpose they state in their application.

F-1 STUDENTS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Immigration acronyms you should know:

- IPO** **International Programs Office** (at Methodist University)
- SEVIS** **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System** -- a tracking system for F-1 and J-1 students, exchange visitors, and their F-2 and J-2 dependents
- DHS** **Department of Homeland Security** -- an office of the U.S. government that houses, among other entities, the three immigration-related departments (USCIS, ICE, and CBP)
- USCIS** **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** -- oversees SEVIS and charged with enforcement of immigration-related infractions
- ICE** **Immigration and Customs Enforcement** -- the largest investigative branch of the DHS to enforce the immigration and custom laws
- CBP** **Customs and Border Protection** -- operates U.S. ports of entry
- DOS** **Department of State** -- office of the U.S. government that oversees U.S. embassies and consulates abroad

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

The following documents are very important and must be valid at all times in order for you to maintain lawful F-1 status:

- **PASSPORT** (should be valid for a minimum of 6 months into the future)
- **Form I-20** (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student (F-1) Status)
- **Form I-94** Arrival/Departure Record (white card usually stapled in passport)

Please keep your original documents in a safe place. We recommend that you make photocopies of these documents and store them in a location separate from the actual documents. If any of these documents are damaged, lost or stolen, you must have them replaced as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind that the F-1 visa stamp in your passport does not need to be valid at all times but it must be valid when you reenter the United States after traveling outside the country. You should contact the IPO if you have any questions about the documents or if you need to have them replaced. Please bring all of these documents with you each time you visit the IPO to address concerns regarding your status.

TRAVEL

You are encouraged to contact the IPO anytime you plan to travel outside of the U.S. This is particularly important as regulations and practices concerning reentry into the United States continue to change. Many students now experience significant difficulties and delays in applying for visas at U.S. embassies or consulates. When you return to the U.S. after travel abroad, you should bring your passport, Form I-20, and Form I-94 to the IPO so that we may update your file. Immigration regulations require that we maintain current copies of your passport and immigration documents.

Recommendation from IPO

- Keep copies of all documents issued to you (I-20, I-94(front and back), visa, and passport) in a safe place
- Give up your current I-94 upon departure from the U.S.
- Give copies of all new documents to IPO (including new U.S. visa and new I-94's obtained upon re-entry to the U.S.)
- Carry original proof of financial support documents when re-entering the U.S. This may be required for entry.

Travel within the U.S. - You may travel within the U.S. provided that you maintain your lawful F-1 status and have a valid passport or state issued ID, Form I-20, and Form I-94 in your possession.

Travel Outside the U.S. before Completion of Studies – You may leave the U.S. at any time. You are permitted to return in F-1 status if you have a valid passport, valid F-1 visa stamp and a current Form I-20 that has been signed for travel on page 3 by an authorized staff member at the IPO. Only a Designated School Official (DSO) at the IPO is authorized to sign a Form I-20. **A travel signature is valid for one year except for travel to Canada, Mexico and adjacent islands, in which case the signature is valid for six months.**

Procedures for returning to Methodist University are different from procedures for returning to attend a different school. If you wish to attend a different school upon your return to the U.S., you should notify IPO of your intention before your departure. You must obtain a new Form I-20 from your new school and present it to an immigration officer upon reentry to the U.S.

Travel Outside the U.S. after Completion of Studies - The date you officially complete your studies is very important with regard to travel and re-entry to the U.S. If you attempt to return to the U.S. in F-1 status after your completion date, you may be denied the right to re-entry unless you have been authorized for Optional Practical Training and have received your Employment Authorization Document and obtained a written offer of employment in your field of study.

If you depart the U.S. and wish to return after the date of your completion of studies, you must present the following documents to the CBP inspector upon arrival back in the U.S.:

1. Valid OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card (USCIS Form I-766)
2. Form I-20 which has been endorsed for travel within the last six months by the IPO
3. Your passport
4. Valid F-1 visa stamp
5. Proof of employment in the field of study

Application for New F-1 Visa during Travel – F-1 students are allowed to remain in the U.S. with an expired F-1 visa stamp, provided that they are maintaining their status as full-time students and their passport and Form I-20 are valid. Although you may remain in the U.S. with an expired F-1 visa, it will be necessary to apply for a new visa during your next trip abroad. You will need a valid F-1 visa in order to reenter the U.S. Students needing to apply for a new visa during a trip abroad should inform the IPO before travel.

Holidays and Vacations

You can stay in the U.S. and still maintain F-1 status during holidays and vacation periods observed by Methodist University including, summer vacation, provided you are eligible, plan to register for the next academic semester and all of your immigration documents remain valid.

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

It is extremely important for a nonimmigrant to maintain his or her status while in the U.S. Failure to maintain the terms and conditions of F-1 status is a ground for removal from the U.S. (deportation). To maintain status, a student must:

- Report to the DSO upon arrival to have his or her SEVIS record registered; and each semester thereafter
- Attend the school that is stated on the I-20
- Pursue a “full course of study” at the school listed on the current valid I-20 during the academic year except during official school breaks or unless approved by your DSO
- Make normal progress towards completing the course of study by completing studies before or by the program completion date on the I-20
- Abide by the F-1 grace period rules
- Report changes of address to the DSO within 10 days of the change. F-1 student must notify the IPO and DHS of their address by filing Form AR-11
- NOT work, either on or off-campus, unless specifically authorized

EMPLOYMENT ON CAMPUS

F-1 students in lawful status who have been issued a form I-20 by IPO and are enrolled full-time (12 semester hours) at Methodist University may work up to 20 hours per week on campus while school is in session. Full-time enrollment is required during the Fall and Spring semesters. On-campus employment may be full-time during holidays and annual summer vacations if you are not registered for courses during the summer but are pre-enrolled or intend to enroll for the Fall.

International students on F-1 status who will be employed are required to have a social security number (SSN) and open a bank account so Methodist University can deposit wages directly to students’ accounts (to apply for a SSN please see SSN on page 5). A SSN is required for payroll and tax withholding purposes.

It is necessary for ALL students to complete tax withholding forms at International Programs Office. Please see taxes for more information

Important Restrictions

1. F-1 students may not work more than 20 hours per week when school is in session
2. F-1 students must be in lawful F-1 status, in good academic standing, and enrolled full-time at Methodist University
3. F-1 students must stop working if the employment interferes with their studies
4. All off-campus employment must be authorized in writing by IPO prior to working

M U Work Study Program (WS)

Identification of Eligible Students:

The Office of Financial Aid will determine which students are eligible for the WS Program. Only those students who have applied (or reapplied every academic year) for financial aid and who meet all the criteria of MU will be considered. Please do not render your services to any employer before you visit the Office of Financial Aid, Office of Career Services & Student Employment & the Payroll Office. All students are not automatically eligible for the WS Program.

Student Employment and Its Benefits

WS is a funded work program for students enrolled at MU. This program provides part-time employment allowing students to earn income that may be used to defray educational expenses.

WS does not mean that you will get to study at work. WS is a part-time job. You, the student, are expected to show the same commitment and level of professionalism in the WS program as with any other job.

Student Work Hours:

Students are certified to work a certain total number of hours for the semester or academic year, according to their financial needs. Most will average working between 4 and 20 hours per week. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WORK MORE THAN TWENTY HOURS A WEEK AND NOT ALLOWED TO WORK OVER THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS INDICATED ON HIS/HER CONTRACT.** Students will not be paid for hours worked over the approved total. Scheduling of hours will be a mutual decision between you and your employer.

7 Steps to Student Employment

1. Financial Aid Office -- Get your award amount from the Financial Aid Office in Stout Hall.

2. Register – You must register on-line with Career Services prior to inquiring about student employment. www.methodist.edu/careerservices College Central Network

3. Student Employment Office -- Get your Student Employment Acceptance Form and required payroll forms from the Office of Career Services and Student Employment located on the first floor of the Berns Student Center.

4. Select a Job -- Have your supervisor complete and sign the Student Employment Acceptance Form.

5. Student Employment Office -- Return the signed Acceptance Form to the Office of Career Services and Student Employment. You will be informed when to pickup your student contract from the Payroll Office.

6. Payroll Office -- Take your student ID, original Social Security Card, I-20 (if applicable), completed tax forms and direct deposit form to the Payroll Office located in the Horner Administration Building. You will sign your student contract at this time.

7. Go To Work!

EMPLOYMENT OFF CAMPUS

Because F-1 students enter the United States for academic studies and are required to show proof of financial support before entering the country, a student should not plan on being allowed to work off-campus. Off-campus employment is authorized only in cases of severe economic hardship occurring after a student enrolls in an academic program. Off-campus employment is a case-by-case exception made for students who can show that new, unexpected circumstances beyond the student's control have created severe economic hardship. These may include:

- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment – if it is not the student's fault
- Large increases in tuition or living costs
- Substantial decrease in the value of currency the student depends upon to pay expenses
- Unexpected changes in the financial conditions for his or her sources of financial support
- Unexpectedly large medical bills not covered by insurance; or
- Other substantial, unexpected expenses

F-1 students must have been enrolled for at least one academic year and be in good academic standing before they can be authorized to work off-campus.

The F-1 student must file a Form I-765 and pay a fee (\$380) to USCIS. This should be done within 30 days of the day you endorse the Form I-20. If the application is approved, the student will receive an EAD card and can begin working.

Approval for off-campus employment is good for one year. If the F-1 student needs to continue working off-campus, you must reapply.

INTERNSHIP WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

If you are offered employment by a recognized international organization in the form of an internship, you may accept such employment upon receipt of authorization from the Immigration Service. Examples of recognized organizations include the United Nations, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an employment option available to F-1 students where practical training employment is considered to be an integral part of the curriculum or academic

program. According to the immigration regulations, this employment may be an internship, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience that is either required for your degree (as defined in the course catalog) or for which academic credit is awarded.

To be eligible for CPT, you must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year, your employment must be an integral part of your degree program or requirement for a course (as defined above), and your job offer related to your major or field of study.

The student may be eligible for CPT only if the training is a requirement for graduation or it is a course of study for which academic credit is given. The student's Designated School Official must provide written authorization that the CPT has been approved.

Application Process

1. Complete the CPT Authorization form
2. Obtain an official offer letter on company letterhead that is signed by the prospective employer. The letter should include the employer's name, physical address, a brief description of the employment, part-time or full-time employment status, and the specific dates of employment.
3. Schedule an appointment with Ms. Jana Moore and bring the following to the International Office:
 - A completed CPT Authorization form
 - The offer letter from your employer
 - A valid, unexpired passport
 - I-94 card

CPT appointments should be made at least 2 business days BEFORE the anticipated employment is to begin. Please allow up to 1 business day to process the CPT application for approval.

If I do CPT, can I still do OPT later?

Yes, as long as you do not engage in full-time CPT (that is, more than 20 hours/week) for a cumulative total of 12 months. Part-time CPT (20 hours or less per week) has no impact on subsequent eligibility for OPT, even if you work for more than a year.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Optional practical training provides an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge obtained in an academic program to a practical work experience. This employment opportunity must be directly related to your major field of study. It may, in certain circumstances, be full- or part-time and may take place anywhere in the U.S. You may apply to use OPT during your vacation periods, during the academic year, or when you complete your studies.

Application Process

1. Complete form I-765

2. Complete the Request for OPT Application Form. You can download this from www.methodist.edu/int
3. Schedule an appointment with Ms. Jana Moore and bring the following items:
 - The completed Request for OPT Application Form
 - The completed I-765 form
 - All required documents needed to accompany the I765 form
 When you meet with Ms. Moore, she will issue you your new I-20 with the OPT authorization on P. 3. **OPT processing time is two business days.** It is your responsibility to make sure that your information is up to date and correct.

Mailing Your Application to USCIS

Make sure you do not mail your OPT application along with other documents more than 90 days before the completion of your program(s). Send the following information to USCIS, arranged in the order listed below:

- USCIS Form I-765
- Application Fee-- \$380 personal check or money orders must be in the exact amount and payable **to United States Department of Homeland Security**
- OPT I-20, endorsed with an original signature by IPO advisor and signed by student in item #11
- A photocopy of all previously issued I-20s
- A copy of your most recent form I-94, front and back
- A copy of the F-1 visa stamp page
- A copy of your EAD card, if you have had one before
- A copy of both your passport photo, information page showing expiration date and your most recent U.S. visa
- Two identical color photographs. Photos must be taken within 30 days of the filing of the application. For more details on the photograph specification, please go to http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html

*****Please be sure to make a photocopy of all documents before you submit to USCIS. The IPO highly recommends you send it by certified return receipt .***

Mail your Form I-765 package to:

For private courier (non-USPS) deliveries:

USCIS
Texas Service Center
P.O. Box 851041
Mesquite, TX 75185-1041

USCIS
Texas Service Center
4141 North St. Augustine Road
Dallas, TX 75227

Note: Once you have received your receipt notice, you may check on the status of your application online. Go to www.uscis.gov and click on "case status." You will use the receipt number (3 letter and 11-14 digits) as your reference number. **DO NOT THROW YOUR RECEIPT AWAY!!!**

Reporting information to IPO

The new USCIS regulations that took effect January 1, 2003 require you to remain in contact with the IPO. Changes to any of the following must be reported **within 10 days** of the event:

- Changes in name or residential/ mailing address. In order to do this, you must complete AR-11 Change of Address Form
- Report your employer's name, address, and supervisor's e-mail within 10 days of any changes or new employment
- Report changes to another immigration status
- If you will leave your OPT employment before your OPT end date
- Notify IPO if you change your email address throughout the term

OPT EXTENSION

Requirements for 17-month OPT Extension

Effective on April 8, 2008, the extension is available only to F-1 students currently authorized for those who are actively participating in an initial period of 12-month OPT who meet very specific criteria:

- Student must be currently participating in a 12-month period of OPT, working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student's major area of study.
- Student must have successfully completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) included in the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List, from a SEVIS-certified college or university.
- Student must have a job offer from an employer registered with the E-verify employment verification programs.
- Student will have to apply for the 17-month OPT extension on Form I-765 with fee.
- The student must apply on time (i.e., before the current post-completion OPT expires). Students who timely file an application for the 17-month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.
- Student has never received a 17-month OPT extension.
- The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to the DSO or through "any other means or process identified by DHS." An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of five consecutive business days without the employer's consent.
- The DSO must recommend the 17-month OPT extension in SEVIS, after verifying the student's eligibility, certifying that the student's degree is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, and ensuring that the student is aware of his or her responsibilities for maintaining status while on OPT.

To be eligible for the 17-month OPT extension, a student must have received a degree included in the STEM Designated Degree Program List. This list sets forth eligible courses of study according to Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

- Actuarial Science. CIP Code 52.1304
- Computer Science Applications:
 - CIP Codes 11.xxxx (except Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, which are CIP Codes 11.06xx)
- Engineering. CIP Codes 14.xxxx

- Engineering Technologies. CIP Codes 15.xxxx
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences. CIP Codes 26.xxxx
- Mathematics and Statistics. CIP Codes 27.xxxx
- Military Technologies. CIP Codes 29.xxxx
- Physical Sciences. CIP Codes 40.xxxx
- Science Technologies. CIP Codes 41.xxxx
- Medical Scientist (MS, PhD). CIP Code 51.1401

A full list of CIP Codes is available online at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>

Mailing your Application to USCIS

Send the following documentations to USCIS to apply for OPT extension, arranged in the order listed below:

- Application Fee-- \$380 Personal check or money orders must be in the exact amount and payable to **United States Department of Homeland Security**.
- USCIS Form I-765
- An offer letter from your employer who has registered in E-Verify program. It can be brief but needs to include the details about how your employment relates to the area in which you received your degree.
- New OPT I-20, endorsed with an original signature by IPO advisor and signed by student
- A photocopy of all previously issued I-20s
- A photocopy of your transcript—it must indicate the degree level and title of major/degree program.
- A copy of your most recent form I-94, front and back
- A copy of the F-1 visa stamp page
- A copy of your EAD card
- A copy of both your passport photo and information page showing expiration date and your most recent U.S. visa
- Two identical color photographs. They must be taken within 30 days of the filing of the application. For more details on the photograph specification, please go to http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html

*****Please be sure to make a copy of all documents before you submit it to USCIS. IPO highly recommends that you send your documents by certified mail, return receipt. This is to provide you with evidence that your application was received by USCIS.***

Disclaimer

The resources on this page were prepared by the International Programs Office (IPO) as general guides to assist you in preparing your 2011 tax filing. If your tax situation is complicated, please consult with a tax preparation service, professional tax accountant, or tax attorney who is knowledgeable about nonresident tax law.

*****Please be aware that each student/scholar is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of his/her income tax returns and any resulting penalties or interest.***

INCOME TAXES

Students who have been in the U.S. less than 5 years (and are therefore nonresidents for tax purposes) and who are on CPT or OPT are not subject to any FICA (Social Security) and Medicare withholdings. The mechanism for the exemptions is found under Internal Revenue Code 3121(b)(19) and is available to persons on F-1, J-1, M-1 and Q immigration status. It is a blanket exemption with the only qualification being that the person be a nonresident for tax purpose and that the work is authorized (CPT, OPT). IRS Publication 519 is a good resource.

Though F-1 students working off campus are exempt from FICA, they are subject to higher federal (and state) withholding for nonresident aliens.

TAXABLE SCHOLARSHIP

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 contains provisions regarding the federal income tax treatment of scholarship from the university or from any other source, you should be aware that...

1. Under federal tax law, only qualified scholarship or fellowships may be excluded from their recipient's gross income.
2. Under the tax law, the expenses that scholarships are used for fall in to two categories: tuition and living expense. Scholarship that is used for tuition is not taxable, but scholarship that is used for living expenses is taxable.
3. **Qualified Scholarship** or fellowships are any amount a student receives as a scholarship or fellowship that is used for **tuition and fees** to enroll in or to attend an educational institution; or to **purchase books, supplies, and equipments** that are required of the courses at the school the students plan to attend. These items must be required of all students in the course of instruction. Awards in excess of the described expenses are includable in the recipient's gross income.
4. You must be a candidate for a degree.
5. RA stipends are wages and thus are taxable.

IRS Publication 901, U.S. Tax Treaties, provides an excellent summary of the tax treaties in effect in a given year. It is published annually and should be consulted each year, as new treaties are constantly being negotiated and existing ones renegotiated. IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens, is also an excellent resource as it provides detailed information on the filing of US Income Taxes for nonresidents.

The taxable portion of your award will be taxed at a rate of 14% (Federal Rate) and 6% (state). Some foreign students come from countries that have a tax treaty with the U.S. A tax treaty takes precedence over the U.S. tax laws, so that, if your country's treaty exempts your scholarship from tax and you complete a Form W-8BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding) and return it to the IPO, you will not be charged any tax.

- If you are from a treaty country and you complete a Form W-8BEN, then you will **NOT** be charged any tax. Even though the tax treaty may exempt your scholarship from tax, you may still be required to file an income tax return.

- If you are from a treaty country and you do not complete a Form W-8BEN, then you may be taxed.
- If you are not from a treaty country, then you may be taxed.

Note: TAX TREATIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS ARE DIFFERENT FROM TAX TREATIES FOR EMPLOYMENT EARNINGS! Many countries have limited tax treaty agreements with the U.S. Please consult IRS Publication 901, U.S. Tax Treaties or a tax consultant regarding a possible tax treaty between your country and the U.S. regarding employment earnings.

CURRENT TAX TREATY BENEFITS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Bangladesh	China	Cyprus	Egypt
Commonwealth of Independent States			Estonia
Czech Republic		France	Germany
Iceland	Indonesia	Israel	Kazakhstan
S. Korea	Latvia	Lithuania	Morocco
Netherlands	Norway	Pakistan	Philippines
Poland	Portugal	Romania	Russia
Slovak Republic		Slovenia	Spain
Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago		Tunisia
Ukraine	Venezuela		

CURRENT TAX TREATY BENEFITS FOR STUDENT WAGES

Bangladesh	Belgium	Bulgaria	China
Commonwealth of Independent States			Cyprus
Czech Republic		Egypt	Estonia
France	Germany	Iceland	Indonesia
Israel	S. Korea	Latvia	Lithuania
Morocco	Netherlands	Norway	Pakistan
Philippines	Poland	Portugal	Romania
Russia	Slovak Republic		Slovenia
Spain	Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago	
Tunisia	Venezuela		

Forms you may receive from Methodist University: International students will receive the following documents from the Payroll Department and/or the Accounting Department in order to prepare your tax return:

1. **W-2**
This statement of earnings and taxes withheld from the previous tax year is sent to you by January 31 of the current tax year if you paid federal taxes in the previous year.
2. **1042S Document**
This statement is issued for any Foreign National who had a tax treaty from employment income, or who was issued a scholarship or fellowship in the previous tax year

If you will be receiving a 1042S, do not submit your tax return paperwork to the IRS prior to the receipt of the 1042S form. This form is sent out March 15 of every year.

IRS FORMS

Form 8843: Upon filing your tax returns, international students, scholars, and dependents who are a nonresident aliens **must** file form 8843. This applies even if you did not have any source of income for the current or previous year. F-1 students must complete part I (Question 1-4) and III (Question 9-14).

Form W-8BEN: All students must complete form W-8BEN. You must have a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to complete Form W-8BEN. The form is valid for three calendar years. If you are a registered student for more than three years, you must complete a new form at the expiration date.

Form 8233: If you are from a treaty country with a tax treaty for student wages and wish to claim a tax treaty-based exemption from federal and state tax withholding on compensation for personal services performed at Methodist University, you must file Form 8233. Form 8233 is valid only for the calendar year (every January) in which it is filed and must be re-filed each year. ***Please contact IPO to fill out this form within 7 days once you arrive on campus. For those without a SSN, make sure to finalize this form within 3 days of receiving your SSN.***

All international students who were in the United States prior to December 31 must submit tax form 8843 to the Internal Revenue Service before April 15. Students who received compensation, prior to December 31, for on-campus work, scholarships, tuition waivers and/or assistantships must file state and federal taxes.

Note: The MU IPO will assist with the accuracy of your forms. However, please remember that it is the RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT to complete and submit these tax forms in a timely manner!

Form 1040 NR: is used by international students and scholars for which the following cases apply:

- claiming dependents (residents of Canada, Mexico, Japan, S. Korea and students from India only) - **Form 1040NR**
- received dividends or capital gains from U.S. stocks - **Form 1040NR**
- received income as independent contractor on Form 1099 - **Form 1040NR**
- claiming additional itemized deductions such as donations to U.S. charities, professional tax preparation fees from previous years - **Form 1040NR**
- claiming unreimbursed employee expenses (moving, travel, continuing education) - **Form 1040NR**
- have additional adjustments to income - **Form 1040NR**

Form 1040 NR-EZ: is the tax return form most frequently used by international students in the United States

You can use **Form 1040NR-EZ** only if all the requirements below apply to you (most international students meet all these conditions).

- You do not claim any dependents. (Do not claim a wife or children on your tax return.)
- You cannot be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return (ex: spouse, parent).
- You are not claiming any tax credits.
- If you are married, and you do not claim an exemption for your spouse.
- Your taxable income is less than \$100,000.00.
- You do not claim any itemized deductions other than for state and local income taxes.
- You are not claiming any adjustments to income other than scholarship and fellowship grants excluded.
- You do not owe any "other taxes."
- Your only U.S. income was from wages, salaries, and tips, refunds of state and local income taxes and scholarship or fellowship grants.

*International students are responsible for their own taxes. IPO staff **CANNOT** give you individual tax advice. For assistance, you may consult IRS Publication 519 (U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens) and 901 (U.S. Tax Treaty). If you would like a copy of these publications, please go to IRS website or call IRS at 1-800-TAX-FORM.*

NORTH CAROLINA STATE INCOME TAX

In addition to federal taxes, international students are also required to file a North Carolina income tax form (D-400-N.C. Department of Revenue Individual Income Tax Return <http://www.dor.state.nc.us/downloads/D400.pdf>) if they had earned income in North Carolina. If you had earned income from another state, you will be responsible for filing a tax form for that particular state.

When filing your state tax return, make sure that you include the proper W-2, 1042-S, etc. form(s). This information is always notated on the W-2, 1042-S, etc. forms that you receive from your employer (i.e. "Attach to any state tax return that you file."). If you determine that you are due a refund of taxes paid, you will mail your return to:

N.C. Dept. of Revenue
P.O. Box R
Raleigh, NC 27634-0001

If you are not due a refund or if you are required to pay state taxes, your return will be mailed to:

N.C. Dept. of Revenue
P.O. Box 25000
Raleigh, NC 27640-0640



LIVING IN THE U.S.

You certainly have heard stories, good or bad, about American people. You also probably have preconceived ideas from having met Americans before or from films and television programs that color your impression of what Americans are and what they do. However, American society is enormously diverse and complex and cannot be reduced only to a few stories or stereotypes. Important differences exist between geographical regions, between rural and urban areas, and between social classes. In addition, the presence of millions of immigrants who came to the United States from all corners of the world with their own culture and values adds even more variety and flavor to American life.

The characteristics described below represent that image of U.S. society that is thought of as being "typically American."

Individuality

Probably above everything else, Americans consider themselves individuals. There are strong family ties and strong loyalties to groups, but individuality and individual rights are most important. If this seems like a selfish attitude, it also leads Americans to an honest respect for other individuals and an insistence on human equality.

Related to this respect for individuality are American traits of independence and self-reliance. From an early age, children are taught to "stand on their own two feet," an idiom meaning to be independent. You may be surprised to learn that most U.S. students choose their own classes, select their own majors, follow their own careers, arrange their own marriages, and so on, instead of adhering to the wishes of their parents.

Honesty and frankness are two more aspects of American individuality, and they are more important to Americans than personal honor or "saving face." Americans may seem blunt at times, and in polite conversations they may bring up topics and issues that you find embarrassing, controversial, or even offensive. Americans are quick to get to the point and do not spend much time on social niceties. This directness encourages Americans to talk over disagreements and to try to patch up misunderstandings themselves, rather than ask a third party to mediate disputes.

Again, "individuality" is the key word when describing Americans, whether it is their personalities or their style of dress. Generally though, Americans like to dress and entertain informally and treat each other in a very informal way, even when there is a great difference in age or social standing. Students and professors often call each other by their first names. International students may consider this informality disrespectful, even rude, but it is part of American culture. Although there are times when Americans

are respectful of, and even sentimental about, tradition, in general there is little concern for set social rules.



Competitiveness

Americans place a high value on achievement and this leads them to constantly compete against each other. You will find friendly, and not-so- friendly, competition everywhere.

The American style of friendly joking or banter, of "getting in the last word," and the quick and witty reply are subtle forms of competition. Although such behavior is natural to Americans, some international students might find it overbearing and disagreeable.

Americans can also be obsessed with records of achievement in sports, in business, or even in more mundane things. Books and movies, for example, are sometimes judged not so much on quality but on how many copies are sold or on how many dollars of profit are realized. In the university as well, emphasis is placed on achievement, on grades, and on one's grade point average (GPA).

On the other hand, even if Americans are often competitive, they also have a good sense of teamwork and of cooperating with others to achieve a specific goal.

Measuring Success

Americans are often accused of being materialistic and driven to succeed. How much money a person has, how much profit a business deal makes, or how many material goods an individual accumulates is often their definition of success. This goes back to American competitiveness. Most Americans keep some kind of appointment calendar and live according to schedules. They always strive to be on time for appointments. To international students, American students seem to always be in a hurry, and this often makes them appear rude. However, this attitude makes Americans efficient, and they usually are able to get many things done, in part, by following their schedules.

Many Americans, however, do not agree with this definition of success; they enjoy life's simple pleasures and are neither overly ambitious nor aggressive. Many Americans are materially successful and still have time to appreciate the cultural, spiritual, and human aspects of life.

Friendliness and Friendships

Americans are reputed to be friendly people. It is not uncommon for Americans to be informal and casual, even with perfect strangers. When in the United States, do not be surprised if somebody you do not know says "Hi!" to you for no reason. However, there is a difference between friendliness and friendships. As in any culture, it takes time for friendships and close relationships to form.

Americans' friendships tend to be shorter and more casual than friendships among people from some other cultures. It is not uncommon for Americans to have only one

close friendship during their lifetime and to consider other friends to be merely social acquaintances. This attitude probably has something to do with American mobility and the fact that Americans do not like to be dependent on other people. They tend to



compartmentalize friendships, having "friends at work," "friends on the basketball team," and "family friends," for example. Here are some other characteristics of Americans' behavior in social situations:

- Americans might refer to acquaintances or people they meet in class as "friends." However, there are different levels of friendship, and even if they call these people friends, they do not always have close emotional ties to them.
- In the United States, people often will ask, "How are you?" or "How are you doing?" when you meet them. These are usually polite phrases more than personal questions, and they do not always expect an honest answer. If you are well acquainted with this person, you might say how you truly are feeling. If not, the accepted response is usually "Fine, thank you. How are you?" even if you are not feeling very well.
- Americans often communicate with touch, by putting a hand on somebody's shoulder to express warmth of feeling, by giving a nudge to express humor, or a pat on the back to express reassurance. Often they will hug when meeting. These friendly gestures are common and should not be interpreted as intrusive or disrespectful.
- Even if Americans tend to touch each other more often than in some other cultures, they usually maintain a relatively large physical distance between one another during conversations or social meetings. Everybody has a different "comfort zone" around them; do not be offended if an American takes a step back as you approach him or her in a conversation.
- Men and women often have long-term platonic relationships, which can surprise some foreign visitors. People of the opposite sex might go to the movies, a restaurant, a concert, or other event together without ever being romantically involved.
- Americans generally enjoy welcoming people into their homes and are pleased if you accept their hospitality. Do not hesitate or feel uncomfortable to accept invitations, even if you cannot reciprocate — they know you are away from home and will not expect you to do so.
- Participating in campus life is a good way to make friends. Every university offers various organizations, committees, sports clubs, academic societies, religious groups, and other activities where everyone with an interest can take part.

As in any culture, it takes time to make good friends. Just be patient, try to meet as many people as possible, and with time you may form friendships while in the United States that could last a lifetime.

International Students' Statement of Responsibilities

1. Maintaining your visa status: You must follow the rules that apply to your non-immigrant visa in order to maintain your status.

- Your passport must be valid at all times while you are in the U.S.
- You must report to the IPO within 10 days after you change your address.
- You must attend the school specified on your I-20.
- You must register for and complete a full course of study each semester.
- You must notify the IPO when you change your major or degree program level.
- You must receive approval from the IPO before:
 - a.) Registering for less than (or drop below) a full course of study
 - b.) Terminating your program of study
- You must receive work authorization before you engage in any employment off campus.
- You must notify the IPO if you plan to transfer to another school. The IPO must transfer your SEVIS record before another school can issue you an I-20.

2. Full time enrollment:

- U.S. immigration law requires that F-1 students register for and complete a full course of study each semester:
 - 12 credits for undergraduate and non-degree seeking students
 - 6 credits for graduate students
- If you cannot enroll full-time or you need to withdraw from a class and fall below the minimum amount of credits outlined above, you must be authorized to drop below a full courseload by the IPO before the beginning of the semester or before dropping below full-time enrollment.
- Students who receive a WF grade for a class are no longer considered enrolled in the course. If you are registered for 12 credit hours and receive a WF for a course, your course load drops from 12 credit hours to 9 credit hours, which is below full time status.

3. Work permission: You may work on campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session, and full-time during official vacation periods and semester breaks. Any off campus employment requires prior authorization by IPO or the USCIS.

4. Keep immigration documents up to date:

- Upon initial entry, and any substantial change, F-1 students must present their own documents to the IPO including I-20, passport, entry visa stamp, and I-94 card.
- Keep your documents safe, and save all your new and old I-20s during your stay in the U.S.

5. Students are responsible for keeping up to date on immigration matters by checking your MU email. Please visit our website www.methodist.edu/int for immigration information, forms and procedure.

6. Release of information: The IPO cannot release your information to anyone unless you provide us with written permission. However, the IPO is required by law to report to the USCIS information regarding your presence in the U.S. and your student status at the university. Additionally, other agencies may be designated to request information about you.

7. Required Health Insurance: The University requires all international students to be enrolled in the university sponsored student health insurance.

8. English Test Score Level: If your English test scores are below the required level, you may be required to enroll in the English as a Second Language courses.

9. You must pay all your tuition, fees, loans and other university bills. Nonpayment will result in a registration hold and may result in loss of legal status.

10. You must file a U.S. income tax form by April 15 each year, even if you have not earned any income in the U.S. The IPO provides resources for tax assistance but does not provide tax advice.

11. Travel: If you are travelling outside of the U.S., you will need the following documents in order to re-enter: valid passport, valid entry visa, valid I-20, and a valid re-entry signature from the School Designated Official (DSO).

Please sign and date this part and turn it in to the International Program Office

I have received and agree to read and carefully review the information and guidelines provided within the International Student Handbook as provided by the MU International Programs Office. I am aware that my legal status in the U.S. depends on fulfilling the responsibilities listed

within this handbook to the best my ability. If I have any questions at any time about these matters, I know I can reach the IPO at (910) 630-7049.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____