

July 17, 2020

Dear international students,

As you may know, earlier this week, the original fall 2020 guidance for nonimmigrant students published on July 6, 2020 by the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has been reversed.

We recognize that many of our students may have questions about how this news impacts the fall semester and we wanted to provide you with the most up to date information on how this will impact our undergraduate and graduate students from overseas. While each school has a different plan for the semester, the following is overarching guidance. Specific information about school programs has been (or will be) sent by each individual school.

Continuing Students:

- Students may continue studying online inside the U.S. or outside the U.S. while keeping their legal F-1 student status. Students will need to return to campus once normal operations resume.
- We do not know yet whether students who left the U.S. last spring will be able to return if 100% of your classes are online.
- All students must be registered full-time (undergraduate: 12 credits, graduate students: 8 to 10 credits each semester, depending on the individual program). The University is required to terminate any student who drops below full-time without prior authorization. Registration status is regularly monitored throughout the semester.
- Report your local U.S. address: all students are required to report a change to their local address inside the U.S. within 10 days of the move. We are aware the some of you have moved to other states and have not reported your new address. If this applies to you, update your temporary address right away at <https://insidetrack.yu.edu> and also report it to oiiss@yu.edu.
- Students who are studying online outside of the U.S. do not need to provide a local U.S. address, but you do need to tell us that you are out of the country. Report your location to oiiss@yu.edu so a notation can be made in your SEVIS record.

New Students (first time in the U.S.):

- You may begin your studies full-time (or part-time) from outside the U.S.
- You will be able to apply to enter the U.S. in January 2021 to continue your studies on-campus, provided that normal University operations resume by then. An I-20 will be provided with a semester start date in January 2021.

- Your F-1 status will begin only once you enter the U.S. This means that you will become eligible for internship authorization (CPT) after completing two full semesters **inside** the U.S. (spring 2021 and fall 2021).

Transfer Students with a valid I-20 from another school

- You will receive an I-20 with a fall 2020 start date.
- Transfer students **inside** the U.S. need to complete the school transfer within 15 days of the I-20 start date. You can choose to remain in the U.S. or depart and study online from abroad. If you choose to leave you may need remain outside the U.S. until normal operations resume.
- Transfer students **outside** the U.S. must remain outside the U.S. until normal operations resume. Your SEVIS transfer will be completed only after you return to the U.S. SEVP is aware that this will be after the 15-day reporting requirement and has created a work around to manage this.

Employment:

- Students may continue to virtually engage in on-campus employment, CPT, OPT and STEM OPT for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. Please refer to the [SEVP FAQ](#) for complete information.
- New students who begin school online outside the U.S. do not begin to accrue off-campus work eligibility time until they arrive in the U.S. and are admitted by customs in F-1 status.
- As of 7/15/2020, the government has not provided any new guidance enabling students to apply for OPT from abroad.

TRAVEL AND VISAS

I-20s

- The SEVP FAQ states that Designated School Officials may send I-20s electronically to the student's email of record in SEVIS. This is usually the yu.edu email address. Scanned and electronically signed I-20s will also be accepted for visa processing and admission to the U.S. by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- If you need a travel signature to return to the U.S. after the fall holidays, please send an email to oiss@yu.edu in September.

Visas

- Routine U.S. visa processing was officially suspended on March 20, 2020
- On July 13, 2020 the Department of State "tweeted" the following update from @TravelGov: "U.S. embassies and consulates are beginning the phased resumption of routine visa services. The dates for each embassy or consulate will depend on local conditions. We are unable to provide details for each location. Please monitor the embassy or consulate website for updates."

- To find embassy or consulate websites, go to <https://www.usembassy.gov/>. The embassy links get you to the right embassy website, but you will have to do some clicking to find relevant COVID-19 information, as each embassy website is structured a bit differently.

Travel Bans, Presidential Proclamations and U.S. Entry Restrictions [NAFSA Summary](#)

- The President has issued several COVID-19-related proclamations. Currently all are in effect. They are also independent one from another. For example, if someone is exempt from the June 22, 2020 proclamation on H, J, and L nonimmigrants, they may still be subject to one of the country-specific COVID-19 proclamations (i.e., if present in **China, Iran, European Schengen Area, UK, Ireland, or Brazil in the 14-day period before attempting entry to the U.S.**) unless specifically exempt from those as well.
- Canada-Mexico “Essential Travel” Restrictions have been extended to July 21, 2020. Travel to study in the U.S. is listed as essential travel. However, it is unclear whether "traveling to attend educational institutions" also covers students who are studying online under their school's COVID-19 policy.
- **The five-month temporary absence provision addressed in 8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(4) will not apply for students who remain in Active status.**

[New York State Travel Advisory](#)

Individuals traveling to NY State from other states with high rates of COVID-19 must complete a health form upon arrival in the airport and may be required to quarantine for 14 days.

We know that this is a lot of information and there may be some anxiety, but we are here to guide you through any process you choose. Immigration updates are regularly posted on the [OISS website](#) with links to the source. **Please check this site frequently.**

The OISS continues to work remotely, assisting many students everyday with questions and immigration application. Please keep in contact with OISS via our website and oiiss@yu.edu and with all other pertinent officials at Yeshiva University.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Golden
Director, Office of International Services
Yeshiva University