

International Student and Scholar Services

From: International Services
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 5:18 PM
Subject: Fall Updates for F-1 and J-1 students

Greetings! There are only **27 days** until the fall semester begins! Classes begin on August 19th and we will be operating in a hybrid format. This means that your classes may be a combination of in-person meetings and online meetings and assignments. We hoped to have more information about your enrollment requirements this week, but the U.S. government has not issued specific fall guidance. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has confirmed that additional fall 2020 guidance is coming. For now, we will give you the information based on the guidance that we do have. Here is this week's update about issues specific to international students. As always, information about the campus, classes, etc. can be found online in [the university's reopening plans](#).

TRAVEL

There are currently many travel restrictions. Students who have been in certain countries during the previous 14 days may not be allowed to enter the United States. Please monitor the [CDC website](#) for current information. Last week, the [U.S. Department of State released guidance](#) on National Interest Exception (NIE) waivers. **F-1 students in the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, or Ireland can enter the U.S. without requesting a national interest exception.** J-1 students from these areas must submit a request at their nearest U.S. Embassy. Students traveling on a NIE waiver must fly into one of [15 specifically designated airports](#). We recommend you carry a copy of the [U.S. Department of State guidance](#) with you when you travel. If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Embassy in your country. You can also contact the airline or the Customs and Border Protection office where you will enter the U.S. for additional confirmation.

For a link to the COVID-19 information for the U.S. Embassy in your country, visit this site:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

ON CAMPUS

Based on current guidance, you should be [enrolled full-time](#). Your face-to-face classes may actually be a hybrid format where you attend in a classroom sometimes and remotely others. You should be attending each face-to-face class in the physical classroom at least once day per week. If this is not possible, and if necessary based on SEVP guidance, we will have a place for you to participate in the class in a monitored classroom setting to meet the physical presence requirement.

You should plan to be on campus when classes start on August 19th. If you cannot get to campus by August 31st, please contact internationalservices@coastal.edu to explain your situation and your travel plans. We will look at your specific situation and determine your best options.

NOT ON CAMPUS

If you are not going to be able to enter the U.S. and come to campus, you can request an fully online schedule by submitting a [COVID-19 Adjustment Request Form](#). Please contact our office as well so we can advise you on your options as it relates to your student visa status.

New Students: If you are not able to enter the U.S., we will have to defer your I-20 or DS-2019 to start in January. You can still take online classes in the fall if you wish. Your SEVIS ID will remain the same so you will not have to pay an additional I-901 SEVIS fee if you have already paid one.

If you have a newly transferred SEVIS record, we cannot register your record if you are not physically present in the U.S. However, we can leave your record in Initial status and request a data fix to activate it when you are able to come to campus.

Continuing Students: If you are not able to enter the U.S., we will be able to keep your status active if you are enrolled full-time online in the fall semester. If you are not enrolled full-time in the fall semester, we will have to terminate your F-1 or J-1 status. We can either reactive your status or issue you a new I-20 or DS-2019 for the spring semester depending on your specific circumstances.

IMPLICATIONS OF SEVIS TERMINATION

F-1 Students

It may be possible to reactive a record after an Authorized Early Withdrawal Termination if the intended return is within 5 months of the termination. Reactivated I-20s should not experience issues with F-1 benefit eligibility such as CPT or OPT. Reactivation takes about 30 days, so contact us as soon as possible after you have confirmed your intent to return to campus.

If we are required to terminate your SEVIS record for any other reason or if the reactivation is denied, either based on current or future guidance, you will need to obtain a new I-20 when you decide to return to Coastal. To issue a new initial I-20, we will need updated proof of finances sufficient to cover one year of estimated costs. New initial records require a new I-901 SEVIS fee payment. As long as your F-1 visa is otherwise valid, you will not require a new F-1 visa. You should be able to enter the U.S. on your current, unexpired F-1 visa and your new I-20. If you have to obtain a new initial I-20, your F-1 benefit eligibility such as CPT or OPT resets. Students must have been in active F-1 status for one academic year to be eligible to apply for CPT or OPT.

J-1 Students

The process to regain status is different for students on a J-1 visa. If you are a J-1 student and have questions about your status, please contact us with the details of your situation and we will advise you directly.

Please contact us if you have any questions. Also, monitor our website for [updates](#).



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