

## COVID-19 International Students FAQs Spring 2020

### 1. **How does switching to online instruction affect my immigration status?**

U.S. universities received guidance from the Department of Homeland Security that allows students to continue this semester's courses online without jeopardizing their immigration status. This means that you must continue to be enrolled full-time and be making normal progress toward the degree. Regardless of where you are participating in online classes, your immigration status will remain active. Please note that this method of instruction is being implemented until the end of the spring 2020 academic semester, May 22, 2020.

### 2. **Will I be able to maintain my immigration status if I go back home until the Fall semester, which is nearly five months?**

If you decide to leave the country while you continue taking your courses online for the rest of the semester, you are considered full-time as long as you remain enrolled until the end of the spring semester. According to the immigration regulations, an F-1 or J-1 student is in status during the annual (or summer) vacation if the student is eligible and intends to register for the next term.

### 3. **How do I register for classes for the summer or fall semesters and what do I do if there is a service indicator on my CUNY First Account?**

Until we hear otherwise, you can reach your Academic Department and/or academic advisors in CASS for advisement.

If you have service indicator on your CUNYFirst record; contact the department that placed the service indicator. Please be aware that beginning this semester CGE has put on an ISE service indicator, which still allows registering for classes and enrolling for future semesters, but will not allow you to drop below the minimum requirement of 12 credits for Undergraduate and 9 credits for Graduates unless your program states otherwise. In addition, you cannot swap classes without permission from the CGE. As usual, you will need permission from CGE to be enrolled part-time or to not take any classes to maintain your immigration status.

### 4. **I still need to apply for OPT. Can I do this remotely from elsewhere in the U.S.? Can I do it from outside the U.S.?**

You must be physically in the U.S. at the time you submit your Optional Practical Training (OPT) application. Currently, CGE is assisting you with OPT applications and strongly encourages students to you to submit their applications as soon as possible.

**5. If I vacate my current on or off campus residence and relocate to a new address, do I need to report it within 10 days? Where do I report?**

Yes, the Immigration & Nationality Act (INA § 265, 8 U.S.C. 1305) requires international students, scholars, and their families, to report any change of residential address in the U.S. to the federal government, within 10 days. Please report address changes to CGE within 10 days via email.

**6. I will graduate in May 2020, and my plan was to return to my home country. After I graduate, I would prefer to stay in the United States. What are my options?**

You have three options:

**A.** Remain in the U.S. and apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) (for F-1 students) or Academic Training (for J-1 students).

**B.** Remain in the U.S. during the grace period after your program end date (which you can find on your I-20 or DS-2019). The grace period is 60 days for F-1 students and 30 days for J-1 students.

**C.** Pursue another degree in the United States and transfer (if eligible) your SEVIS record to another institution.

**7. My visa is expiring, and I am unable to travel to my home country currently. What should I do?**

You may stay in the U.S. on an expired F-1 or J-1 visa as long as you maintain your immigration status by being in possession of a valid I-20 or DS-2019 and by meeting normal enrollment requirements. (Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S.)

**8. My visa is expiring/has expired. If I leave the U.S. now, but must come back after the expiration date of my visa, will I need a new visa, or can I re-enter on an expired visa?**

If you leave the U.S. and your visa will have expired by the date you wish to re-enter the U.S., then you will need to obtain a new visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before you can re-enter the U.S. (Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S.)

**9. What is your Contact information?**

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