COVID-19 Information Updates for UM International Students

Last Updated: 06/25/2020

This document provides a compilation of notifications from the Department of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to F-1 and J-1 University of Miami international students regarding the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Please visit www.miami.edu/coronavirus for comprehensive information on the University of Miami’s response to the Coronavirus.

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F1 & J1 Students Not Affected by Entry Ban of Aliens Who Present a Risk to the U.S. Labor Market Following the Coronavirus Outbreak (06/23/2020 & 6/25/2020)

On June 22, 2020, President Trump signed a proclamation that will suspend the entry to the U.S. of certain nonimmigrants to the U.S. The proclamation is part of the Trump Administration’s response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ban takes effect at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on June 24, 2020, and will be in place through December 31, 2020.

This proclamation does not affect international students in F-1 or J-1 status or their dependents in F-2 and J-2 status. It also does not affect Optional Practical Training (OPT) and OPT STEM, which are benefits for students in F-1 status completing an academic degree in the United States.

Please see detailed information about who is exempt, and who is subject to the ban below:

**Who is exempt from the ban?**

The following categories of foreign nationals are exempt from the entry ban:

- Foreign nationals present in the U.S. at 12:01 a.m. EDT on June 24, 2020, including those in the U.S. awaiting a change of status under the FY2021 H-1B cap gap;
- Foreign nationals holding a valid visa, advance parole or other travel document on June 24, even if they are outside the U.S. when the ban takes effect;
- U.S. lawful permanent residents;
- The spouse or child of a U.S. citizen;
- J-1 exchange visitor program participants other than interns, trainees, teachers, camp counselors, au pairs and summer work travel participants; and
- Foreign nationals entering the U.S. to provide temporary labor or services essential to the U.S. food supply chain.

**Who is subject to the ban?**

The proclamation restricts the entry of the following categories of nonimmigrants, if they are outside the U.S. as of 12:01 a.m. EDT on June 24 and do not hold a valid visa, advance parole or other U.S. travel document:

- H-1B and H-2B nonimmigrants;
- L-1A executives and managers;
- L-1B specialized knowledge workers;
• J-1 interns, trainees, teachers, camp counselors, au pairs and summer work travel participants; and
• Their dependent spouses and children.

The impact on Canadian nationals seeking admission in these categories is not yet clear. The proclamation provides for certain discretionary waivers of the restrictions.

Please note that international students traveling from a country impacted by the May 24, 2020 Proclamation on Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Novel Coronavirus, must continue to comply with the May 24 Presidential Proclamation. It suspends entry into the U.S. of all non-U.S. citizens who were physically present within the following countries during the 14-day period preceding their entry to the U.S.

• People’s Republic of China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau)
• Islamic Republic of Iran
• European Schengen area (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City)
• United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)
• Republic of Ireland
• Brazil

Also, please note that due to COVID-19, routine U.S. consular visa services, including visa interviews and visa application processing, have been suspended by the U.S. government until further notice.

International Student and Scholar Services is closely monitoring presidential proclamations and will provide updates as they become available.
U.S. Imposes Travel Restrictions related to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): China, Iran, Schengen Area, United Kingdom, Ireland and Brazil (05/27/2020)

Please be aware that on May 24, 2020, the White House issued a presidential proclamation, amended on May 25, 2020, imposing travel restrictions on individuals traveling from Brazil to the United States due to the current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic:

- The presidential proclamation temporarily bars the entry of foreign nationals who were physically present in Brazil during the 14-day preceding their attempted entry to the U.S. This includes foreign nationals of any nationality who hold a valid F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa to the U.S. (as well as Canadian citizens who are exempt from the F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa requirement).
- The travel restrictions went into effect on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. Please note that the travel restrictions do not apply to persons aboard a flight scheduled to arrive in the U.S. that departed prior to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on May 26, 2020.
- The proclamation states that “it shall remain in effect until terminated by the President.”

Additionally, please be reminded that the White House issued four previous presidential proclamations imposing travel restrictions on individuals traveling from the People’s Republic of China (PROC), the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Schengen Area in Europe, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to the U.S. due to the current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic:

- The January 31, 2020 presidential proclamation temporarily bars the entry of foreign nationals who were present in mainland China during the 14-day period preceding their attempted entry to the U.S. This includes foreign nationals of any nationality who hold a valid F-1/J-1 or F2/J-2 visa to the U.S. (as well as Canadian citizens who are exempt from the F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa requirement). The travel restrictions went into effect on Sunday, February 2, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). At this time, it is not known how long these travel restrictions will be in effect.
- The February 29, 2020 presidential proclamation temporarily bars the entry of foreign nationals who were physically present Iran during the 14-day period preceding their attempted entry to the U.S. This includes foreign nationals of any nationality who hold a valid F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa to the U.S. (as well as Canadian citizens who are exempt from the F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa requirement). The travel restrictions went into effect on Monday, March 2, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. EST. At this time, it is not known how long these travel restrictions will be in effect.
- The March 11, 2020 presidential proclamation temporarily bars the entry of foreign nationals who were physically present in the Schengen Area during the 14-day period preceding their attempted entry to the U.S. This includes foreign nationals of any...
nationality who hold a valid F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa to the U.S. (as well as Canadian citizens who are exempt from the F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa requirement). The Schengen Area includes the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The travel restrictions went into effect on Friday, March 13, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. At this time, it is not known how long these travel restrictions will be in effect.

- The March 14, 2020 presidential proclamation temporarily bars the entry of foreign nationals who were physically present in the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland during the 14-day period preceding their attempted entry to the U.S. This includes foreign nationals of any nationality who hold a valid F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa to the U.S. (as well as Canadian citizens who are exempt from the F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa requirement). The travel restrictions went into effect on Monday, March 16, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. At this time, it is not known how long these travel restrictions will be in effect.

International Student and Scholar Services is closely following the U.S. travel restrictions related to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic and will provide further updates as they become available.
Important Information regarding Embassy Contacts During COVID-19 (05/22/2020)

Please be advised that the U.S. Department of State (DoS) is posting country-specific repatriation information on its website. This includes a frequently updated list of foreign embassies and consulates, including possible repatriation flights. This information may be helpful if your exchange visitor program is scheduled to end soon and you experience difficulties returning to your home country due to lack of commercially available flights or travel restrictions. Please keep us apprised of your travel plans and proactively reach out to your respective embassy or nearest consulate prior to planning and embarking on international travel.

To access the information online:

- Click on link to Exchange Visitor Program Information on Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Then click on Embassy Contacts:
  - You will see links to documents in PDF format related to this topic (see screenshot of current document links posted below). Click on the link(s) to see the information included in the respective document and follow the instructions.

**EMBASSY CONTACTS (Updated twice on 5/12/2020)**

- Repatriation Assistance (PDF)
- Notice for Stranded Bangladesh Nationals (PDF)
Important Information for International Students and Scholars regarding Receipt of Erroneous Stimulus Payments by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (05/15/2020)

International Student and Scholar Services provided the information below regarding receipt of erroneous stimulus (economic impact) payments from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Please be advised that the IRS updated its online Economic Impact Payment Information Center on May 11, 2020 with detailed instructions on how to return an erroneous Economic Impact Payment (EIP). To access the information:

2. Then, click on Q41: What should I do to return an Economic Impact Payment (EIP)? (updated May 11, 2020)
3. Follow the IRS’ detailed instructions for returning the EIP to the IRS.

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) last week started to dispense stimulus payments to U.S. residents for tax purposes who filed a 2018 and/or 2019 federal income tax return. According to the U.S. Department of State, some international students and scholars in the U.S. who are actually nonresident aliens for federal tax purposes received a stimulus payment under the CARES Act because they erroneously filed a 2018 or 2019 Form 1040 as resident aliens for tax purposes.

If you erroneously filed a 2018 or 2019 federal income tax (Form 1040) with the IRS as a resident alien for tax purposes and therefore erroneously receive(d) the stimulus payment from the IRS in 2020, Arctic International LLC, owner of GLACIER Tax Prep (GTP), advises that there are two issues that require action:

Return of Stimulus Payment:

- With respect to the erroneous receipt of the stimulus payment, most importantly, the nonresident alien should NOT spend the erroneously received stimulus payment. To return the payment, we suggest that the individual follow the same guidelines provided by the IRS in case an incorrect federal tax refund is received, which are based on how the erroneous refund was received:
  - Paper check that has not yet been cashed/deposited;
  - Paper check that has already be cashed/deposited; or
  - Direct deposit made to the nonresident alien’s U.S. bank account.
For detailed information on how to return the incorrectly received stimulus payment to the IRS for each of the situations above, please go to https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc161.

Amendment of Incorrectly Filed 2018 and/or 2019 Federal Income Tax Return:

- The nonresident alien must immediately file an amended tax return. Information about how to amend the incorrectly filed 2018 and/or 2019 Form 1040 may be found in GTP by selecting “FAQ” from the menu. Please refer to the attached April 10, 2020 email reminder we sent to you for information on how to access GTP.

It is important to note that if the nonresident alien does not immediately return the erroneously received stimulus payment, they may be subject to interest accrued until the payment is returned. Also, until such time as the incorrectly filed federal income tax return is amended to submit the correct federal income tax return, the nonresident alien is subject to a filing penalty and/or loss of any otherwise applicable deductions or allowances, including income tax treaty exemptions. Failures to file a correct federal income tax return and/or filing a fraudulent federal income tax return are violations of U.S. tax law and may potentially impact current or future immigration status.

The IRS provides detailed online information regarding the Economic Impact Payments as well as a number of interactive tax tools that can assist interested individuals in determining eligibility to file taxes and the correct form to use:

- https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/dual-status-aliens
- https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/references-for-foreign-students-and-scholars
ISSS to issue electronically signed Form I-20s (04/02/2020)

Due to COVID-19, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has authorized schools to email a digitally signed Form I-20 using electronic signature software to the student’s email address listed in SEVIS.

In light of this, effective immediately and until further notice, when you apply for a travel signature or updated I-20 with a new major, a program extension or a benefit, such as Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT), ISSS will e-mail you a digitally signed I-20. E-mailed and/or digitally signed I-20s will be valid when printed.

Should you need an original Form I-20 in the future, ISSS will provide one to you once we are able to resume in-person services.
Full-time online study and F-1 Student Status (Spring 2020 semester)  
(03/18/2020)

The University of Miami sent out a communication on March 17, 2020 that all courses will be instructed online for the remainder of the Spring semester, which ends on May 6, 2020. We understand you may have concerns regarding how this may affect your F-1 student status. **Please note that students in F-1 status who are currently enrolled in a program of study may engage in full-time online study during the Spring 2020 semester whether they are currently in the U.S. or currently outside the U.S. In either case, your SEVIS record will remain active as long as you are taking a full-time load of online classes during the Spring 2020 semester.**

Students who continue to make normal progress in their course of study remain eligible for reentry to the United States. However, because of the changing array of travel restrictions, nonimmigrant students should refer to their local U.S. embassy’s website through the U.S. Department of State for any updates about visa issuance. Also, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites both provide information about current travel restrictions to the United States.
Effective immediately, ISSS’s in-person services are temporarily suspended until further notice:

- Advising will be available exclusively via isss@miami.edu.
- **For all leaving the United States, you do not need a travel signature on your I-20/DS-2019 before exiting the country.** Before you return to the US, please e-mail isss@miami.edu and request an updated travel signature. ISSS will mail to you a new Form I-20 or DS-2019.
- If you would like to apply for OPT, please submit copies of your application documents at www.miami.edu/optapplication. Upon receipt and processing, ISSS will mail to you an updated I-20. Please note you must be in the US to apply for OPT.

In addition to email and phone, you can now connect with your ISSS Advisor via Zoom Video Communications. In order to access this service, you will need to download Zoom. Click here for Zoom Instructions. Once you have access to Zoom, email your Advisor to request a meeting if you currently have any questions or concerns. Click here for your Advisor’s name and email.

Quick questions can best be answered by emailing your ISSS Advisor. You can also speak to your ISSS Advisor over the phone if you prefer. Email your ISSS Advisor your telephone number, and your Advisor will call you back.
The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) in the U.S. Department of State continues to monitor developments related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and acknowledges that universities are implementing significant operational or curricular changes in order to prevent unnecessary exposure to the disease and its spread. ECA recognizes that sponsors share its commitment to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all exchange visitors participating in the Exchange Visitor Program and the Americans with whom they interact.

Per guidance from the ECA, international students in J-1 status who are currently enrolled in a program of study at the University of Miami may engage in full-time online study until on-campus classes resume. Therefore, international students who choose to stay in the US for the rest of the semester will be considered to be in J-1 student status while taking a full-time load of online classes until on-campus classes resume this semester. Students with authorized Academic Training are encouraged to speak to their respective employer about alternative ways to maintain program objectives and/or employment, such as telework or other arrangements, and to keep their respective exchange visitor program sponsor updated.
New SEVP Guidance about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Procedural Adaptations for F Nonimmigrant Students (03/13/2020)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) continues to monitor developments with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and acknowledges that Universities are implementing significant operational or curricular changes. Per new guidance from SEVP, international students who are currently enrolled in a program of study may engage in full-time online study until on-campus classes resume. Therefore, international students who choose to stay in the US for the rest of the semester will be considered to be in F-1 student status while taking a full-time load of online classes until on-campus classes resume this semester.

For international students who plan to leave the US and re-enter the US after on-campus classes resume this semester, note that further travel restrictions may be implemented with short notice and some international students may not be able to return to the US in time.

For international students who will or have departed the US for the rest of the semester, being able to complete the semester online will depend on their professors/academic departments.

SEVP is monitoring this situation closely. It will supplement this guidance with additional information and will adjust guidance as needed. We will keep you updated as new guidance is provided.