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DHS Guidance for Spring 2021- Important Update

SEVP announced that the March 2020 guidance (the same guidance used during the Fall 2020 term) remains in effect until further notice. Based on this, the online course registration requirements a student followed in Fall continue to be in effect for that student during Spring. Students who were actively enrolled and in an active F-1 or J-1 SEVIS status as of March 9, 2020 may enroll in a fully online course of study and maintain status (full-time registration is still required). Students who do not meet this criteria are required to enroll in at least one in-person or blended/hybrid course to maintain F-
At this time, we ask that all students please review our UAlbany CIEGS/ISSS Spring 2021 Policy Guidance for F-1/J-1 Students. Click "Read More" below to access the guidance.

If you have any questions please email ISSS@albany.edu.

Quarantine and COVID Testing Requirements for Spring 2021

Yesterday, students received an email from the Dean of Students Office called "Spring 2021 Pre-arrival and Arrival Requirements." Please review it carefully to understand the COVID testing and safety requirements for all students in Spring 2021.

New York State (NYS) currently has a quarantine requirement for most international travelers and most travelers from other U.S. states. The full requirements are on the New York State website here: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory. It explains who needs to quarantine, how to quarantine, for how long, and links to a travelers form you need to complete when you arrive to the state.

Students who will live off-campus are responsible for arranging their own quarantine space. On-campus students who would like to arrange quarantine housing through the Office of Residential Life (if available) should review any emails from the Office of Residential Life and respond by the specified deadlines (ResLife@albany.edu).

In terms of COVID testing, there are NYS run and funded facilities which don't require insurance. Before getting tested please confirm with the testing site that it is state funded and/or insurance and payment isn't required.

Students can search for local test sites by Zip Code here: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you. Again, we suggest finding a state run facility and/or a facility which does not require insurance or other payment. If the facility requires insurance or other payment students are responsible for the costs.

Please continue to monitor the UAlbany COVID-19 website for the latest information: https://www.albany.edu/covid-19
Employment Workshop Schedule for Spring 2021 (OPT, CPT, and STEM OPT Workshops)

Every semester, ISSS offers a number of employment authorization workshops for students. This includes live Zoom workshops on CPT, OPT, and STEM OPT. In order to meet the scheduling needs of students during remote learning, we will also offer recorded versions of these workshops on our website to make them easily accessible if you are unable to attend a live workshop. Additionally, we will now be offering open Q&A sessions on Zoom which students can attend if they have follow up questions after viewing a workshop recording.

You can find a full schedule and Zoom links on our website here:  
https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/OPT%20Workshop%20Schedule%20Spring%202021.pdf

Here are some upcoming workshops:

**Post Completion OPT Workshop**  
Wednesday, January 20, 3:30-5:00pm  
Join Zoom Meeting  
https://albany.zoom.us/j/97123852005?pwd=L2pQQ210cjRYUUpuakpIVnJSS1VnZz09

**CPT Workshop**  
Wednesday, February 10, 3:30-5:00pm  
Join Zoom Meeting  
https://albany.zoom.us/j/92152390115?pwd=U0JqblFsTEdPWGU3MmljbFg0WTZCZz09

**STEM OPT Workshop**  
Wednesday, January 13, 3:30-5:00pm  
Join Zoom Meeting  
https://albany.zoom.us/j/96541681367?pwd=NmNDTTThOT3JBdCtVbXRjc2xtVUY5Zz09

**USCIS Lockbox Delays**

There have unfortunately been reports of extreme delays in USCIS processing of receipt notices nationwide. A few weeks ago USCIS sent out this message to stakeholders:

"The USCIS lockbox facilities have received a significant increase in filings in recent weeks. This increase, along with facility capacity restrictions necessary to protect the health and safety of the lockbox workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic, is causing significant delays for processing receipt notices."
We are collecting information from students who are experiencing these delays. If you have submitted an OPT or STEM OPT application and not yet received your receipt notice please fill out this brief survey: https://forms.gle/VzmUEdxB7KJ4wKL98

If you have a delivery confirmation from USPS/FedEx/UPS you are welcome to send that to ISSS and we will keep it with your file as additional documentation. You may also email USCIS at lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov with proof of delivery and inquire about your case.

Upcoming Events & Other Announcements

Save the Date: Doctoral Discussion Forums 1/13, 1/14, 1/19, 1/20, 1/21

The 2020-2021 Doctoral Discussion Forums will be held during the winter break. There are two sessions for each Forum. Listed below are the topics for each session. The panelists will address each topic. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions during the talks. The more questions you ask, the more you will benefit from the Forums. To attend the Forums, please RSVP to receive Zoom meeting information.

Session 1: Navigating Your Early PhD Career
Topics:
- Starting a PhD: What do you need to know for your first year? How doctoral study differs from previous academic pursuits?
- Developing your academic identity
- Moving from course focus to research focus
- Choosing a dissertation topic
- Forming a dissertation committee (picking a committee chair and working with a committee)

For STEM
Time: Wednesday, 1/13, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
RSVP: https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd
Panelists: Dr. Melinda Larsen (Biological Sciences)
Dr. Igor Lednev (Chemistry)
Dr. Ryan Torn (Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences)
Dr. Christine Wagner (Behavioral Neuroscience)

For Social Sciences
Time: Thursday, 1/14, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
RSVP: https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd
Panelists: Dr. Kajal Lahiri (Economics)
Dr. Melissa Tracy (Public Health)
Dr. Katherine Trent (Sociology)
Dr. Alan Wagner (Education)

*For Humanities*
Time: Thursday, 1/14, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
RSVP: [https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd](https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd)
Panelists: Dr. Rachel Cohon (Philosophy)
Dr. Griffith Glyne (English)
Dr. Lotfi Sayahi (Languages, Literatures, and Cultures)

**Session 2: Managing Your Dissertation and Planning Your Career Path**
Topics:
- Writing and defending the dissertation proposal
- Strategies for completing components of your dissertation
- Strategies for preparing for and defending your dissertation
- Creating your career path beyond your dissertation

*For Humanities*
Time: Tuesday, 1/19, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
RSVP: [https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd](https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd)
Panelists: Dr. Rachel Cohon (Philosophy)
Dr. Griffith Glyne (English)
Dr. Lotfi Sayahi (Languages, Literatures, and Cultures)

*For Social Sciences*
Time: Wednesday, 1/20, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
RSVP: [https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd](https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd)
Panelists: Dr. Kajal Lahiri (Economics)
Dr. Melissa Tracy (Public Health)
Dr. Katherine Trent (Sociology)
Dr. Alan Wagner (Education)

*For STEM*
Time: Thursday, 1/21, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM
RSVP: [https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd](https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mxLhuCOhYv75Gd)
Panelists: Dr. Melinda Larsen (Biological Sciences)
Dr. Igor Lednev (Chemistry)
Dr. Ryan Torn (Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences)
Dr. Christine Wagner (Behavioral Neuroscience)

Panelists will also integrate how to deal with setbacks, time management, and building a support system into their talks.
Questions? Please feel free to contact Yu-Hui Chen (ychen@albany.edu).

**Student Job Opening: UAlbany Fund**

UAlbany Fund Student Job Opportunity  
Wed, Jan 13 7:30 pm EST - 8:30 pm EST  
[https://albany.joinhandshake.com/events/646918](https://albany.joinhandshake.com/events/646918)

UAlbany Fund Student Job Opportunity  
Thu, Jan 14 7:30 pm EST - 8:30 pm EST  
[https://albany.joinhandshake.com/events/646928](https://albany.joinhandshake.com/events/646928)

**Blog: 10 Things to Remember When Searching for Jobs in the First Quarter of 2021**

Check out the latest blog post from Kwan Segal, Career Coach from ICAway. Click "Read More" below.

[Read More](#)

**Giftcard Raffle for Research Study on UAlbany International Students and Asian/ American Students**

UPDATE: Please note that we are including both East Asian and non-East Asian international students in the interviews/ Qualtrics surveys. Please disregard any text referencing “East Asians only.”

In search of volunteers for a research study on the impact of COVID-19 on international and East Asian American students at the University at Albany (Principal investigator, Professor Angie Y. Chung). The larger study (UAlbany IRB: 20X251) will involve a 20-30 minute phone or online interview, which will qualify you for two raffle entries for one of three $25 giftcards (Amazon, Korean BBQ Chicken, or Doordash). Or alternatively, you may complete the Qualtrics survey in the link below for one raffle entry. We have interviewers who can speak Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese if you prefer. If you are Korean, you will also have the option to participate in a fully paid 2-hour focus group session (York University IRB: e2020-213).

In order to qualify, you must be an East Asian international or Asian American student 18 years of age or older and currently enrolled at the University at Albany, regardless of student status, citizenship,
place of birth, or background.

For more information, please contact Professor Angie Y. Chung (aychung@albany.edu).

Qualtrics Survey: https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6s7pE0fotHH0SPz

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