The below ISSS policy guidance is in response to July 24th federal DHS/ICE/SEVP regulatory guidance pertaining to F-1 student study for the Fall 2020 term. Federal regulatory guidance is subject to change, and our institutional policies may need to be adjusted pending future guidance.

Continuing Students Currently Inside the U.S.

- Students in the U.S. who were in active F-1 status in March 2020 may be enrolled in any combination of courses including fully online, blended/hybrid and in-person; they must be registered full-time (12 credits for undergraduate students and 9 credits for graduate students) or have an approved reduced course load authorization; and they must be making normal progress towards graduation.
- Students with a pending SEVIS transfer record who were in active F-1 status in March 2020 and are inside the U.S. are expected to begin courses in Fall 2020 and follow normal transfer-in procedures, SEVIS transfer students must be registered full-time which may include courses that are fully online, blended/hybrid and in-person.
- Should the university have to move to an all remote instruction model due to an outbreak, continuing international students may remain in the U.S. and study fully online during fall 2020.

Continuing Students Currently Outside the U.S. Planning to Enter the U.S. to Study

- Students seeking entry into the U.S. who were in active F-1 status in March 2020 may be enrolled in any combination of courses including fully online, blended/hybrid and in-person; they must be registered full-time (12 credits for undergraduate students and 9 credits for graduate students) or have an approved reduced course load authorization; and be making normal progress towards graduation. This includes students with a pending SEVIS transfer record who were in active F-1 status in March 2020 and will be seeking entry into the U.S.
- It is recommended that students entering the U.S. be registered for at least one in-person or blended/hybrid course prior to their entry in the event they need to substantiate their registration upon request for admission into the country.
- Before seeking entry to the U.S. students should consider:
  - Currently there are federal bans which prevent entry F-1/J-1 students who have been present in the following regions/countries in the 14 days preceding their attempted entry: China; Iran; European Schengen countries; the United Kingdom and Ireland; and Brazil. (U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are exempt.
from these bans). However, a recent automatic national interest exemption has been given to F-1/J-1 students from European Schengen countries, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

- There are currently restrictions on land entry from Canada and Mexico.
- Even outside of these federal bans, flights and airline travel worldwide are severely limited at this time.
- Students are required to have a valid I-20/DS-2019 (continuing students must also have a DSO/ARO travel signature from within the past year), valid passport (with at least 6 months validity remaining), and valid F-1/J-1 visa when seeking admission to the United States.
- Students should review expectations for quarantining from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and NYS Department of Health and [for the University at Albany](#).

**New Students Outside the U.S. Planning to Enter the U.S. to Study**

- New students seeking entry into the U.S. to begin study for the first time must be enrolled full-time including at least one course or one credit of in-person blended/hybrid instruction. New students cannot take a fully online course load.
- Before seeking entry to the U.S., students should consider:
  - Currently there are federal bans which prevent entry F-1/J-1 students who have been present in the following regions/countries in the 14 days preceding their attempted entry: China; Iran; European Schengen countries; the United Kingdom and Ireland; and Brazil. (U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are exempt from these bans). However, a recent automatic national interest exemption has been given to F-1/J-1 students from European Schengen countries, the United Kingdom and Ireland.
  - There are currently restrictions on land entry from Canada and Mexico.
  - Even outside of these federal bans, flights and airline travel worldwide are severely limited at this time.
  - Students are required to have a valid I-20/DS-2019 (continuing students must also have a DSO/ARO travel signature from within the past year), valid passport (with at least 6 months validity remaining), and valid F-1/J-1 visa when seeking admission to the United States.
  - Students should review expectations for quarantining from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and NYS Department of Health and [for the University at Albany](#).

- Should the university have to move to an all remote instruction model due to an outbreak, new international students will have needed to complete an in-person component of their in-person or blended/hybrid course in order to remain in the U.S.
Continuing Students Studying Outside the U.S.

- Students studying outside the U.S. who are in active F-1 status in March 2020 can maintain an active SEVIS record as long as they are enrolled full-time or have an approved reduced course load authorization.
- Students outside the U.S. who do not maintain a full course load will not be able to continue in F-1 status and therefore their I-20 will be terminated. When a SEVIS record is terminated a student must obtain a new I-20 before returning to the U.S. If the student’s F-1 visa expired while the student was overseas, the student must also renew the visa before returning to the U.S. Students returning to the U.S. for a future term should begin discussing their return with an ISSS advisor approximately 3 months before their intended return.
- University policy states that students cannot work for UAlbany (including assistantships) if they are not physically present at Albany; please contact your employment supervisor and Human Resources for more details.

New Students Studying Outside the U.S. in Fall 2020

- New Undergraduate/Bachelor’s students planning to begin study fully online from outside the U.S. should notify ISSS so that other offices may be notified as well (including Orientation, Academic Advising, and Residential Life).
- New Graduate (Master’s/PhD) students planning to begin study fully online from outside the U.S. should notify ISSS and consult their academic department about beginning fully online.
- Students should also notify Undergraduate Admissions or Graduate Admissions to obtain a new I-20 with a Spring 2021 or other start date, as that will be the new intended term for which the student plans to enter the U.S. for non-fully online study.
- Students must obtain a F-1 student visa prior to being able to enter the U.S. Visas are issued by the U.S. Department of State. There is never a guarantee that a visa will be issued, as the discretion lies with federal officials.
- Students cannot work for UAlbany (including assistantships) if they are not physically present at Albany; please contact your employment supervisor and Human Resources for more details.
- Pending any further DHS guidance contradicting this issue, students who intend to enter to the U.S. for in-person study in Spring 2021 or possibly another future term will be able to have their time spent studying full-time overseas count toward the academic year requirement for practical training while studying full-time from outside the U.S. All other CPT/OPT eligibility requirements must continue to be met, including that the student is in an active F-1 status at the time of the practical training. Please note that DHS/USCIS is the agency that approves the OPT application, not UAlbany ISSS.

Continuing Students Not Taking Courses in Fall 2020

- If a student will not be taking any courses in Fall 2020 the student’s F-1 or J-1 SEVIS record will be terminated and the student must depart the U.S. within 15 days of SEVIS termination.

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• Undergraduate students should withdraw through Undergraduate Education and will be required to apply for readmission through Undergraduate Education before returning for future study.
• Master’s and PhD level students should notify their department and Graduate Education for further guidance on the withdrawal, leave of absence, and return process.
• When a SEVIS record is terminated a student must obtain a new I-20 before returning to the U.S. If the student’s F-1/J-1 visa expired while the student was overseas, the student must also renew the visa before returning to the U.S. Students returning to the U.S. for a future term should begin discussing their return with an ISSS advisor approximately 3 months before their intended return.
• When a student takes a break from full-time study (i.e. when a student doesn’t take classes during the regular fall or spring term), the academic year requirement for practical training eligibility restarts from the semester the student resumes study. This means that the student would need to complete two more semesters full-time (a fall and a spring term) after resuming study before being eligible for CPT/OPT.

New Students Not Taking Courses in Fall 2020
• If a student chooses to defer admission to a future term the student should contact ISSS and Undergraduate/Graduate Admissions.
• Based on current DHS guidance, students with a pending SEVIS transfer who are outside the U.S. may have their transfer-in deferred to a future term as well. As mentioned earlier in this document, students with a pending SEVIS transfer who are inside the U.S. are expected to begin courses in Fall 2020 and follow normal transfer-in procedures, including registering full-time in any combination of courses. Any students who are currently inside the U.S. with a pending SEVIS transfer and not planning to start in Fall 2020 should contact ISSS about their plans.