

FAQ AMID COVID-19 FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS F-1 VISA HOLDERS

Q. Will Pace reopen in the Spring 2021 semester?

A. PACE UNIVERSITY is reopening its campuses. Spring semester begins on January 23 with two weeks of remote classes. In-person classes begin on February 8. To learn more about reopening Pace campuses follow the link: <https://www.pace.edu/return-to-campus/students>

Q. Where can I read in more details about F-1 visa status maintenance amid COVID-19?

A. SEVP guidance has been updated on August 7, 2020 and is pertaining to the academic year 2020--2021. The most updated [set of FAQs](#) from August. 7, 2020 now governs F-1 status amid COVID-19..

Q. As a continuing student currently in the U.S. can I chose online classes for the Spring 2021 semester? Will I remain in F-1 lawful status?

A. Yes, you may enroll full-time in online classes or in a combination of classes [in-person/hybrid and online]. You will maintain an F-1 status, as long as you are a full-time student.

Q. As a continuing student outside the U.S. can I chose online classes for the Spring 2021 semester? Will I maintain F-1 status taking one remaining class online from overseas?

A. Continuing students outside the U.S. may take online classes (full-time load) and remain in status. However, you must discuss your class schedule with an academic advisor.

Q. I've been on LOA, and am resuming my studies for fall. Can I take classes online?

A. *By SEVIS definition you are a new student. Your I-20 was issued for "initial"/resumption of studies attendance. Therefore a different set of SEVP rule applies. If you are staying in the home country, due to travel restrictions, your SEVIS record will not be activated.* We will defer you in SEVIS to the next semester and re-issue an updated I-20 with a new start program date. You may take classes online.

If you manage to come back to the U.S. to resume your degree study in spring, your SEVIS record will be activated, and you will be required to enroll full-time in a combination of classes (hybrid, in-person and online).

Q. Will I lose my F-1 status staying in my home country for 5 months or more?

A. No. As long as you continue your degree study full-time, 5-month physical presence clock is waived

Q. I am a continuing student outside the U.S. enrolled in online classes for the Spring 2021 semester. I was charged with annual insurance fee. Do you I need to pay for the health insurance if I am outside the U.S.?

A. No, you do not need to pay. You need to waive the fee. Download the [Waiver Form](#). Check off the box – "studying from my home country" and send it via email (as an email attachment) to the insurance company. The email address is listed on the form.

Q. I am a PhD student and I have completed the degree requirements but am working on dissertation research, can I continue remotely?

A. PhD students who have completed coursework and are engaged in research, while registered for 'maintaining matriculation', remain active in SEVIS.

Q. I was authorized for CPT but amid COVID-19 the worksite has been transferred to online environment? Is teleworking allowed under CPT employment authorization?

A. Continuing students who are in the U.S. pursuing practical training/CPT will maintain active SEVIS status if CPT employer switched to work remotely. This is contingent upon current employer's directions and remote supervision.

Q. Can students with proper authorization participate in Curricular Practical Training (CPT) while they are abroad?

A. Students may engage in CPT during their time abroad, provided the employer has an office outside the U.S. or the employer can assess student engagement and attainment of learning objectives remotely.

Q. I was authorized for OPT but amid COVID-19 the worksite has been transferred to online environment. Is teleworking allowed under OPT employment authorization?

A. OPT holders will maintain status working remotely as long as OPT employer's worksite is temporary online amid COVID-19. This is contingent upon current employer's directions and remote supervision

Q. Does time spent studying outside of the U.S. during the COVID-19 emergency count toward the one-year requirement for CPT and OPT? If I spend this semester in the home country while taking classes online, do I preserve an off-campus employment eligibility clock?

A. Yes, you accrue eligibility for practical training CPT/OPT whether you are inside or outside of the U.S. during the COVID-19 emergency if you are active in SEVIS and continue maintaining F-1 status.

Q. This is my last semester of study, I have only one class left. I am staying overseas, and unable to come back to campus at this time due to travel restrictions. Will I maintain F-1 status taking one remaining class online from abroad?

A. Yes. However, last semester students interested in applying for OPT but are outside the U.S., need to come back before semester ends in order to apply for OPT.

Q. I have been in my country for a while taking fall semester classes online. Do I need a travel signature in order to come back and begin spring semester in-person?

A. Travel signature is valid for 12 months now. If you need a travel signature, submit a request in [ISS Connect](#)

Q. Can ISS sign my I-20 electronically? Can I travel with a soft copy of I-20?

A. Yes, due to COVID-19, DSOs may electronically sign Forms I-20 and provide it to the student's email addresses listed in SEVIS or through other University online portals. We will sign your I-20 electronically and send you the instructions how to obtain a soft copy of the endorsed I-20 in ISS Connect.

Q. Are there still travel restrictions? Will travel bans be lifted anytime soon?

A. [Coronavirus Travel Bans by Presidential Proclamation](#) are still in effect. F-1 students from Schengen Area, UK and Ireland have been granted a "national interest" waiver of the entry ban and are considered as "essential" travellers. Continuing students planning to come back for spring semester, should contact the U.S. embassy in the home country to verify if an exception applies to them.

Q. How can I schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor?

A. ISS advising appointments are available via SKYPE/ZOOM. To schedule a Skype Appointment, visit [ISS Connect](#) and select an advisor's name to view appointment times.

Q. I have a question about my class schedule for spring semester

A. Questions about class schedule for the Spring 2021 semester should be addressed to academic advisors.