

FAQ AMID COVID-19 FOR NEW 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. I am a transfer student for the Spring 2021 semester and I am currently in the U.S. Can I chose online classes for the Spring 2021 semester? Will I remain in F-1 lawful status?

A. New international students who are in the U.S. (transferring from another SEVP-approved school) may take classes online towards their full course of study in the Spring 2021 semester and remain in status, as long as student's SEVIS record has been activated.

Q. I am a transfer student for the Spring 2021 semester and am currently outside the U.S. Can I travel back to the U.S. in order to start spring semester classes?

A. Yes, you may come back, as long as you are registered for in in-person/hybrid classes.

Q. As a new student outside the U.S. can I chose online classes for the Spring 2021 semester and maintain F-1 status?

A. No. Your F-1 status begins when you cross the U.S. border. Pace can offer a selection of online coursework so that you can start your degree online either part-time or full-time.

Q. As a new student inside the U.S. can I chose online classes for the Spring 2021 semester and maintain F-1 status?

A. No, as a new international student, F-1 visa holder, you can only join Pace University for in-person and hybrid classes. Online classes are not permitted under your initial SEVIS status.

Q. I am a new student outside the U.S. enrolled in online classes for the Spring 2021 semester. I was charged 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've been on a Leave of Absence, 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 you are under SEVP rule for new students. **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. I am a new student staying in the home country for the Spring 2021 semester due to travel restrictions. Does time spent outside the U.S. during COVID-19 count toward employment eligibility clock for CPT. Is my clock on?

A. No, you will not accrue an employment eligibility for practical training (CPT) since your SEVIS record will not be activated until after you arrive to the U.S., enroll full-time and maintain F-1 status.

Q. I am a new student for spring. My I-20 was issued already by Pace University. I have paid the SEVIS fee as well as the DS-160 visa application fee, BUT I am unable to come in person for spring semester due to travel restrictions and suspended visa services. Will I have to pay the fees again?

A. If you have already been issued an I-20 form but are unable to come in person for the Spring 2021 semester, we will defer your SEVIS record to the next semester. SEVIS fee is valid for one year. DS-160 visa application fee is valid for one year as well.

Q. If you defer me in SEVIS to the Fall 2021 semester, how I will get a new I-20 for fall? Would my new I-20 have the same SEVIS ID number, so I could retain the I-901 SEVIS fee receipt?

A. Yes. An updated I-20 with the same SEVIS ID number will be available for you via secure online channels. You will retain same SEVIS ID number, even though you will receive an I-20 with a new program start date.

Q. Will you sign my updated I-20 electronically? Can I obtain visa and travel to the U.S. with a soft copy of I-20?

A. Yes, due to COVID-19, DSOs may electronically sign Forms I-20 and provide it to student email addresses listed in SEVIS or through legitimate school's online portals. U.S. Consular Services and CBP are accepting digital signatures and a PDF of I-20 amid COVID-19.

Q. Is there a timeline for the U.S. Consular Services abroad to resume visa services?

A. Even though there are countries where visa services have been resumed or expected to resume soon, it is happening now on a post-by-post basis depending on the pandemic situation in each given country. We are unable to provide a specific date for when each mission will resume specific visa services. Please frequently check the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate's website](#) for information regarding the consulate operating status and which services it currently offers.

Q. Are there still travel restrictions? Will travel bans be lifted by the time I am planning to arrive to campus?

A. [Coronavirus Travel Bans by Presidential Proclamation](#) are still in effect. Recently F-1 students from Schengen Area, UK and Ireland have been granted a "national interest" waiver of the entry ban and are considered "essential" travelers. We recommend contacting the U.S. embassy in your home country to verify if an **exception applies to you**.

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.