

# International Students Guide for the fall 2020 Semester

## What You Need To Know

On July 24, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued an Update on Federal Guidance for F-1 students for fall 2020 semester.

On August 7, 2020 FAQs. SEVP posted a revised set of COVID-19 FAQs dated August 7, 2020 at [www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf)

### General Information

Active F and M students, as well as schools certified by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) should abide by SEVP guidance originally issued in [March 2020](#).

- I. The guidance enables schools and students to engage in distance learning in excess of regulatory limits due to the public health emergency generated by COVID-19.
- II. The March 2020 guidance applies to nonimmigrant students who were actively enrolled at a U.S. school on March 9, 2020, and are otherwise complying with the terms of their nonimmigrant status, whether from inside the United States OR from abroad.

### SUMMARY OF MARCH 2020 GUIDANCE FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS

- I. As stated in the March 2020 guidance, Active F and M students will be permitted to temporarily count online classes towards a full course of study in excess of the regulatory limits stated in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G) and 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(m)(9)(v).
- II. The March 2020 guidance applies to continuing F and M nonimmigrant students who were in valid F-1 or M-1 nonimmigrant status on March 9, 2020, including those previously enrolled in entirely online classes who are outside of the United States and seeking to re-enter the country this fall.

*Q1: What is the new policy for Continuing Students?*

- I. The new policy continues the March Guidance for the Fall 2020 School semester and states that F-1 students in ACTIVE STATUS will be permitted to temporarily count online classes towards a full course of study that is more than the required maximum limit for online classes.

*Q2: I am an active/continuing student. How do I know if the continued March 2020 guidance applies to me?*

The continued March 2020 guidance applies to you if you were:

1. in valid or active F-1 status on March 9, 2020
2. previously enrolled in ONLY online classes while outside of the United States and seeking to re-enter the country the fall semester.

*Q3: I am a continuing F-1 student in active SEVIS status since March 9 and I am OUTSIDE of the U.S. Can I return to Owens for the fall 2020?*

Yes. Students actively enrolled at a U.S. school on March 9, 2020, who **subsequently took courses online while outside of the country, CAN re-enter the United States.**

***Q4: I am an F-1 student in active SEVIS status since March 9. For how many online courses can I enroll?***

**Continuing F-1 students will be permitted to take any amount of online classes toward a full course of study of 12 credit hours.**

*However, we recommend that you choose the type of classes that will best suit your learning style, and which will be the most beneficial to you in making academic progress.*

### **MAINTAINING STUDENT RECORDS**

***Q5: Do DSOs have to cancel Forms I-20 if students are taking classes outside of the United States? If their SEVIS record remain in Active status, will the students be subject to the five-month rule?***

- If an Active F student is outside the United States, their SEVIS record can remain in Active status and not be terminated.
- While the temporary measures related to COVID-19 are in place, students are deemed to be maintaining status if they are making normal progress in their course of study.
- For that reason, the five-month temporary absence provision addressed in 8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(4) will not apply for students who remain in Active status.
- SEVP will allow F-1 students to temporarily count online classes toward a full course of study in excess of the limits stated in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G) and 8 CFR 214.2(m)(9)(v), even if they are outside the United States and are taking the online classes elsewhere.

### **SUMMARY OF MARCH 2020 GUIDANCE FOR NEW OR INITIAL STUDENTS**

- II. In accordance with March 2020 guidance, F and M students in **new or initial status after March 9, 2020, will NOT be able to enter the United States to enroll in a U.S. school as a nonimmigrant student for the fall term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online.**
- III. Also consistent with the [SEVP Broadcast Message dated March 9, 2020](#), designated school officials should not issue a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," for a student in new or initial status who is outside of the United States and plans to take classes at an SEVP-certified educational institution that is operating 100 percent online.

***Q6: Who are NEW/INITIAL students?***

A new or initial F-1 student is a student who has an I-20 with INITIAL ATTENDANCE as the Form Issue Reason on Page 1, and who is currently outside of the U.S.

***Q7: I am a NEW/INITIAL student outside of the U.S. How does the continued March 2020 guidance affect my enrollment for the fall 2020 semester?***

F-1 students in new or initial status coming to Owens for the fall 2020, will **not** be able to enroll for a full course of study that is 100 percent online. This means that you **MUST be enrolled for a minimum of ONE on campus class of at least three credit hours.**

***Q8: I am a student on a government scholarship. How does the new guidance affect my fall 2020 enrollment?***

Students on scholarships from the Kuwaiti Embassy of the State of Kuwait Cultural Division or the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM), **MUST adhere to the requirements of their scholarship regarding online/ distance learning.**

***Q9: What will happen if I start the fall semester under an in-person or hybrid model that moves to an online model in the middle of the semester?***

Students will still be categorized in the “hybrid model” and can stay in the U.S., as some classes were initially offered in-person and others online.

***Q10: Are there travel precautions or guidelines for me to follow when I return to the U.S. from international travel?***

Yes. Follow the CDC guidelines. ***Please be mindful of these guidelines when planning your return to attend Owens State Community College for the fall semester.***

Find the CDC guidelines here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html> and below:

Stay home for 14 days from the time that you arrived in the U.S. from international travel. *During this 14-day period, take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing:*

1. Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also, watch for [cough or trouble breathing](#). Use this [temperature log](#) to monitor your temperature.
2. Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school.
3. Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.
4. Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

***Q11: Is the U.S. travel ban still in place for entry from some countries?***

Restrictions are still in place which do not allow entry of those who [spent the previous 14 days in China, Iran, the European Schengen area, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, or Brazil](#)

See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html>

***Q12: What educational or operational plan is Owens adopting for the fall 2020 semester?***

Owens is following a **hybrid operational plan** for fall 2020 semester with a mix of the following types of classes:

- **Face-to-face** or on-campus classes
- **Hybrid classes**-a mix of face-to-face and online classes

- **Synchronous classes**-live but online, which will meet at a set date and time, with students engaging in real time with their instructor
- **Asynchronous classes**-traditional web based classes without a set meeting time

Face-to-face classes, as well as in person services on campus, will adopt protective measures such as required facial coverings, physical distancing, and continued deep cleaning.

***Q13: How and where can I get more information on SEVP's guidelines?***

- The international office is working to create **virtual orientation sessions** that will address *self-quarantine, ICE/SEVP regulations and regular orientation matters*. During the virtual orientation sessions, you will have the opportunity to ask questions or you may [contact](#) International Student Services with specific questions.
  - Virtual orientation information will be sent to your Owens student account.
- **You may also find additional resources here:**
  - <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2020/07/read-an-update-on-federal-guidance-for-the-fall-semester>
  - <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf> (Last Updated: Aug. 7, 2020)

**Updates:**

Note that this information is fluid and could change as additional clarifications are released.

We will continue to update students via email and through an FAQ link on our website at <https://www.owens.edu/international/fulltime/>