

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO FIU NEW AND CONTINUING STUDENTS FOR FALL 2020 (after July 6 SEVP Guidance Update)

SEVP released their latest COVID-19 and Fall 2020 Guidance Update on July 6, 2020. This information must have generated a lot of questions and concerns, but please know that the ISSS Office and the FIU Community are here to assist and provide you with the support you need to ensure your success while you are our student.

So based on the latest information provided, ISSS offers the following guidance:

ARE YOU A NEW OR CONTINUING STUDENT IN THE UNITED STATES OR PLANNING TO COME BACK IN THE FALL 2020?

- In order to maintain your F1 status while in the US, international students at FIU must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours (Undergraduate) and 9 credit hours (Graduate). You must take **as many of the available face-to-face or hybrid classes offered that will count towards their program of study as possible (at least ONE)**. SEVP requires F-1 international students to take these classes and make normal progress toward completing the degree program.
- Students attending schools adopting a hybrid model—that is, a mixture of online, hybrid, and in person classes—will be allowed to take more than one class or three credit hours online.
- Students may not take a full online/remote course load and remain in active status while in the United States
- Contact your academic advisor for assistance if you are having difficulty finding face-to-face or hybrid courses.

ARE YOU CONTINUING STUDENT IN THE UNITED STATES OR PLANNING TO COME BACK IN THE FALL 2020 EXPECTING TO GRADUATE IN FALL 2020?

- If this is your last semester of study and you are expected to graduate this Fall 2020, please note that you must be enrolled in at least one course face-to-face or hybrid that will count towards your program of study.
- Student must also apply for graduation and submit a [Reduced Course Load for Completion of Degree](#) form in order to justify their under enrollment in their last term.
- Students may not take a full online/remote course load and remain in active status while in the United States
- Contact your academic advisor for assistance if you are having difficulty finding face-to-face or hybrid courses.

ARE YOU A CONTINUING STUDENT CURRENTLY IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY?

- If you are a continuing student who is back in your home country and you decide that you are not returning to FIU for the Fall 2020, or you are unable to return due to travel restrictions, you must submit a [COVID-19 LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM](#). This form will enable you to take a leave of absence while you stay in your home country and our office will update your I-20 accordingly.
- Once you are ready to return to the United States in the Spring 2021 or any subsequent term, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to get in touch with the ISSS Office to get your updated I-20.
- If your F-1 visa expires while you are in your country during your Leave of Absence, it is your responsibility to renew it at your local US Embassy/Consulate to be able to enter the United States when you are able to come back.
- If you decide to take courses while you are still in your country, you will not be subject to the full-load requirement (you can be enrolled for as many credits as you wish).

ARE YOU A NEW STUDENT CURRENTLY IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY?

- If you are a newly admitted student for fall 2020 and you decide not to come to FIU in the fall, or you are unable to travel due to travel restrictions, you **MUST** contact the **Office of International Admissions** to let them know. You may contact admissions via:
 - iadmiss@fiu.edu
 - WhatsApp: +1(786)702-0031 – Students should send a message to set up an appropriate time for a phone call.
- If you have submitted a **Housing** contract to live at the FIU Residence Halls and you need to change your arrival date or cancel, please contact the Housing Office directly at housing@fiu.edu
- **Pre-Arrival Sessions**- Please stay alert to messages from the ISSS Office. New students will be invited to these useful sessions where you will be able to ask questions and receive important information to prepare for your arrival at FIU. For dates and times visit <https://globalaffairs.fiu.edu/iss/international-students/new-f1-students/international-student-sessions/>
- If you are a new student, you **MUST** attend a **Welcome International Student Session**. This is a session **IN ADDITION** to your regular Orientation. Date and time information here <https://globalaffairs.fiu.edu/iss/international-students/new-f1-students/international-student-sessions/>

TRAVEL INFORMATION

If you are in your country and wish to start planning for your return to the United States, please be reminded that the ISSS Office is not the best source for travel information. The best sources are your airline, your local American Embassy, and the [Center for Disease Control information](#).

VISA INFORMATION

Please continue to monitor the opening of your local American Embassy. Each country will be following its own schedule so check with them in order to make an appointment for your visa interview. You can check the status of your local embassy here <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

Questions? Concerns? Visit our [VIRTUAL OFFICE](https://go.fiu.edu/virtualoffice) at go.fiu.edu/virtualoffice