

Special Forum
Fall 2020
Immigration
Update for
Students

Tufts International Center
July 16, 2020



Before We Begin

- Please mute your audio
- Chat room will be disabled until we start the Q&A period
- Refer to <https://icenter.tufts.edu/immigration/covid-19> for ongoing updates

Today's Topics

- Travel Updates
- July 6 ICE Guidance and Aftermath
- Questions and Answers

- Next Forum: Wednesday, July 22 at 10am – go to announcement on icenter.tufts.edu web site

Travel Conditions

- **COVID-19 travel suspensions still in effect** for persons trying to come to the US from China, Iran, Schengen countries of Western Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Brazil
 - Entry to US not permitted if you were in these countries or regions within the 14 day period prior to attempting entry into the US
 - Includes transit stops
- Non-essential (tourism) travel to US from Canada and Mexico still restricted
 - Student travel OK

Travel Conditions

- Still need standard travel documents to enter the US for Fall 2020
 - Unexpired passport
 - F-1 entry visa (except Canadian citizens)
 - Form I-20 from Tufts
 - New students should also carry copies of admission letter and financial documents and I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt
- Phased re-opening of US visa services in consulates, will depend on local conditions
 - <https://usembassy.gov>
 - **COVID-19 travel suspensions still in effect** for persons trying to come to the US from China, Iran, Schengen countries of Western Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Brazil

July 6, 2020 ICE Guidance – WITHDRAWN!

- Guidance announced on July 6 by Immigration and Customs Enforcement regarding Fall 2020 semester requiring students taking only online classes to leave US
- Challenged in courts by Harvard / MIT, Johns Hopkins, multiple other universities (including Tufts), state of Massachusetts, California, and many more
- **Withdrawn** by the government on July 14 – government has agreed to return us to March 2020 rules
- **However**: March 2020 rules are very specific to the Spring 2020 semester. Not completely clear how they apply to Fall 2020

Next Steps

- International Center and other schools are working to get some final questions answered from government
- Confirming with each school their plans for the Fall 2020 semester

New Students

- New students – i.e., students with no previous F-1 visa history – who will be outside the US for Fall 2020 term may take on-line classes, but are not required to do so
- New students cannot come to the US in F-1 status if their programs are on-line only, even if they have a visa; however they may take on-line classes from home country
- New students who come to the US must take some in-person or hybrid classes and must be full-time
 - **Current recommendation:** try to limit on-line classes to one class for your first 9 credits (for graduate students) or 12 credits (for undergraduate students)

Continuing and Transfer Students

- Continuing students can now stay in the US and maintain status through on-line or a combination of on-line and in-person/hybrid courses
- Continuing students taking full-time remote classes outside the US will be maintained in active status for return in Spring or later
 - Students who are taking a leave of absence will have SEVIS records deactivated
- Transfer students inside the US will be able to complete the F-1 transfer to Tufts for Fall 2020 as long as you are enrolled full-time, regardless of course modality

Updated I-20 Forms – No Longer Needed

- July 6 guidance said that schools must reissue new I-20s to all students applying for visas or coming (back) to the US
- The requirement has been eliminated now that the July 6 guidance was withdrawn
- However, some embassies already put into operation the July 6 guidance, it will take them a few days to catch up

Students on Study / Research Abroad

- Continuing students engaged in Tufts study abroad programs or graduate students who are doing research abroad during Fall 2020 will have SEVIS record maintained in active status

F-1 Enrollment Requirements

- Continuing students must still enroll full-time for Fall 2020 to maintain F-1 status and keep their SEVIS records in active status
 - Continuing students taking classes outside the US – waiting for more specific processing instructions from the government
- Students can still request reduced course load, if inside the US, for the following reasons (see <https://icenter.tufts.edu/fl-reduced-courseload>)
 - First semester academic difficulties
 - Final semester (cannot take only on-line classes)
 - Medical condition (requires recommendation from medical doctor)

OPT / CPT Timeline

- OPT and CPT eligibility require two consecutive semesters of full-time study in the US
- New students who do not arrive until Spring 2021 will not start the “Practical Training” clock until Spring 2021
- Continuing students may include Fall 2020 as one semester even if studying / researching outside the US, as long as registered full-time

Q&A and Thank You

- Updated FAQs on web site coming soon
 - <https://icenter.tufts.edu/immigration/covid-19>
- Send questions to internationalcenter@tufts.edu
- Thank you for coming!