



# INTERNATIONAL

## International Programs and Global Engagement (IPGE) Alert Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**March 23, 2020**

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Services (USCIS) has developed an FAQ in response to COVID-19. Read more below.

### **Non-Immigrant Students Maintaining Student Records**

**Question:** Many F and M students may choose to travel home and complete the spring term remotely. Since they are still enrolled, do DSOs have to cancel their Forms I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," if they are taking classes outside of the United States? If their Student and Exchange Visitor Homeland Security Investigations National Security Investigations Division Student and Exchange Visitor Program Information System (SEVIS) records remain in Active status, will students be subject to the five-month rule?

**Answer:** Under current conditions, if an active F student leaves the United States to complete the spring term online, their SEVIS record should remain in Active status and not be terminated. While the temporary measures related to COVID-19 are in place, students 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 and M 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 have left the United States and are taking the online classes elsewhere. This temporary provision is only in effect due to COVID-19.

**Question:** Due to COVID-19, what is the requirement for Initial status students who have already arrived in the United States?

**Answer:** Initial status students currently in the United States that have reported to their school should be made Active in SEVIS, and follow the guidelines the school provides to all its F and M students related to COVID-19. If Initial students have not arrived in the United States, they should remain in their home country.

## **Employment**

**Question:** Can students with proper authorization participate in curricular practical training (CPT) while they are abroad?

**Answer:** Students may engage in CPT during their time abroad, provided they are:

- Enrolled in a program of study in which CPT is integral to the program of study;
- Their DSO authorized CPT in advance of the CPT start date; and
- Either the employer has an office outside the United States or the employer can assess student engagement and attainment of learning objectives electronically.

## **Student Return to the United States**

**Question:** Will F and M students be able to return to the United States if they are continuing their studies outside of the country as a result of COVID-19?

**Answer:** Students who continue to make normal progress in their course of study remain eligible for admission into the United States. However, because of the changing array of travel restrictions, students should refer to their local embassy's website through the U.S. Department of State for any updates about visa issuance. Also, DHS and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) websites provide information about current travel restrictions to the United States.