

Broadcast Message: Follow-up: ICE continues March Guidance for Fall School Term

To: All SEVIS Users

Date: July 24, 2020

Number: 2007-02

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](#). 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. 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 abroad. SEVP will not issue a temporary final rule impacting F and M students for the fall school term.

Summary of March 2020 Guidance for Continuing Students

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). 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. 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, even if their school is engaged solely in distance learning.

Summary of March 2020 Guidance for Initial Students

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. 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.

Additional Information

Stakeholders can refer to SEVP's current policy guidance and frequently asked questions at [ICE.gov/Coronavirus](https://ice.gov/Coronavirus), under the Nonimmigrant Students and SEVP-certified Schools header:

- [Broadcast Message 2003-01: Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and Potential Procedural Adaptations for F and M Nonimmigrant Students](#) (March 9, 2020).

- [COVID-19: Scenarios for SEVP-certified Schools for Emergency Procedures](#) (March 13, 2020).
- [Frequently Asked Questions from SEVP Stakeholders about COVID-19.](#)

SEVP recently updated its [frequently asked questions](#) with information to clarify the application of the March 2020 guidance to the fall 2020 semester and will continue to update these resources with the latest information and guidance for stakeholders. The program will continue to provide updates to the academic community through our communication channels, including Broadcast Messages, SEVP field representatives, Study in the States blog posts and social media.

Stakeholders should continue to refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of State and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the latest COVID-19 information, specific port-of-entry screening processes, as well as any travel restrictions.

Disclaimer

This Broadcast Message is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule or a final action by SEVP. It is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil or criminal matter.

