



April 6, 2021

Rutgers is planning to welcome all students back to campus, including our 8,000+ international students, for the fall 2021 semester. While we hope to provide an in-person experience for all students, we also understand that there are several variables that may impact an international student's ability to arrive on-campus for the fall. Please be assured that Rutgers will continue to support you in your educational journey, on-campus as well as online.

On Thursday, March 25, President Jonathan Holloway shared his message [Our Path Forward](#) – COVID-19 Vaccination and the Fall Term, in which he announced that the university has updated its immunization requirements for all students to include COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized for use by the U.S. [FDA](#) and recommended by the [CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#). Rutgers has been a global leader in COVID-19 research and is confident that COVID-19 vaccination is one of the best ways we can provide a safe environment for students to thrive both academically and socially.

As an International student, we realize you may have many questions about this requirement. Please see the FAQs below, which will be supplemented as additional information becomes available.

Please note that as public health guidelines, federal immigration and travel policy, and Rutgers policies continue to evolve, additional information will be provided on changes/updates to this policy.

Which COVID-19 vaccines will fulfill the Rutgers proof-of-COVID vaccination requirement?

The university will accept any COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use by the U.S. FDA and recommended by the CDC ACIP (currently, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson). Rutgers will also accept other COVID-19 vaccinations that receive a U.S. FDA authorization and CDC ACIP recommendation before the beginning of the fall 2021 semester.

For those international students who decide to get vaccinated after arrival in the US, Rutgers will provide whatever assistance possible that is consistent with [NJ State public health guidelines](#).

New Jersey has been rolling out COVID-19 vaccines step-by-step to serve all adults who live, work, or study in the state. Starting **Monday, April 19, 2021**, all individuals in New Jersey aged 16 and older will be eligible for vaccination.

What if I was already vaccinated for COVID-19 in my home country but it is not on the U.S. FDA and CDC authorized list?

You will need to show proof of receipt of a vaccine authorized for use in the U.S. and recommended by the CDC ACIP upon arrival to Rutgers. We will assist international students to comply with the university's requirement, as appropriate.

If I am unable to obtain one of the U.S. FDA authorized vaccines prior to my arrival in the U.S., will I be able to obtain a U.S. FDA authorized vaccine upon arrival to campus?

Rutgers has received approval from the State of New Jersey to administer authorized COVID-19 vaccines at our three campus locations. As soon as an adequate supply is available, we will make vaccinations available to our students, staff, and faculty, consistent with public health guidelines. This should allow all international students to receive the vaccination at Rutgers once they arrive. However, you will not be allowed to be on campus until 2 weeks after the final dose of COVID-19 vaccine. More information about vaccination requirements and options will be provided to you directly in the coming months.

Will there be a cost for the vaccine?

The New Jersey Department of Health has advised that there will be no charge for the vaccine.

Are there any exemptions to the vaccine requirement?

Students may request an exemption from showing proof of vaccination for medical or religious reasons. More information on exemptions can be found on the [Rutgers Immunization Portal](#).

When should I arrive in order to start my semester on time?

Based on current guidance, international students with an F-1 or J-1 visa may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the program start date indicated on their I-20 or DS-2019 forms. When making plans for arrival to the U.S., students are advised to factor in adequate time to receive the vaccine and quarantine. No student will be allowed to participate in campus events, reside in the residence halls, or attend classes without being fully vaccinated. The university is in the process of developing interim housing space for arriving international students to allow for vaccination wait times and quarantine. The university will be offering online programs and activities for international students during this period.

New international graduate students are advised to contact their academic program for information on school-specific orientation activities for international graduate students.

In advance of arriving to New Jersey, please review the Rutgers webpage on [Updated Quarantine and Travel Guidance](#).

When is International Student Orientation?

All new international first year and transfer students are required to attend our International Student Orientation (ISO). This mandatory program will be offered virtually in August for all incoming students for the Fall 2021 semester. More information about the ISO will be made available at a later date. Please consult [Rutgers Global International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#) for updated information during the coming months.

New international graduate students are advised to contact their academic program for information on school-specific orientation activities for international graduate students.

How does current government policy affect my immigration status and ability to start in-person classes in the fall?

While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has not provided updated guidance regarding online instruction beyond spring 2021, we are hopeful that the fall 2020 and the spring 2021 flexibilities will continue. Based on current guidance, continuing Rutgers students who are in active SEVIS status, whether inside the U.S. or abroad, will continue to maintain their legal status and enroll in 100% online coursework or any combination of in-person and online study to [maintain their legal status](#). New international students, and students who started their programs in the fall 2020 or spring 2021 semesters from overseas, are eligible to apply for a visa and enter the U.S. to attend in-person classes. However, current regulations are that new international students may not enroll in 100% online courses if they will be in the U.S. for the fall 2021 semester. All students should continue to regularly monitor travel regulations between the country they are traveling from (including transit countries), and the United States, as these policies are subject to change.

What if I am unable to get a visa to start my Rutgers education in New Jersey?

Should travel to the U.S. not be possible due to visa issues, we will work with you to provide a virtual experience until we can welcome you to campus as soon as feasibly possible. The university will continue to process I-20 and DS-2019 documents as students request them to ensure that you are able to schedule a visa appointment should one become available for you.

We realize there are concerns with getting a visa and arriving on-campus in time for the fall term. Students should check with the embassies and consulates near them as they prepare their visa applications. We also recommend checking the U.S. [Department of State website](#) for the status of operations at the embassy or consulate where you intend to apply for a visa. Please be assured that Rutgers, along with other U.S.-based universities, are strongly lobbying the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and we are urging them to take immediate action and allow international students to enter the U.S. in time for the fall semester.

Will I be required to get a visa if all my classes are online?

The existing guidance states that new/initial students may only apply for a visa and enter the U.S. to enroll in a U.S. school only for a full course of study that is not 100% online. Please contact [Rutgers Global International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#) for regulatory

guidance, resources, and information for international students. We will continue to update our websites as more information becomes available and notify you as changes occur.

Will this information change?

We expect both the COVID-related health regulations, as well as the U.S. immigration regulations and status, will continue to evolve over the next several months. Updates will be provided by email and on our websites as they occur. We are here to support you in any way we can, and we truly hope to welcome you to campus this Fall.

For the latest information regarding travel, visa, and immigration matters, please check the [Rutgers Global Alerts](#) website regularly. We will also email you with updates and information as they become available.

Resources:

- [University-wide COVID-19 Information](#)
- [Rutgers Global Alerts](#)
- [COVID Related International Student FAQ](#)
- [Rutgers Global International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#)

Best wishes,
Rutgers Global - ISSS

This periodic update from the Rutgers Global – International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office provides you with important information regarding your legal status, upcoming programs, and useful resources. Previous updates can be found on our [Email Notices page](#).

These notices are automatically sent to all nonimmigrant students enrolled at Rutgers–New Brunswick and Rutgers–Biomedical and Health Sciences. Most messages, however, apply only to F-1 and J-1 students. We label most messages to facilitate your identification of which messages may apply to you personally. All F-1 and J-1 students on Rutgers' visa sponsorships are required to know the information that is provided in these notices and to follow reminders and instructions that apply to their own situations. This is NOT a subscription email list. These notices are sent periodically to an automatically generated list. If you are a permanent resident or citizen of the U.S and should not be receiving these notices, please contact ISSS:

New Brunswick

848-932-7015

iss-students@global.rutgers.edu

RBHS

973-972-6138

iss-rbhs@global.rutgers.edu