

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



**December 13, 2021**

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### **ISSS HOLIDAY WISHES**

Your friends at Rutgers Global wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. We know these times continue to be challenging in numerous ways and we are proud of your resilience, learning, and success as we come to the end of this semester. We hope you find joy in whatever makes you happy during the winter recess, and we wish you a safe and prosperous New Year.

### **UNIVERSITY OPERATING STATUS FOR SPRING 2022**

Rutgers welcomed students back to campus for in-person courses in fall 2021 and expects to operate in a primarily in-person mode of instruction in spring 2022. For international students who are unable to attend classes in-person because of visa, travel or health-related circumstances, Rutgers remains committed to helping all students continue their studies and attain their academic goals. There may be limited remote options for students who choose to remain outside of the U.S. Please discuss your academic schedule and plan with your program/school. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and impacts of the pandemic around the world, and will provide updates as needed.

The spring semester begins on January 18, 2022 and all students are expected to be in classes from the first day of the semester (in-person or remote, based on your academic schedule). Please plan your travels accordingly.

## **GOVERNMENT TRAVEL POLICY UPDATES AND TIPS**

### **UPDATED GOVERNMENT TRAVEL POLICIES**

#### **DEC 2, 2021: US GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NEW TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL AIR PASSENGERS TRAVELING TO THE US**

The [White House and CDC announced](#) effective December 6, all international air passengers traveling to the U.S. will be required to produce a COVID-19 negative test within one day of their departure, regardless of nationality or vaccination status. With the winter break coming up, we strongly recommend you monitor the [CDC's international travel guidelines](#) as new travel restrictions and requirements can change quickly.

#### **NOV 26, 2021: COVID ENTRY RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVELERS COMING FROM CERTAIN AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

On November 26, 2021, President Biden signed a [proclamation effective November 29, 2021](#), suspending entry to the U.S. after recent presence in certain countries in southern Africa. Note that this proclamation operates in addition to the [November 8, 2021 vaccination requirement](#). A [November 28, 2021 CBP Carrier Liaison Program bulletin](#) clarifies that: "Any NIE granted to a noncitizen under previous proclamations are void with respect to the Proclamation of November 26, 2021."

#### **COVID-RELATED TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS**

As the situation regarding domestic and international travel is changing daily, we would like to advise all our students to be careful and alert during any travel and be prepared to face extra scrutiny at visa issuing posts and at ports of entry. As always, follow all rules and regulations to [maintain your legal status in the U.S.](#) Visit the [Travel and Visa Information](#) page on the Rutgers Global website for information and detailed recommendations for travel. [The COVID-19 Related International Student FAQs](#) contains updated details about travel, vaccination requirements, Rutgers University operating policy, and more. Other resources include the [Rutgers Global Alerts](#) page, the [student health site](#), as well as the university-wide website [coronavirus.rutgers.edu](#) for updates.

The U.S. government has implemented certain [travel and visa policies](#) that students should be aware of prior to making any travel plans. Also, many countries are imposing immigration restrictions during the pandemic. For further information, please review the following resources:

- [COVID-19 Restrictions on U.S. Visas and Entry](#) [External Link - NAFSA]
- [National Interest Exceptions for Certain Travelers](#) [External Link - NAFSA]
- [COVID-19 Country Specific Information from the US Department of State](#) [External Link - Department of State]
- [CDC \(Centers for Disease Control\) for International and U.S. Travel](#) [External Link - CDC]
- [Rutgers Global Travel Updates and Advisories](#)
- [CDC Flow Chart: Traveling to the United States from a Foreign Country by Air](#) [External Link - CDC]

## **ISSUANCE OF “TRAVEL/VISA SUPPORT LETTERS” FROM RUTGERS GLOBAL - ISSS**

Should you make the decision to enter the U.S. for the spring semester, you may carry with you this [Travel/Visa Support letter](#) to help facilitate the application for a visa should you need one, and for your entry into the United States.

Please note that this support letter does not guarantee that you will be issued a visa or be permitted entry into the United States. This letter is only meant to provide additional documentation and institutional support indicating that you intend to enroll in a course of study which is a combination of online and in-person requirements.

## **OBTAIN A TRAVEL SIGNATURE ON AN I-20 OR DS-2019 BEFORE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

If you are planning to travel internationally during the upcoming holidays, please exercise caution and review the [Travel and Visa Information webpage](#) for further detailed travel guidance, resources, and tips. The travel signature on the I-20 or DS-2019 is valid for 12 months (6 months for students on OPT) and confirms that the student is in valid legal status and eligible to return to the United States to resume their programs.

## **APPLYING FOR A TRAVEL SIGNATURE**

1. **Visit the [Travel Signature Request Procedure](#) page on our website.**  
Check your I-20 or DS-2019 to see when it was last signed for travel. If you have received a travel signature within 12 months of your anticipated return to the United States, you do not need a new signature at this time. Visit the travel signature page on our website for guidance on whether you need a new travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019.
2. **Complete the [Travel Signature Request E-Form](#) on the RGlobal Portal.**
3. **Your document will be ready within 5 business days.** We will email you an I-20 that has been digitally signed for travel. J-1 students will require an original DS-2019 and will need to complete the [Document Mailing Request E-Form](#) on the RGlobal Portal. Be sure to safely keep all your previous I-20s/DS-2019s.
4. **Report International Travel.** Any time you have international travel planned (departing and/or entering the U.S.), we ask that you report this to us via the **International Travel Plans e-form** in the [RGlobal portal](#) (found under Travel & Location Information). It is separate from the existing [Travel Signature Request E-form](#) referenced above in Step 2.

## **COVID RELATED GUIDANCE FOR SPRING 2022**

Current guidance from SEVP/ICE will continue through the spring semester. Please review the following resources for current information:

- [COVID Related International Student FAQ](#)
- [Rutgers Global - Alerts](#)
- [Universitywide COVID-19 Information](#)

## **RUTGERS COVID VACCINE REQUIREMENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

All Rutgers students are required under [Policy 10.3.14](#) to be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they have received a medical or religious exemption approved in writing by Rutgers' Waiver Review Committee or are exempt from the Policy for any of the other reasons listed in the Policy. For students subject to Policy 10.3.14 who have been accepted for the upcoming Winter or Spring semester(s), evidence of immunization must be uploaded to the Rutgers Immunization Portal as soon as the vaccination series is completed and no later December 1, 2021. Students who wish to request a medical or religious exemption must submit their request, via Rutgers' Immunization Portal, by December 1, 2021.

Students accepted on or after December 1, 2021 must upload evidence of immunization to the [Rutgers Immunization Portal](#) as soon as the vaccination series is completed and no later than 7 calendar days after their acceptance date. Students accepted on or after December 1, 2021 who wish to request a medical or religious exemption must submit their request, via [Rutgers Immunization Portal](#), no later than 7 calendar days after their acceptance date.

Students who are not compliant with Policy 10.3.14 will not be permitted to register for Winter or Spring courses.

International students who enrolled from outside the U.S. for the fall 2022 semester were granted a COVID vaccine waiver for the semester. This waiver expires on 12/31/2021. If you are planning to come to the U.S. for the spring 2022 semester, please make sure you submit your vaccination report through the [Rutgers Immunization Portal](#) as soon as possible.

If you are enrolling from outside the U.S. for the spring 2022 semester, and need to be waived from the immunization requirement, we need information from you submitted through the ISSS Spring 2022 Plans survey. Please check your inbox for an email from [ISSS-students@global.rutgers.edu](mailto:ISSS-students@global.rutgers.edu) titled "Spring 2022 Plans – Brief Mandatory Survey from ISSS" which was originally sent on December 2 and a reminder sent on December 8. Please complete that survey and based on your response, we will be able to request an immunization waiver on your behalf.

## **UPDATES AND REMINDERS**

### **REDUCED CREDIT/COURSE LOAD – SPRING 2022 DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2022**

To maintain legal status, all F-1 and J-1 students must pursue a full course of study at all times. This means being registered for a full credit load (12 credits for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduate students). There are cases, however, in which regulations consider a student to be pursuing a full course of study even though he or she is NOT actually registered for a full credit load. For example, undergraduates who only need 1 or 2 classes to complete their program, or graduate students who have completed all coursework but are still conducting thesis or dissertation research, might be considered to be pursuing a full course of study even though not registered for 9 credits.

If you will be registered for less than a full-time credit load in Spring 2022, you MUST submit a "Reduced Credit/Course Load" e-form to ISSS using the [RGlobal portal](#). You need approval from

our office for less than full-time enrollment in any semester. The form can be completed online and will require your graduate program director/academic dean's approval. Please review our website for instructions and information about the process to submit this form. The deadline for submitting the form is **Friday, February 4**.

Please check the University's academic calendar for the appropriate add/drop dates for the last date to drop classes without a "W" grade:

[Undergraduate Registration Calendar](#)

[Graduate Registration Calendar](#)

Bear in mind that it takes 3-4 days to process the form after receipt and we cannot guarantee timely processing of forms received after the deadline. This could mean loss of legal status and you will need to leave the country or apply for a reinstatement process with the government. Remember, the "Reduced Credit/Course Load" e-form can be submitted at any time before the deadline, even before the semester starts.

### **FINAL SEMESTER?**

Are you finishing your degree requirements this semester? If so, congratulations! Be sure to review our [graduating students page](#) for important guidance on your next steps. Please note that we do not recommend traveling outside the U.S. if you have already completed your degree requirements and plan to re-enter the U.S. in your current status. If you have questions about traveling during your grace period, please visit our [advising services page](#) and consult with an international student adviser.

### **EXTENSION OF PROGRAM**

If you will not complete your program before the end date on your I-20/DS-2019, you must request an extension of your program. Please remember that any delay in completing program requirements must have been caused by compelling academic reasons (such as a change of major, change in research topic, or unexpected research problems) or medical reasons (documented by a licensed medical practitioner). Please review the [Extension of Program webpage](#) for more information about eligibility requirements and instructions.

### **UPCOMING OFFICE AND UNIVERSITY CLOSURES**

Rutgers Global - ISSS will be closed and virtual advising services will be unavailable during Winter Break: Friday, Dec. 24 - Friday, Dec. 31. ISSS will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, January 3, 2022.

Take care, stay safe, and happy holidays!

Rutgers Global – ISSS

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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](mailto:iss-students@global.rutgers.edu)

**RBHS**

973-972-6138

[iss-rbhs@global.rutgers.edu](mailto:iss-rbhs@global.rutgers.edu)