



May 7, 2021

Dear Students,

Rutgers Global ISSS would like to draw your attention to some recent updates that help you plan your Fall 2021 semester. More information and details will be provided as information becomes available and details evolve.

I. IMMIGRATION AND TRAVEL POLICY UPDATES

- [Continuation of current SEVP policy into Fall 2021](#)
- [Updated National Interest Exception \(NIE\) waivers](#)
- [Updated Travel Restrictions](#)

II. VACCINATION REQUIREMENT UPDATE

- [COVID-19 vaccination requirement updates for international students](#)

I. IMMIGRATION AND TRAVEL POLICY UPDATES

ICE Continues March 2020 Guidance for 2021-2022 Academic Year

[SEVP confirmed on April 26, 2021](#) that guidance originally issued in March 2020 for the COVID-19 emergency is extended for the 2021-2022 academic year. The March 2020 guidance applies to nonimmigrant students who were actively enrolled at a US school on March 9, 2020, and are otherwise complying with the terms of their nonimmigrant status, whether from inside the United States or abroad. This guidance also confirms that students may continue to receive I-20s via email and they can be electronically signed by a Designated School Official (DSO).

What this Means for Continuing Students

Based on current guidance, continuing students who are in active SEVIS status, whether inside the US or abroad, can continue to [maintain their legal status](#) and enroll in 100% online coursework or any combination of in-person and online study, provided they continue to be [enrolled full-time](#) and are making normal progress toward their degree. Note that if you are in your final semester you may be authorized to be less than full-time and maintain status if you do not require a full-time course load to complete degree requirements.

What this Means for New Students (Students admitted for Fall 2021 and students who started their programs outside the US in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021)

Based on current guidance, 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 US to attend in-person classes. However, new students may not enroll in 100% online courses if they will be in the US for the fall semester. Note that your F-1 status is not activated until you enter the United States, and the F-1 regulations do not apply to new students whose F-1 status is not yet activated.

As the pandemic situation improves in the US, as immigration and travel restrictions are relaxed for some, and based on Rutgers [President Holloway's March 25th message](#), we hope to welcome international students to campus if visa, travel and public health guidelines permit. However, in case students are unable to make it to campus in time for the fall semester, they may enroll in online classes offered by Rutgers or participate in some of the other available options such as the [ROSE program](#) or a [Rutgers Study Abroad at home program](#) (for undergraduate students only). Graduate students should consult with their programs to discuss online study options.

Updated National Interest Exceptions (NIE)

On April 26, 2021, [The US Department of State updated its national interest exceptions page](#) to expand certain National Interest Exceptions (NIE) eligibility to all countries subject to a geographic COVID-19 entry ban. The [April 26, 2021 NIE policy](#) states: "Students and academics subject to these proclamations due to their presence in China, Iran, Brazil, or South Africa, may qualify for an NIE only if their academic program begins August 1, 2021 or later." The [April 30, 2021 NIE notice](#) also adds India to this list.

Based on this policy, students traveling from the [Schengen area](#), the United Kingdom, Ireland, China, India, Iran, Brazil, and South Africa with valid F-1 visas have been granted an exemption from the Presidential proclamations that suspended entry from these areas and do not need to seek a National Interest Exception (NIE) as long as they are entering to begin/resume classes on or after August 1, 2021.

Please note there are still some ambiguities to the NIE policy that we are working through. We will provide any further clarifications as we receive them.

What does this mean for you:

- Remember that new F-1 and J-1 students may enter the US no more than 30 days prior to the start of their academic studies in the US - this regulation stays in place over and above the NIE policy guidance.
- New and continuing students with a valid F-1 visa from the Schengen Area, the UK, Ireland, China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa and India can come in without the 14-day stay in another country as long as they are entering to start or resume their studies on August 1

or later. They do not need to contact an embassy or consulate to seek an individual NIE to travel.

- Students from China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, and India who need to come in before August 1 (e.g. students on CPT/OPT, students starting their programs in the summer) must spend 14-days in another country from which it is legal to travel directly to the US, and then enter the US. Students in this situation may reach out to their local embassy or consulate to inquire whether they are eligible for an NIE but there is no guarantee of approval.
- We are unclear still whether F-1 students from the Schengen Area, the UK, and Ireland are subject to the August 1, 2021 condition to enter the US. If you are from one of these countries and need to enter the US before August 1 (because your program is starting earlier, or you are returning to resume your studies, or you are on OPT/CPT), please contact the nearest US embassy or consulate to confirm whether you need to request an individual NIE.
- J-1 students should contact the nearest US embassy or consulate to initiate an exception request.

ISSS has prepared the following FAQs based on the travel restrictions: [FAQs on Geographic COVID-19 Presidential Proclamations--Updated 05/05/21](#).

Updated Travel Restrictions - COVID Entry Restrictions on Travelers Coming from India (effective May 4, 2021)

On April 30, 2021, President Biden signed [a proclamation effective May 4, 2021](#) which bars entry of travelers coming from India. This proclamation is similar to the current restrictions already in place suspending travel from Brazil, China, Iran, Ireland, Schengen Area, United Kingdom, and South Africa.

While this latest Presidential Proclamation does restrict travel from India for those who were physically present in India during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States, the [National Interest Exception policy guidance](#) provides the same relief for Indian students as for students from the other countries included in the Proclamation. Additional FAQs are available on the [US Embassy in India's webpage](#).

Please note that the regulations are changing frequently and you should monitor the latest travel advisories carefully before making any travel plans.

Resources

- [COVID-19 Restrictions on US 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 US Travel](#) [External Link - CDC]
- [Rutgers Global Travel Updates and Advisories](#)

II. VACCINATION REQUIREMENT UPDATE

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Updates for International Students

The [Fall Return to the Banks](#) plan includes an update on the [Rutgers Immunization policy](#) requiring that student be immunized with a USFDA authorized COVID-19 vaccine:

- International students who are unable to obtain a USFDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start of the semester, will be able to obtain one of the authorized vaccines on or near the Rutgers campus when they arrive in New Jersey.
- International students needing to quarantine will be provided temporary housing options for up to 15 days prior to the start of the Fall semester. More information about these options will be provided over the summer.
- The university continues to explore adding additional vaccinations to the authorized list and will make students aware as soon as more vaccinations are authorized.
- The university understands that many students have already received a non USFDA authorized vaccine and are concerned about booster vaccinations. The university continues to study this issue and will work on options for students who have these concerns.
- The [COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Information for All Rutgers University Students](#) stipulates that complete vaccination documentation must be uploaded no later than August 1, 2021. If you are an international student who will be receiving a USFDA-authorized vaccine after arrival in the US (on or after August 2, 2021), you will be allowed to upload your proof of vaccination after you receive it.

The recently announced immunization policy was created based on studies of authorized vaccine effectiveness with time, and with sensitivity to the travel and regulatory restrictions of international students who are abroad, while still prioritizing the health and safety of the broader Rutgers community.

As Rutgers University and the United States coronavirus-related guidance and policies continue to evolve, we will inform you of relevant changes by email. [The COVID-19 Related International Student FAQs](#) contains updated details about vaccination requirements. As Rutgers University, the state of New Jersey and the United States coronavirus-related guidance and policies continue to evolve, we will inform you of relevant changes by email. Other resources include the [Rutgers Global Alerts](#) page, the [student health](#) site, as well as the university-wide website <http://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/> for updates.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming you in the safest way possible and are committed to providing you with a high-quality Rutgers experience this fall.

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:

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