



FAQs for International Students on F-1 and J-1 Visas Re: COVID-19

Updated 05/26/20

Please be reassured that Rutgers University is closely monitoring and responding to the COVID-19 situation, and that we at [Rutgers Global](#) will continue to share additional information as soon as it becomes available. You should be monitoring the University's coronavirus.rutgers.edu site, checking the [Rutgers Global alerts](#), the [Rutgers Global Travel Updates and Advisories](#) website, and regularly watching your Rutgers email inbox for updates from the university and our offices. For further information, especially concerning travel advisories, you should continue to follow the relevant [U.S. Department of State](#) (U.S.DOS) and [CDC](#) sites.

Feel free to [contact our office](#) if you have any questions that are not answered by the FAQs below.

- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND VISAS**
- **IMMIGRATION STATUS – CURRENT STUDENTS**
- **EMPLOYMENT**
- **HEALTH, HOUSING, AND OTHER RESOURCES**
- **IMMIGRATION – INCOMING STUDENTS**

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND VISAS

1. What are the current travel restrictions we should be mindful of?

The U.S. government has suspended entry for any non-U.S. citizens and non-permanent residents who were physically present within the following countries during the 14-day period preceding their entry to the U.S.

- [People's Republic of China](#) (excluding Hong Kong and Macau)
- [Islamic Republic of Iran](#)
- [European Schengen area countries](#) - Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
- [United Kingdom and Ireland \(as of Monday, March 16, midnight\)](#)
- [Brazil \(May 24-25\)](#)

[Canada-Mexico Essential Travel Restrictions](#) - COVID-19 restrictions that restrict entry to the United States through land ports of entry along the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders to "essential travel" only.

Please note that the situation is changing daily. Also, many countries are imposing immigration restrictions in order to contain the virus. For further information, please review travel advisories available from the [U.S. State Department](#), the [CDC](#), and the country/countries outside of the US from which you want to fly from or to. Feel free to [contact our office](#) if you have any other questions.

2. I am currently in the U.S. but was planning to travel outside of the U.S. soon. Should I travel?

Given the fluidity of the current situation, we are unable to advise one way or the other about international travel. This is a decision you will need to make keeping in mind all available information.

Consider the travel restrictions at your destination as well as U.S. government-imposed travel restrictions as you consider re-entry into the U.S. We understand that international students may want to return home to be with their families. As long as you have weighed the risks and then made your decision, please know that Rutgers Global will continue to support you and your legal status will remain active while you are utilizing the university's remote instruction plan and otherwise remain compliant with applicable regulations. Should you choose to travel, check the validity of your [travel signature](#). You will need a new one at the time of re-entry into the U.S.

3. I need to leave the U.S. but have not received my I-20/DS-2019 with a travel signature. Can I travel out of the U.S. without the new I-20/DS-2019?

Please know that you do not need a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 document to either remain in OR to depart the U.S. You DO need a valid travel signature to return to the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status. A valid travel signature must be no more than twelve months old on the date that you return to the U.S. (For F-1 students on [post-completion Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) or [STEM OPT Extension](#), travel endorsements are only valid for 6 months). You will only need a valid signature to apply for a new visa if the F-1 or J-1 visa stamp in your passport is expired and/or for your reentry into the U.S. Visit our the [Travel and Visa Information](#) section of our website for more information.

4. Can I travel within the United States?

Even within the U.S., different regions are experiencing travel impacts and restrictions. The [CDC: COVID-19 Cases in the U.S. website](#) has updated numbers per state, but this is changing quickly. If you choose to travel domestically, please be sure to consider your own health and safety. We encourage you to follow the CDC and local recommendations for travel. States may have their own travel restrictions, shelter in place orders, and disruption in infrastructure that you should take into consideration as well.

5. My visa is expiring soon. Can I travel home or to a third country to apply for a new visa?

International students should consider the following as they plan to travel out of the country to apply for a new visa:

- Students can remain in the U.S. with an expired visa as long as they have legal status in the U.S. The F-1/J-1 visa only needs to be valid at the time of entry into the U.S. If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., you can still continue to stay here as long as you are maintaining your status. If your visa expires and you have traveled out of the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa.
- If students must travel out of the country, they should keep in mind the status of visa application operations at the embassy or consulate where they intend to apply, as well as travel and other restrictions in the destination countries visited while out of the U.S. The following links should be closely monitored for the latest information on the status of embassies and consulates around the world:
 - The [Department of State website](#) for the status of operations at the embassy where students intend to apply for a visa
 - [Visa wait times](#) at various embassies
- Students should also be mindful of [U.S. government-imposed travel restrictions](#) that may lead to problems with re-entry into the U.S.
- Students should also consider the implications of their travel on immigration benefits such as OPT.

We also have a lot of useful information related to [travel and visa application](#) on our website.

6. How do the current travel restrictions impact visa applications?

In response to the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 20, 2020, the [Department of State](#) suspended all routine visa services at all U.S. Embassies and Consulates world-wide. Students should check with the embassies or consulates near them as they prepare for their visa applications. We would also recommend checking the [Department of State website](#) for the status of operations at the embassy where they intend to apply for a visa.

We would recommend that students continue to monitor the news, airline travel information, and the [Rutgers Global](#) website for additional changes or updates. We also have a lot of good information related to [travel and visa application](#) on our website.

7. I want to leave the U.S. but am unable to at this time. What should I do?

We are aware that many international flights are being/have been canceled, and travel may be a challenge at this time. If you are graduating and unable to depart the U.S., please consider options post-graduation ([see question 14](#)), and [contact ISSS](#) to let us know about your situation. If you are a continuing student (looking to register in the fall semester), your status remains active, but you may need to consider other issues related to housing etc. if you are unable to go home. See the [Health, Housing, and Other Resources](#) section of this FAQ for more information.

We recommend that you contact your home country's local consulate or embassy in the U.S. for support and information regarding travel home.

ISSS will continue to work with students on a case by case basis to help determine the best path forward.

IMMIGRATION STATUS – CURRENT STUDENTS

8. I am an international student in F-1/J-1 status and I have submitted an application to ISSS for processing. When and how will I receive my new I-20/DS-2019?

At this time, we are unable to mail physical I-20s and DS-2019s to students since ISSS is operating remotely. We will process your applications within our usual processing times and email you a digitally signed I-20 or DS-2019. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has made allowances for the issuance of electronic I-20s. The electronic I-20s can be used for the purposes of travel, visa applications, and USCIS applications such as OPT. There may be certain applications (such as change of status) for which a wet signature is required on the I-20. This is a temporary allowance and may be rescinded once the COVID crisis has passed.

If you need confirmation whether the electronic I-20 is acceptable for a specific application, we recommend that you contact the specific government agency (e.g. USCIS for OPT, Social Security Administration for SSN, U.S. Customs and Border Protection for travel/re-entry, the U.S. Department of State for visa applications) to confirm whether the digitally signed I-20 will be acceptable.

J-1 students will require an original DS-2019 for any formal applications (such as visas & travel).

If you need a physical I-20/DS-2019 for a specific reason, please notify the ISSS advisor processing your application, and we will work with these requests on a case by case basis.

9. As an international student can I take online classes and still remain in legal status?

International students in F-1 and J-1 status can complete their spring/summer semesters, either abroad or in the US, via remote instruction offered by the university and maintain their legal status, as long as they continue to remain enrolled in a full course of study and make normal

progress towards their degree (unless they qualify for a [reduced credit/course load](#) based on permissible exceptions).

We will provide information about fall based on guidance expected from the University and government agencies.

This guidance is based on the following information:

- According to [President Barchi's announcement on March 17, 2020](#), and the [Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Barbara Lee's announcement on March 26, 2020](#), Rutgers University will continue to offer remote instruction through the end of the spring semester and summer sessions.
- We have also received official guidance from the government that allows US universities to temporarily adapt their policies and procedures in certain respects related to remote instruction to address issues associated with COVID-19.
- Please note that this relaxation of policy remains in place through the end of the summer session. We are awaiting updated guidance to make decisions about the fall semester.
- [President Barchi's message on May 13, 2020](#), outlines the possible scenarios for the fall and updates on COVID-19 planning at Rutgers.

Students who chose to leave the U.S. should consider future implications, such as potential difficulties with visa renewals when returning to the U.S. and travel restrictions. The Rutgers Global ISSS Office can help to advise students on a case by case basis.

10. If I leave the U.S. now and stay out of the country for more than 5 months, will this be a problem for my immigration status? What happens to my SEVIS record and my I-20/DS-2019?

Based on current guidance from the government, students who leave the country but remain enrolled full-time and make normal progress towards their program by participating in modified modes of instruction (as offered by the university) will be considered to be in active SEVIS status. They are also eligible for the summer vacation after the end of the spring term. In this case students could potentially leave any time during the spring semester and return any time before the start of classes in the fall term and their SEVIS records would remain active.

This applies to continuing students only – that is students enrolled in the spring and expected to enroll in the fall term. This is a [temporary measure put in place by the Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS) due to COVID, and is subject to change. We are awaiting guidance from the government on whether this policy will apply to the fall semester as well.

If students withdraw from their programs, the usual [five-month rule](#) would apply to their SEVIS status.

11. I am currently enrolled in a program at Rutgers as an international student (and will be enrolled in the fall semester as well). Are there any restrictions on returning home for the summer?

Continuing students are not required to enroll in courses in the summer. They are eligible to stay in the U.S. without being registered for courses. They may (if they choose) enroll in summer classes or a summer program at Rutgers or at a different institution. Online study is also not restricted during the summer as long as the student was actively enrolled in the spring and intends to be enrolled in a “traditional” in-class program in the fall.

Continuing students are eligible for on-campus employment (full-time or part-time) and may apply for Curricular Practical Training (if eligible).

See answer to question 1 for more travel related details.

12. I am an international student currently abroad, and I cannot return to the U.S. due to travel restrictions. What should I do?

Students are advised to contact their academic department/school immediately (if they haven't already) to discuss whether any academic contingency plans are feasible while they are abroad. These may involve:

- Taking classes online while abroad
- Obtaining a leave of absence and withdraw from Rutgers for the semester (SEVIS record would need to be closed)
- Qualifying for reduced credit authorization and maintaining an active SEVIS record
- Graduate students who have completed all coursework and may be able to enroll full-time in research or other non-coursework degree requirements while abroad may be able to maintain an active SEVIS record.

Once an academic plan is agreed upon, students should be directed to contact ISSS immediately to discuss the immigration implications of this plan. While there are usually very limited options to keep a student's SEVIS status active while outside the U.S. during an academic term, current COVID-19 based accommodations for F-1 and J-1 students may allow for some flexibility.

If the academic plan (and/or a relaxation of federal regulations) allows ISSS to maintain a student's SEVIS status, we will do so.

If this is not possible, students will be directed to close their SEVIS record and obtain a new immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) when they are ready to return. This may involve re-activating the currently closed record or issuing a document under a new SEVIS ID based on how long the student remains outside the country from the date of termination of his/her record. ISSS will handle these on a case by case basis.

There are other implications of the actions above, including but not limited to delayed benefits such as Optional Practical Training (OPT), Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or students being required to apply for a new visa. [Contact ISSS](#) to discuss these implications.

13. I am an international student in my final semester, currently abroad, and I cannot return to the U.S. due to travel restrictions. Can I return after the situation stabilizes?

International students who were expecting spring 2020 to be their final semester of study and are not able to complete their programs should apply for an [extension of their SEVIS program](#). Please note that extensions cannot be granted to accommodate graduation ceremonies (the Rutgers May graduation ceremony is suspended).

International students unable to return to the U.S. and in their final semester of study (completing their programs while overseas) are faced with the possibility of losing their ability to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT for F-1 students) or Academic Training (for J-1 students). There is currently no regulatory relief for students caught in this situation.

Even if you have an I-20/DS-2019 valid until a later date, but have completed all your program requirements, please note that your status is only valid while you are actively pursuing a program of study (degree). Students intending to continue their study in the U.S. can return with a new I-20 for that program. If you would like to return for any other purposes, you may do so on another visa classification (such as the B-2 visitor visa).

14. Will opting for the pass/no-credit grade impact my visa status?

Choosing the pass/no-credit option will not impact your F-1 or J-1 visa status. F-1 and J-1 students are expected to enroll in a full course of study every fall and spring semester, unless authorized for a reduced course load based on permissible exceptions.

If you are in F-1 or J-1 status and you withdraw or cancel your enrollment, this can negatively impact your F-1 or J-1 visa status. [Contact ISSS](#) before making a decision to withdraw or cancel your enrollment.

15. I am an F-1/J-1 student studying on-campus at Rutgers and in my final semester of study at Rutgers. What are my options at this time?

Graduating students have the following options:

- **[Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)/ Academic Training](#)**

F-1 students can apply for post-completion OPT, which grants them employment authorization and an extension of status for 12 months (per advancing degree level) after the completion of their program. This authorization can be extended by another two years for students in approved STEM fields, based on certain eligibility criteria. The application is filed with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and involves a filing fee. It provides employment-authorization as well as extension of a student's legal status. Application deadlines must be adhered to.

Students have to be present in the U.S. to apply for OPT. They can travel only after they get a receipt for the successful submission of their application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). If you choose to apply for OPT, ensure that you apply prior to departing the U.S. (and get the receipt notice) or stay in the U.S. and complete the semester via remote instruction.

J-1 students may apply for Academic Training (AT), and work in the U.S. after completion of their program. Academic Training is authorized for a specific job and is processed at ISSS. Legal application deadlines must be adhered to. Students looking to apply for AT should contact ISSS to discuss case specific timelines and possible travel restrictions.

- **[Transfer to a New Institution/Program](#)**

Students in F-1 and J-1 status can transfer their SEVIS records from one school to another. F-1 student SEVIS records can be transferred to a new school within 60 days of the completion of their program at Rutgers. This date is often the degree completion or graduation date. The new program can begin within 5 months of the date of last enrollment at Rutgers (program completion date) or the last date of authorized OPT.

J-1 Students - Students must begin a new program immediately after completion of the current program (no gap allowed).

International students can also begin a new program at Rutgers. Please [contact ISSS](#) for advice on how best to maintain/update your SEVIS record.

- **[Change of Status](#)**

Students may consider applying for a change to a different immigration status such as B-1/B-2 tourist visa (or another viable) status to remain in the US. This is an independent petition and students can apply on their own, or work with external lawyers for assistance. The application is filed with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and involves a filing fee.

- **Leave the Country within the Grace Period**

F-1 and J-1 students have a grace period, following the end of their programs, which enables them to remain in the U.S. legally during this time.

- F-1 students - 60 days after degree completion
- J-1 students - 30 days after degree completion

16. I am a J-1 student and my program is ending soon. What are my options?

J-1 students with a DS-2019 expiration date between April 1 – May 31, 2020 were automatically extended by the U.S. Department of State for an additional 60 days, allowing additional time to depart, transfer or apply for J-1 Academic Training. J-1 students must continue to maintain financial support and health insurance for the duration of their stay. ISSS has sent direct email information to J-1 students impacted by the automatic extension. J-1s who have questions about their automatic extension and options should [contact ISSS](#).

17. I am an international student on a study abroad exchange program in one of the impacted countries. What should I do?

If the program is cancelled, students may return to their home country. Students have the following options:

- Take a leave of absence (LoA), withdraw for the semester and close their SEVIS records
- Maintain status by enrolling in remote instruction/online courses, unless they qualify for reduced credit authorization under any of the permissible reduced course load exceptions
- In the case that this is a student's final semester before graduation, and the student is unable to return to the U.S., they would lose their OPT eligibility (according to current policy). Students in this situation should consult with a [Rutgers ISSS advisor](#) immediately.

18. I am currently in the U.S. but quarantined (or self-isolated) and unable to attend classes due to medical reasons. What should I do?

International students may submit a request to ISSS for consideration of a [Medical Reduced Course Load](#) exception to normal full-time enrollment requirements if they are unable to maintain their full-time studies for a medical reason. The quarantine or required self-isolation would qualify as a medical reason. International students should carefully assess the individual need for such an exception in light of the university's temporary utilization of remote education.

EMPLOYMENT

19. I am currently on OPT/STEM OPT or CPT. How does the current situation impact me and my ability to work?

OPT/STEM OPT and CPT work authorizations that have been authorized remain valid for the dates of authorization. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has provided guidance and accommodation recognizing that changes to workplace requirements may impact students pursuing practical training. Students in such situations should consult with their employers and seek alternative ways to maintain employment such as teleworking and other arrangements. If there are any substantial changes to OPT employment, make sure you follow [OPT reporting guidelines](#) to report the change to ISSS so we can update your SEVIS record. Students on authorized CPTs should check with their employer about the viability of the employment/experience. If there is any change to employment dates, contact ISSS to have the authorization updated on your I-20.

20. I am currently on post-completion OPT. Does the 90-day unemployment rule still apply in light of the current crisis?

At this time there is no revised guidance on the unemployment rule while on OPT. Please remember that you can also participate in volunteer/unpaid employment of more than 20 hours/week, directly related to major field of study, and appropriate for your level of education.

21. I cannot return to the U.S. in time to apply for OPT. Can I apply for OPT from outside the U.S.?

Currently, regulations require you to be physically in the U.S. at the time you submit your OPT application, but we have been informed that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is evaluating this question and may issue additional guidance. We will update this answer as soon as more information is available. Please continue to check the USCIS website(link is external) for updates or visit the [USCIS COVID-19 response page](#).

22. I am graduating in May and applying for OPT. Can I travel internationally after mailing my OPT application to USCIS from the U.S.?

Students are allowed to leave the U.S. while their OPT application is pending at USCIS, but they have to make sure they get the receipt notice for the OPT application prior to traveling out. There is always an element of risk involved with international travel and return to the U.S. (particularly when you have completed the primary purpose of your visa status – that is your degree program), and given these unprecedented times, the risks are further heightened.

If you do choose to travel, please make sure you have your receipt notice with you. If your application is approved while you are overseas, make sure it is delivered and received at a valid U.S. address, and someone checking your mail sends you an electronic copy/image of the EAD card, which you can print and keep with you at the time of re-entry into the U.S. Students are advised to follow the [travel tips](#) and [OPT guidance](#) on the ISSS website.

We will update this answer as more information becomes available.

23. How can I apply for a Social Security Number (SSN) at this time?

The New Brunswick SSA center as well as all other SSA offices are closed until further notice. Unfortunately, it is not possible to apply online. ISSS will continue to process requests for [Social Security Letters](#), but the application cannot be submitted until the SSA office resumes in-person operations. We are in contact with the SSA office in New Brunswick and will inform students as soon as we are informed of any updates.

24. I have an approved CPT for the summer, but I am currently back home. Can I work on CPT from outside the U.S.?

SEVP has provided guidance that allows students to engage in CPT while abroad, as long as they meet all the standard eligibility criteria for the CPT (the CPT is a curricular requirement and counts towards the degree, the CPT is authorized prior to the employment 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. Students should discuss the possibility of remote work arrangements with their employer.

25. Do I have to be in the US to file my taxes? Can I file them from abroad?

You do not have to be physically present in the US to file your taxes. As long as you have the required documents, you may complete your tax return in your home country and mail it to the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Please [refer to this page](#) for more information about the tax filing process and required documents.

26. Am I eligible for the CARES Act based stimulus check? What do I do if I have received the check erroneously?

According to the IRS, only individuals who are considered residents for tax purposes are eligible for the stimulus check from the federal government. For F-1 and J-1 students, a resident for tax purposes is defined as someone who has lived in the US for five or more years. If you do not meet this criterion, you are not eligible for the stimulus funds and may need to return the money

if you have received it erroneously. Please [click here](#) for more detail (read the section on *Erroneous Receipt of CARES Act Stimulus Checks*).

27. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits as an international student?

The [U.S. Department of Labor's unemployment insurance programs](#) provide benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and meet other eligibility requirements. Each state administers the program differently; those employed in New Jersey can learn about New Jersey's program at <https://myunemployment.nj.gov/labor/myunemployment/before/about/>. ISSS cannot advise on your eligibility of unemployment benefits; please read the information and contact the appropriate state office for questions.

28. Does receipt of unemployment insurance payments classify me as a public charge?

The list of public benefits considered in the public charge rule does not include unemployment benefits. Furthermore, [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' \(USCIS\) website](#) states that any benefits received by noncitizens related to COVID-19 will not negatively affect the public charge analysis.

29. Do I need employment authorization to volunteer as part of COVID-19 relief efforts?

No, international students who work without wages, taxable compensation or other remuneration are considered volunteers and are not required to obtain an employment authorization document. Check with an advisor at ISSS if you are not sure if the opportunity you are considering qualifies as volunteer work. It is important to be careful that the work does not violate any labor laws or your legal status. Visit the ISSS [website](#) for more detail.

HEALTH, HOUSING, AND OTHER RESOURCES

30. When and how can I move out of my on-campus space?

If you are currently living in an on-campus Rutgers residence hall because you were approved to stay, you may move out at any time before your contract ends (May 14). For detailed information about the move-out procedures, please visit the [Move-out Procedures Section](#) of the Rutgers Residence Life page.

If you have moved away from campus and your belongings are still in your room, watch for detailed emails from Residence Life describing the process to retrieve your items. This will likely be in late-May or June.

31. My on-campus housing contract expires at the end of the semester, but I cannot return home under the current circumstances. Is there any way to extend my contract?

You must apply for summer housing which will be on Busch and Cook/Douglass campuses. Please complete the [Summer Housing Application](#). If you live in a traditional hall or suite-style hall, you will be moved to a summer school hall.

Halls open for summer will be Silvers Apartments and Richardson Apartments on Busch Campus and Henderson Apartments and Newell Apartments on Cook and Douglass Campuses. Students in Livingston Apartments may stay for summer (they must apply) but no new students will be moving into Livingston Apartments for summer.

Any student in a 12-month hall (Buell, Marvin, Johnson, Nichols) is already under contract for Summer.

32. I need to stay on campus for summer, but there are no classes available for what I need. Can I remain on campus?

All summer school residents need to be registered for at least one class. Please work with your advisor or explore an on-line internship for credit with [Rutgers Career Exploration and Success](#).

33. If I stay for a short time after May 15, will I need to move to a new residence hall?

Yes, unless you are already living in one of the selected summer halls remaining open.

34. I currently live on-campus but will be graduating this May. I cannot get a flight home yet. May I stay on campus?

Yes, graduating students who cannot return home may remain on campus. They should complete the [Summer Housing Application](#). They will likely be moved to a summer school hall if their current hall is not slated to remain open for summer.

35. I live off campus, can I move onto campus for Summer School?

No. Only students currently under contract for spring 2020 Rutgers housing may sign up for summer school housing.

36. I am about to lose my lease off campus. What should I do?

Contact the Off-Campus Living Office, 848-932-5500 or RUoffcampus@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance and advice.

37. I only need to stay on campus until my flight is available to go home, probably 10 days or so. What can I do?

You may remain on campus for a short period due to such circumstances. When you [apply](#) for summer housing, be sure to indicate the date you are leaving the country.

38. I am worried about the reduced services on-campus – what dining services are open during this time?

Please check the [Dining Services website](#) for the latest operating status of dining halls. All dining facilities are closed until further notice. More information will be provided once we know the plans for the fall semester.

If you need assistance regarding having access to food, we encourage you to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#), who can assist by connecting you with the appropriate campus and community-based resources.

The [Rutgers Food Pantry](#) is another resource for those concerned about access to food.

Rutgers Global is offering a shopping shuttle to nearby stores to get groceries and other living essentials. Check the [ISSS website](#) for further details.

39. What transportation options do I have to get around campus?

Visit the [Rutgers Transportation Services](#) website for information on [the modified bus schedules](#) and more.

Some public transportation like NJ Transit (running on a limited schedule), taxis and some other car services (such as Uber and Lyft) are also available. Please exercise caution and care as you use any form of public transportation.

40. I am enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan with United Healthcare Student Resources, where can I find information about medical access for COVID-19?

You can visit www.uhcsr.com/MyAccount or your UHCSR mobile app:

- Find a provider within the US or to Global Care for treatment overseas and symptoms checker.
- Get Virtual visits using Telehealth, also Student Assistance Program telephonically including 24/7 counseling, health risks assessments, health/fitness calculators.
- Optum support line providing access to specially trained mental health specialists to support those who may be experiencing anxiety or stress following the recent developments around COVID-19.
- COVID-19 General and Claims Information, FAQs and additional support.

41. I'm worried and stressed, what kind of support services are available to me as a Rutgers student?

The concerns around COVID-19, academics, travel, finances and other issues can understandably cause stress and anxiety. The university has resources and support services that can help you take care of yourself during these stressful times.

Please read below for some useful resources and services offered by Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) as a response to COVID-19.

CAPS has developed several virtual programs and workshops that you may find helpful during this time. These virtual workshops are NOT therapy or psychological treatment. They are held via Webex and led by CAPS staff. Rutgers students need a phone or internet connection for video. Please email Annmarie Wacha-Montes at annmarie.wachamontes@rutgers.edu in advance with questions or for accommodations. For more on workshops and services offered by CAPS, please visit their [website](#).

While the CAPS physical offices are closed, [Let's Talk](#) will be offered remotely via phone and video appointments. Conversations with CAPS counselors are private and confidential.

- To schedule an appointment, call [848-932-7884](tel:848-932-7884), and leave a voicemail with your full name, phone number, and RUID.
- Please speak slowly and clearly into the phone. Your message will be returned within 1 hour during regular business hours.
- **Please note:** CAPS will return your call from a blocked number, so please set your phone to allow blocked numbers and set up your voicemail to allow for messages.

All other CAPS services are also available remotely. Please leave a message at [848-932-7884](tel:848-932-7884) to schedule an appointment.

Resources

- [Tips for International Students and Scholars during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Video](#) on how to respond effectively to the crisis

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Many other Rutgers units are providing virtual programming and services that you may find helpful.

- The [Dean of Students Office](#)

The Dean of Students office provides a range of support services including:

- Addressing technical issues students having with remote access. Assists with Laptop needs.
- Provides Emergency Funding to all students, regardless of status

- Provide grocery store and RU Express cards
- All appointments are being scheduled online and food cards and laptops are being handed out at food pantry distribution at the Graduate Student Lounge
- DOS is also working with students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have family members who have tested positive and need additional assistance

To inquire about any of these needs/issues please email deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu

- **[Student Legal Services](#)**

- Working with International students who went home and are not able to come back, yet have leases and belongings in off campus apartments
- Students are being held responsible for the terms of their lease; may lose their deposit and still be responsible for the outstanding rent
- Working on Rent Control issue; also trying to see if there is anyone available to assist in moving students out (friend, relative, etc).

If you need assistance, contact Student Legal Services at sls@echo.rutgers.edu

- **[Career Explorations and Success](#)**
- **[Learning Centers](#) - New Brunswick**
- **[Rutgers Recreation](#)**
- **[Rutgers Cultural Center Collaborative](#)**

IMMIGRATION STATUS - INCOMING STUDENTS

1. I have been re-admitted to Rutgers for the summer; how does the current crisis impact my situation?

Students who are in the U.S. in active SEVIS status (possibly at another institution, e.g. a community college) can transfer their SEVIS records to Rutgers and participate in remote instruction offered by their program.

We are unable to issue I-20s/DS-2019s with summer start dates for students who are outside the U.S. since Rutgers is offering only remote instruction throughout the summer. However, students can participate in remote instruction offered during the summer session from your home country. Please contact your school/department/program to discuss your academic options.

Please review the information on our "[Returning to Rutgers](#)" section of our website for more details.

Students will need to contact an advisor at ISSS for guidance on the appropriate way to obtain a new I-20 when they are able to return. Based on the period of their absence from the country (less than 5 months or more than 5 months), the action recommended will be different.

2. I am a new student starting my studies in the fall/summer session at Rutgers University. Can I begin my studies in the fall/summer if I cannot come to the U.S. in time?

As a new student, you would need to come into the U.S. and report to Rutgers to activate your SEVIS record and legal status. If you are enrolled for the summer/fall, and unable to come to the U.S., your F-1/J-1 record would need to be deferred to the start of the next semester. You may be able to begin your program from overseas if your department/school provides remote instruction options, but your immigration status would only be activated when you are able to enter the U.S.

More information about delayed enrollment, as well as possibly beginning Rutgers enrollment and courses while abroad (using online or other methods), will be outlined in future communications.

3. I am planning to attend Rutgers in the summer or fall and am already in the U.S. What should I do?

New students who are already in the U.S. (in high school, or at a different institution), can have their SEVIS records transferred to Rutgers and stay in the U.S. even if their program at Rutgers begins in the fall. Please consult with the international services office in your current school about your transfer eligibility and timelines.

New students starting at Rutgers during the summer and interested in on or off-campus employment options should consult with ISSS for eligibility.

4. I am a student currently enrolled at another institution in the U.S. Do I need a new visa to begin study at Rutgers in the fall?

You do not need a new visa to begin the new program at Rutgers if you remain in the U.S. while between schools. If you choose to travel internationally, you will need to check with your embassy or consulate to determine if you need to apply for a new visa. If you have a valid visa (valid at the time of expected entry to the U.S.), chances are you won't need to apply for a new one.

F-1 students can have their record transferred to Rutgers within 60 days of their program completion date at the current school. Your program at Rutgers must begin within five months of the date of last enrollment at your current school (program completion date) or the last date of authorized Optional Practical Training (OPT).

If you are unable to enter the U.S. to start your program due to COVID-19, the 5-month rule could be waived with approval from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). This will require the ISSS office to work with SEVP to correct your F-1 program start date to the next available session. ISSS will work with transfer students in this situation on a case by case basis.

J-1 students can transfer their SEVIS records to Rutgers, but their new program must begin immediately after completion of the current program (no gap allowed).