July 30, 2020

Dear Students,

As you likely know, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) guidance from July 6, 2020 was rescinded (July 14, 2020) and will no longer take effect. F-1 students are expected to follow the guidance issued in March 2020. On July 24, 2020, the SEVP issued a new broadcast message and clarification of its March guidance.

Highlights and implications of the latest updates:

- **Students who were actively enrolled at a U.S. institution on March 9, 2020**, and were maintaining active SEVIS status, whether from inside the US or abroad, can continue to stay in active SEVIS status and enroll in 100% online coursework or any combination or in-person and online study, as needed, to make normal progress toward their degree for the fall 2020 semester. They must follow all other rules to maintain their legal status.

- **New or initial F-1 students outside the US** (including students transferring their F-1 records to Rutgers) who intend to pursue a 100% online course of study in fall 2020 are advised not to come to the US for the fall 2020 term.

- **New or initial students who are inside the US** (transferring to Rutgers or changing status to F-1) should follow all reporting requirements and F-1 regulations to activate and maintain their F-1 status at Rutgers.

- **Visa issuance/renewal** falls under the purview of the U.S. Department of State and cannot be guaranteed by the university or any other government agency.
  - New or initial F-1 students who intend to pursue a 100% online course of study in fall 2020 will most likely not be able to obtain an F-1 visa to study in the US.
  - Students who were in active SEVIS status on March 9, 2020, but subsequently left the country, may be eligible for a visa since the March 2020 guidance permitted a full online course of study from inside the United States or from abroad.
  - Students intending to enroll in a course of study that includes in-person and online components may be eligible for an F-1 visa.
Based on the July 24 clarifications from ICE and the ICE FAQs (updated on July 15, 2020), Rutgers Global - ISSS has the following advice and guidance for international students in F-1 status.

If you are a continuing/returning student in “active” SEVIS status (inside or outside the US)

- Enroll in a full course of study and follow all rules and regulations pertaining to your legal status.
- If you need to come to the US in the fall semester (based on requirements of your program), or apply for an F-1 visa, follow these guidelines:
  - Confirm the need for in-person attendance with your program/school
  - Complete the Rutgers Global Fall 2020 Plans survey, if you have not already done so. Your response will help us prepare for how best to support our international students. You can complete the survey by logging into the RGlobal portal, select “Surveys” on the left-hand menu, then click Fall 2020 Plans.
  - Make sure you have a valid travel signature from ISSS.
  - ISSS is able to provide a "Travel/Visa Support Letter" to students who will be returning to the U.S. in-person for the fall semester. In order for us to issue this letter to you, please submit the survey per the instructions above. We will send a follow-up email as soon as possible after receiving your submission with instructions on how to download your support letter. Please note that this support letter does not guarantee that you will be permitted entry into the United States and is only meant to provide additional documentation of your status as an active Rutgers student.
  - Graduate students may also request an optional letter of support from your academic program. See an example of an academic letter of support. This is not a requirement but may be helpful for travel and visa application purposes.

If you are inside the US with an I-20 marked "initial attendance" (students transferring your SEVIS status or changing status within the US)

- You can enroll in 100% online coursework or any combination of in-person and online study, as needed, to make normal progress toward your degree. You must follow all other rules and regulations to maintain your legal status.

If you are outside the US with an I-20 marked "initial attendance" (new students, students who have been readmitted to Rutgers, students transferring their SEVIS records to Rutgers)

- If 100% of your fall 2020 coursework is online, our advice is that you stay in your home country at this time and not plan to come to Rutgers. You can still begin/resume your studies from overseas through one of the following options, but you will need to request to have your I-20 start date changed to the next semester.
  - Online courses offered through Rutgers (available to all students)
  - ROSE Program (for first year undergraduate students residing in China)
- Study Abroad at Home (for undergraduate students, if offered at/near your location)
- If your program requires your in-person presence on-campus, please contact your program to discuss this requirement.
  - Should you need to be on-campus for the fall 2020 semester, you will be provided with a “Travel/Visa Support Letter”. Please note that this support letter does not guarantee that you will be issued a visa or be permitted entry into the United States and is only meant to provide additional documentation that you intend to enroll in a course of study which is a combination of hybrid and in-person requirements.
  - Graduate students may also request an optional letter of support from your academic program. See an example of an academic letter of support. This is not a requirement but may be helpful for travel and visa application purposes.
- If you are transferring your SEVIS record to Rutgers, please contact the office that issued your original Rutgers I-20 (e.g. graduate admissions, undergraduate admissions, or ISSS) to discuss how you can get an I-20 with a future start date.

Useful Resources:
- Rutgers Global Alerts
- FAQs for Continuing/Returning International and Exchange Students (PDF)
- FAQs for New/Incoming International and Exchange Students (PDF)

Sincerely,

Rutgers Global