F-1 FAQ for COVID-19

Is ISSS open?

Yes, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is open, but effective March 17, 2020 the staff is working remotely. We continue to be committed to our international student and scholar populations. Advising is being conducted via Zoom or by telephone. Click here to book an appointment to meet with an advisor.

We are still accepting requests, (e.g. travel signature, CPT (starting April 15), OPT I-20 requests, etc.). Convert your documents into a pdf file and email to ISSS at international-office@sjsu.edu Currently there is no option to pick-up your I-20 or documents in-person. We will mail them to you via the US Postal Service, unless otherwise directed. Please allow 2-3 days extra for processing and mail delivery.

Can I continue my courses for spring 2020 outside the US, since classes are online?

If you are maintaining your F-1 status by making normal progress in your course of study, then due to COVID-19, SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) has allowed the following temporary provision:

“the five-month temporary absence provision addressed in 8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(4) will not apply for students who remain in Active status. And SEVP will allow students in F-1 status to temporarily count online classes toward a full course of study in excess of the limits stated in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G) and 8 CFR 214.2(m)(9)(v), even if they have left the United States and are taking the online classes elsewhere.”

If I continue the spring semester in my home country, can I come back for fall classes?

It depends. If everything returns to normal, yes. If there are ongoing travel restrictions, then there is a risk. It is best to discuss your individual case with an ISSS advisor. Please also remember that you will need a valid travel signature, a valid passport and a valid F-1 visa stamp upon your re-entry.

Can I take a course for Credit(CR)/No-Credit(N/C) this spring semester?

Yes, you can take a course CR/NC. Per Federal regulations, international students in F-1 status must complete at least 12 units/semester if they are an undergraduate and 9 units/semester if
they are a graduate student in order to maintain their immigration status. Further, an unauthorized withdrawal (WU) grade adversely affects immigration status. The regulations are complex and confusing so for help understanding what is sufficient, please contact an international student advisor at international-office@sjsu.edu

I am currently in the U.S. and plan to travel after the semester ends. What should I do?

Please complete the travel signature request form so we can verify your record and determine if a new travel I-20 is required. You will get a follow up email within 1-2 days with more instructions/information. Keep in mind that travel signatures are valid for 12 months, when you are in your degree program. A validity of 6 months, when you are on OPT/STEM OPT. Check page 2 of your current I-20 to see when your I-20 was last signed for travel. If you are unsure, please email ISSS to verify.

I am currently out of the U.S. and did not get an updated travel signature before leaving the U.S.

Please contact ISSS one month before you plan to return to the U.S. and we will work with you on sending the I-20 to you by mail.

I have recently moved, do I need to report this change in address?

Currently enrolled students: If you are still in the U.S., then you will need to update ISSS of the change by filing the Change of Address form. If you are outside the U.S., then make sure your international address is up to date under ‘Home’ in your mySJSU account.

Students on post-completion OPT and STEM OPT: You will need to report your change in address in your SEVP portal account.

I am working on CPT this semester and my employer is having me work remotely, do I need to report this change?

No. Keep records of your employer's policy and procedure for remote work, including the dates and address of where you worked remotely.
I am working on CPT this semester and due to COVID-19, I have lost my internship. How do I report this change?

Email ISSS at international-office@sjsu.edu letting us know that you are no longer working on CPT. We will need to know the dates that you worked, so we can update your CPT authorization in your SEVIS record.

Are there any changes to OPT/STEM OPT? Application deadlines? Unemployment rules?

No, there are not any changes in the OPT/STEM OPT process to apply, application deadlines, or unemployment rules. You must be in the U.S. to submit the application to USCIS. Our OPT tutorial and STEM OPT information page are up to date. If changes do occur, we will update our tutorials and webpage.

I am working on post-completion OPT and my employer is having me work remotely, how do I report this change?

Log into your SEVP Portal account. Update the Employer address information. Enter the address of where you are currently working remotely, in the US. If you are working internationally, your international address is not accepted in the SEVP Portal. Remember to change the employer address again after you return to your workplace. *See SEVP Portal Student User Guide for more information.

I am working on post-completion OPT and due to COVID-19, I have lost my job. How do I report this change?

It is essential that you report within 10 days of the change. Log into your SEVP Portal account, update or enter the last date of work under the ‘Employment End Date’ field. Please remember that you can accrue an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment during post-completion OPT. In order to stop the unemployment clock, you must be working more than 20 hours per week in a position that is related to your major field of study at SJSU. The job can be paid or unpaid, as long as you are not violating labor laws.
I am working on STEM OPT and my employer is having me work remotely, do I need to report this change?

No. Keep records of your employer's policy and procedure for remote work, including the dates and address of where you worked remotely.

I am working on STEM OPT and due to COVID-19, I have lost my job. How do I report this change?

You need to report this change to ISSS within 10 days of the change in employment, by submitting the [Employment Update Report](#). You will also need to submit the bottom of page 5 of the I-983, 'Final Evaluation on Student Progress', which has been completed and signed by you and your employer.

Please remember that you can accrue an aggregate of 150 days of unemployment during post-completion and STEM OPT. To stop the unemployment clock: you must be working for an e-verified employer for more than 20 hours per week in a PAID position that is related to your STEM major field of study at SJSU. If you change employers, you will need to submit a new I-983 for ISSS to review.

Does SJSU health insurance cover COVID-19 testing?

Yes, testing for COVID-19 is covered 100% by Aetna.

What if I get sick? Is that covered by the insurance? How about prescriptions?

Medical claims outside of testing will be paid just like any other sickness under your plan, which is at 100% covered on your plan. For COVID-19, $20 copay will also be waived. “Teledoc” (aka virtual visits) are free. Prescriptions can be filled for 90 days instead of 30. For more information, please go [here](#).

How can I stay connected with others during this time?

ISSS, along with many other campus departments, is creating opportunities for students to connect with each other and engage with us online. For the latest ISSS event updates, please see our website at [https://www.sjsu.edu/isss/events/](https://www.sjsu.edu/isss/events/) or follow us on Instagram or Facebook @SJSUInternational.
Other Resources

CDC (Center for Disease Control)
Department of State Travel Advisories
USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services):
SJSU Health Advisories COVID-19 Website
ISSS Immigration Updates page

**Both the DMV and SSA are closed. Please go to their websites for more information about applications and urgent requests.**

California DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles)
Social Security Administration