

Office of Global Initiatives
Fall 2020 - Frequently Asked Questions for International Students

Last update: July 17, 2020

UPDATES: Questions that have been added to this document or have updated answers have been highlighted in this version.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Is it safe for international students to come to the campus?

Our university has been working very hard to keep students, staff, and faculty safe. In fact, we started reopening in June for staff and faculty. Our Pandemic Recovery Committee has been working diligently to ensure our campus is safe for all. We encourage all students to check our website for more information <https://www.njit.edu/pandemicrecovery/>.

If there is a second wave which forces the university to close, what will happen to F-1 students? Will students be asked to leave the country?

It is not clear at this point what would happen under this scenario. We assume that, at that point, the federal government may allow students to remain in the US (like they did in March), but we cannot guarantee it. At this time, we are waiting for guidance from the government.

How will emergencies involving healthcare be taken care of?

The NJIT student health insurance provided by AETNA is extremely good and will provide coverage for most matters. If students are demonstrating any symptoms of COVID-19, they should go to health services to get checked immediately.

What happens to students who are overseas and decide not to/cannot come back to the US for the fall semester?

According to the March 2020 guidance, students can take classes online from home and keep their SEVIS record active. We are waiting for additional clarification from the government. Doctoral students please refer to the section below.

REGISTRATION FOR FALL

How do students know which classes to register for?

Based on the March 2020 guidance that is in effect today, students can take any combination of online or converged courses. Students may take all their classes online if they wish, and their SEVIS record will remain active.

Will students who already registered for the fall semester have to register again? How can students know if their current class registration meets the new requirements?

Students who already registered for fall do not have to re-register but they must check their registration and ensure that they are registered for enough credits to maintain their status (12 credits if undergraduate and 9 credits if graduate). Last semester and dissertations continue to be an exception to this rule; students can register for only the number of credits they need.

If fall 2020 is the student's final semester, does he/she have to be registered full time? Do students have to take at least one converged class if it's their final semester?

At this time, according to the March 2020 guidance, students can take all their classes online. During their last semester, students can take only the courses needed to complete their program. If students in their final semester are taking less than a full course load, they must complete the online Full-Time Certification form in the NJIT Pipeline. Please note that this requirement may change with any new guidance.

If the student is outside of the US in the fall 2020 and wants to take online classes, does he/she have to maintain a full course load?

Yes. In order to maintain their SEVIS record active, students must maintain a full course load, as if they were in the US. Failure to do so will result in SEVIS record termination.

What is the last day for students to change their schedules?

NJIT's regular policies for dropping and adding classes will apply to the fall semester. After September 8, students will only be allowed to withdraw from classes and the withdrawal refund policy will apply.

EMPLOYMENT

Are students still allowed to apply for CPT in the fall?

Yes. Students should apply using the Handshake application and work with CDS on their application. In order to maintain status, students are required to register for the co-op course for the fall 2020 semester and at least 1 additional course required for their program to ensure they are making progress toward graduation.

If students are outside of the US during fall 2020 and graduate in December 2020, will they be eligible to apply for OPT after graduation?

At this time, we cannot guarantee that students will be eligible for OPT if they are outside of the US during the fall 2020 semester. We are still waiting for guidance regarding OPT. As soon as information is made available we will post it here.

If students are outside of the US during fall 2020, but return to the US for spring 2021 and graduate in May 2021, will they be eligible to apply for CPT in the spring or OPT after graduation?

At this time, we cannot guarantee that students will be eligible for OPT if they are outside of the US during the fall 2020 semester. We are still waiting for guidance regarding OPT. As soon as information is made available we will post it here.

If students are outside of the US during fall 2020, but return to the US for spring 2021 and graduate December 2021 (or beyond), when will they be eligible for CPT? Will they be eligible for OPT after they graduate?

At this time, we cannot guarantee that students will be eligible for OPT if they are outside of the US during the fall 2020 semester. We are still waiting for guidance regarding OPT. As soon as information is made available we will post it here.

If fall 2020 is the student's final semester and he/she is in the US, will the student be able to apply for post-completion OPT?

Yes, students will be able to apply for post-completion OPT as long as they meet the usual requirements for applying. Refer to the OGI website for instructions on how to apply for OPT at the appropriate time.

Can students apply for fall CPT if they will be outside of the US?

Yes, according to the March 2020 guidance, students can apply for CPT even if they are outside the US if:

- The CPT is for credit or part of the curriculum;
- The student registers for at least one other class required for their program;
- The student applies through Handshake and receives approval from CDS and OGI;
- Either the employer has an office outside the United States or the employer can assess student engagement and attainment of learning objectives electronically.

TRAVEL

If a student plans to travel outside of the US later this summer, will he/she be able to return to the US in time for the fall semester?

While students are not prohibited from traveling abroad, if they do decide to travel, they will need a new I-20 with a travel signature if they don't already have one, or if their most recent travel signature has expired. We advise students to think carefully when considering a trip abroad. As the pandemic may worsen, more countries can go on lockdowns or be added to travel ban lists. The OGI cannot guarantee re-entry to the US at any time.

What if students request an I-20 and, because of reasons beyond their control (flights canceled, country lockdown, visa not granted, etc.), are not able to return to the US before September 8? What can they do?

If students are not able to return to the US (for any reason) before September 8, they should email our office at global@njit.edu and let us know they will not be returning for the fall 2020 semester. The student will have the following options (depending on their internet connectivity and the regulations of their home country regarding online classes):

- 1) Take a full course load online (SEVIS record remains active) – please note that not all classes may be offered in an asynchronous online mode
- 2) Take a leave of absence for the fall 2020 semester (SEVIS record is terminated)
- 3) Enroll part-time (one or two online classes) to continue to make progress toward the degree (no leave of absence required but SEVIS record is terminated)

If the student is currently outside of the US, how late can he/she return to NJIT for the fall semester?

Students need to be back at NJIT by the end of the drop-add period (September 8). If they cannot return by this date then they must contact the OGI immediately by emailing global@njit.edu. After September 8, students will only be allowed to withdraw from classes and the withdrawal refund policy will apply. Even if students have a valid visa and a travel signature, they should not try to return to the US in the middle of the semester.

If the student decides to stay home in fall 2020 but return to the US in spring 2021, will he/she need a new I-20 AND a new visa?

The student may not need a new I-20 if their SEVIS record remained active in the fall. If their I-20 was terminated, they will need a new one with a new SEVIS number. If the F-1 visa is expired, the student will need to reapply for a new visa at the nearest US consulate or embassy. If the F-1 visa is still valid, the student can reuse it. Please note that entry to the US is always at the discretion of the immigration officer at the airport

FOR Ph.D. STUDENTS

Are Ph.D. students, during the dissertation phase of their program, required to register for 9 credits?

No, Ph.D. can register for their dissertation credits only. The student should refer to the academic department for more information about funding if the student is abroad.

Can Ph.D. students maintain their F-1 status if they are outside of the US in the fall 2020 semester and taking only dissertation or predoctoral research credit?

Yes, per March 2020 guidelines, students who maintain their full-time status can keep their SEVIS record active. It may be ok for Ph.D. students who are not receiving financial support to continue their research overseas while registered. Students should contact their departments for more information.

Can Ph.D. students with departmental funding continue to receive their funding if they are outside of the US in the fall 2020 semester?

Normally, graduate students must be in the US to receive support. The issue of departmental funding is currently under consideration and further clarification will be available soon.