



COVID-19 Update #4 for Current F-1 Students

July 10, 2020

DISCLAIMER

- **The Office of International Affairs (OIA) is able to provide general guidance. Any advice provided by OIA, including the information in this presentation, should not be construed as legal advice.**
- **Due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, DHS, USCIS, SEVP and other governmental agencies may change their interpretations of these immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits, at any time. OIA is committed to providing advice based on the most current guidance.**
- **Each case is fact-specific and it is advised that students contact an experienced immigration attorney with questions regarding individual situations.**

DISCLAIMER – COVID-19



- **This situation is entirely unprecedented at NSU, within the United States, and within our modern world.**
- **University officials may only present factual statements based on existing knowledge. We may not provide information to students that relies on anticipations, guesses, wishes, or other uncertainties.**
- **NSU and all DSOs are legally bound to fulfill SEVIS reporting requirements, respond to governmental directives, and adhere to the F-1 regulations.**
- **NSU will continue to prioritize the best interests of all NSU students – including F-1 international students – in decision-making related to COVID-19 and beyond.**

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



- Issued in proposed stage
- Policy clarifications added through FAQ documents at www.ice.gov/coronavirus
- Over a dozen lawsuits filed, requesting injunctions. Expect a response to first lawsuit by July 15th
 - Individual universities
 - University Systems
 - State of California

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



- 1. Students attending institutions operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States. The U.S. Department of State will not issue visas to students enrolled in institutions and/or programs that are fully online for the fall semester.**

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



2. Active international students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs must depart the country or transfer to another institution that is offering in-person instruction.

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



3. Students attending institutions adopting a hybrid model (e.g., BlendFlex) – a mixture of online and in-person courses – will be allowed to enter and remain in the United States. Additionally, they will be allowed to take more than one course online, but not a full online course load.

NSU Implications



- **Because of NSU's BlendFlex hybrid model, most new and continuing international students are permitted to attend NSU this fall 2020 semester.**
- **We currently know of only one program that may not be able to be on campus (M. Acct). At this time we believe all others will offer at least one course in a Blendflex model.**
 - **This includes DO & Optometry**

NSU Implications



- **International students may take more than one online course this fall 2020 semester, but only if needed in order to enroll in a full course of study and maintain appropriate progress toward their degree.**
 - **A fully online course load while within the U.S. is still not permitted.**
 - **Hybrid and BlendFlex courses are not considered online courses as long as they are coded appropriately in Banner.**

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



4. If a school changes its operational stance mid-semester, and as a result an international student switches to only online classes, the student must depart the United States or transfer to another institution with in-person instruction.

Fall 2020 Academic Calendar

Thanksgiving Break:

“Please note that the last day for traditional, in-person undergraduate classes will be Friday, Nov. 20. Those traditional undergraduate courses will conclude in the fall semester fully online. Some undergraduate in-person health care and nursing programs will continue in-person or through hybrid delivery.”

Although announcement was for undergraduate specifically, we anticipate many graduate programs to also follow this format. Confirm with your academic program.

NSU Implications



- **Should NSU unexpectedly be forced to change current plans to offer in-person classes, there may be additional implications:**
 - **If operational changes occur prior to the start of the semester, international students would be required to depart the U.S. or take alternative steps to maintain their immigration status.**
 - **If operational changes occur after the start of the semester, we believe that NSU's BlendFlex model will continue to allow sufficient flexibility to remain in the U.S. in valid status, absent any further guidance from SEVP quantifying hybrid in-person expectations.**

July 6, 2020 SEVP Guidance



5. Only students enrolled at an institution that is solely offering online coursework can engage in remote learning from their home country and maintain valid F-1 status.

NSU Implications



- **Students may study full-time or part-time outside of the U.S. but they will do so without a valid F-1 status. This is true for new and continuing international students.**

NSU Implications



- **Assuming normal winter 2021 operations, students who have a valid F-1 visa should be able to enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the start of winter 2021 to (re)establish valid F-1 status.**

NSU Implications



- **All international students intending to be on campus for the fall 2020 term are expected to arrive prior to the start of the semester but must arrive no later than three weeks after their semester start date.**
 - **As most programs have an August 17 semester start date, September 7, 2020 is the last date to arrive for most students.**
 - **Arrival after this three-week deadline will not allow for students to maintain a valid F-1 status for the fall 2020 term, even if visa or travel restrictions make an earlier arrival impossible.**

FALL 2020

Termination Implications – Program Start Date:

- I-20s are created with actual term program dates so if you are terminated for failure to return in the fall, earliest I-20 program start date would be January (unless your program has 8-week terms).
- NSU will adjust procedures pending SEVP guidance

FALL 2020

Termination Implications – New I-20:

- **To obtain a new I-20 you will require updated proof of finances.**
- **New I-20 requests should be submitted at least one month prior to “program start date” (term when you will re-enter).**

FALL 2020

Termination Implications – OPT:

- **Federal regulations require one academic year of enrollment in a valid immigration status prior to applying for OPT.**
- **Students terminated for the fall term and are graduating prior to Fall 2021 will be ineligible to apply for OPT.**

FALL 2020

Termination Implications – CPT:

- **Federal regulations require one academic year of enrollment in a valid immigration status prior to applying for CPT.**
- **Students terminated for the fall term will not be eligible for CPT until after Fall 2021 term.**
 - **Only exception is for graduate students who are required to do off-campus training (rotations, etc.)**

NSU Implications

Fall 2020 Enrollment for Current F-1 Students

On May 1, 2020, President Hanbury announced that NSU will resume in-person classes for the fall 2020 semester/term, subject to the Governor of Florida's executive orders at the time of opening, as well as CDC and local government directives.

Because it has been announced that NSU will resume face-to-face offerings, F-1 students will be required to return to an adherence of all full course of study requirements, including limits to distance/online education.

Current F-1 students who are unable or unwilling to return to campus for the fall term may continue their studies online, if permitted by the program and/or their home country ministry of education, but their F-1 immigration status and NSU I-20 will be terminated.

Due to the current requirement that students must be enrolled for one academic year in a valid immigration status prior to applying for OPT (the 1-3 year work authorization benefit), students who are unable or unwilling to return to campus for the fall term and are graduating prior to Fall 2021 will be ineligible to apply for OPT.

- **This information has been on our website since May 2020.**
- **This information was communicated in COVID-19 webinar #3 in May 2020.**

Fall 2020 Options




**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

**Option #3:
Take a Leave of
Absence**

**All options may not exist for all programs.
Please confirm with your academic program.**

Fall 2020 Options



**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

Visa Concerns

- Many U.S. embassies remain closed around the world. Students who require a new visa may not be able to get one prior to start of Fall 2020 term.
- Students should plan to arrive prior to start of classes.
- If unable to arrive by start of classes, flexibility will be given to the extent possible by federal regulations:

**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

**LAST DAY TO ARRIVE IN THE U.S. FOR FALL 2020:
THREE WEEKS AFTER PROGRAM START DATE, AS LISTED ON I-20.**

**MOST FALL 2020 START DATES: AUGUST 17, 2020
LAST DAY TO ARRIVE FOR MOST: SEPTEMBER 7, 2020**

Travel Restrictions

- The U.S. has imposed travel restrictions on individuals coming from certain countries around the world and will not allow entry to the U.S. for anyone that has been in those countries for specific periods of time, typically 14 days.
- Certain countries (Canada, Mexico, etc.) have exceptions for “essential travel”, which does include attending a university. Most countries (EU, UK, etc.) do not have these exceptions. Consult specific restriction for details.
- It may be possible to travel to a third country and spend 14 days there before arriving to the U.S.
- Additional travel restrictions could be announced at any time.

**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

Quarantine

- **At this stage, still over one month out, we do not know if a quarantine will be required. We will follow local, federal and university policy at the time of arrival.**
- **Students who are required to quarantine will be permitted to do so within their on-campus housing.**
- **Students are not able to arrive in on-campus housing early to complete a quarantine.**
- **Blendflex and online coursework allows for students to complete coursework while quarantining. Students should notify instructors if they will need to complete a quarantine.**

**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

On Campus Coursework

- **Students will be able to enroll in a mixture of Blendflex and online courses.**
- **Even if not required by the instructor, F-1 students will have to attend in-person requirements for Blendflex courses.**
- **All undergraduate coursework, and many graduate programs, will transition to fully online after Thanksgiving Break, which begins on November 20. Winter 2021 (January) is currently expected to resume in person as normal.**
- **Blendflex courses will adhere to social distancing requirements. Masks will be required.**

**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

Housing

- Questions about housing should be directed to housing@nova.edu.
- Although subject to change, at this time we do anticipate that students will be able to remain in on-campus housing when coursework moves online (after Thanksgiving break) and through winter break.
- We do not yet have instructions for move-in procedures, including if parents will be able to assist with move-in and/or if parents will be required to complete any type of quarantine.

**Option #1:
Study On-Campus
at NSU Florida**

Fall 2020 Options



**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

**This option may not exist for all programs.
Please confirm with your program if studying online
for the fall 2020 term is an option for you.**

F-1 Status

A stylized world map with a watercolor-like texture, showing continents in various colors like blue, green, yellow, and red. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean.

- **Reminder: If not arriving on campus by three weeks after start of classes you are not able to study on-campus for the fall term.**
- **Most fall classes start August 17 → September 7 last day to arrive in U.S.**
- **Students will not have F-1 status while they study outside of the U.S.**
- **Students will need to obtain an F-1 visa before starting on-campus for the winter 2021 term.**

**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

Course Registration

- **Both online and Blendflex courses should be able to be completed fully online, from outside of the U.S.**
- **Blendflex courses may be synchronous, requiring students to log-in to a live course session, even if the timezone is inconvenient.**
- **Online coursework is usually asynchronous and does not require live attendance.**
- **Students will need a reliable internet connection to compete online coursework (including synchronous live video).**

**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

Enrollment Requirements

A stylized world map in the background, with colors ranging from light blue to red, representing different continents.

**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

- **Because students are not in F-1 status, they are not required to be in a minimum number of credits for immigration.**
- **Some scholarships*do* require full-time enrollment so students will need to be full-time to maintain their scholarship.**
- **Certain academic programs may require full-time enrollment.**

Tuition & Fees

A stylized world map in the background, rendered in various colors including blue, green, yellow, and red, with a soft, painterly texture.

- **Online and Blendflex courses are charged at the same tuition rate as on-campus courses.**
- **Students will have access to full range of university services, remotely. This includes:**
 - **International Affairs**
 - **Academic Advising**
 - **Tutoring & Testing**
 - **Writing Center**
 - **Alvin Sherman Library**
 - **Center for Counseling & Wellness**
 - **Virtual events and programming campuswide**

**Option #2:
Study Online
from Abroad**

Fall 2020 Options



**Option #3:
Take a Leave of
Absence**

**This option may not exist for all programs.
Please confirm with your program if taking a leave of
absence for the fall 2020 term is an option for you.**

Confirm Leave of Absence Eligibility

A stylized world map in the background, with colors ranging from light blue to red, overlaid with a semi-transparent white text box.

- **Certain programs do not allow for leaves of absence. Check with your Academic Program to make sure a leave is an option.**
- **OIA process to request leave of absence to be announced after 8/1.**

**Option #3:
Take a Leave of
Absence**

New I-20s for All

All enrolled NSU students (excludes OPT/STEM) will be issued a new I-20.

Study Location	Student Type	I-20 Type	Notes
Inside US	New & Continuing	Fall I-20 with new remark	Automatically issued by 7/31. Students with travel or visa appointment before 7/31 can request expedited I-20. Link on COVID-19 website.

New Remark: Nova Southeastern University is not operating entirely online; this student will not take an entirely online course load for the Fall 2020 semester; this student will take the minimum number of online classes required to make normal progress in their degree program.

New I-20s for All

All enrolled NSU students (excludes OPT/STEM) will be issued a new I-20.

Study Location	Student Type	I-20 Type	Notes
Outside of US	Continuing	Terminated I-20	Updated financials may be required. Deferral I-20 process to be available after 8/1. May or may not have to repay SEVIS fee.

New I-20s for All

All enrolled NSU students (excludes OPT/STEM) will be issued a new I-20.

Study Location	Student Type	I-20 Type	Notes
Outside of US	New (Initial I-20)	Deferred I-20 until future term (Winter or Fall 2021)	Updated financials may be required. Deferral I-20 process to be available after 8/1. Should not have to repay SEVIS fee.
Outside of US	New (Transfer Pending)	New I-20 with future term (Winter or Fall 2021)	Updated financials may be required. New I-20 process to be available after 8/1. Will have to repay SEVIS fee.

OPT

July 6 SEVP policy has no impact on students on OPT/STEM.

- **Our current recommendations are:**
 - **Students who wish to apply for OPT should do so from within the US and should remain in the US until:**
 - **OPT has been approved**
 - **EAD card has been received**
 - **Proof of employment can be provided**

OPT APPLICATIONS

- **Students who wish to apply for OPT should:**
 - **Review an OPT workshop recording (available at nova.edu/internationalaffairs/covid19)**
- **Send fully completed NSU OPT Application and fully completed I-765 to intl@nova.edu.**
- **Processing time for all documents: 7 business days.**

OPT APPLICATIONS

- **Students may anticipate that OPT processing by USCIS will be delayed.**
- **Students do not need to send copies of other documents (photos, check, etc.) to intl@nova.edu for processing.**
- **Electronic OPT I-20s will be emailed to the student, who will be responsible for submitting all items to USCIS.**

Summary

Based on current guidance - **SUBJECT TO CHANGE:**

- **NSU students who are registered a mix of in-person, Blendflex, and online courses within the U.S. will maintain valid F-1 status, even as the university transitions to fully remote coursework after Thanksgiving.**
- **Students who are not able to arrive on campus within three weeks of the start of their fall 2020 classes (August 17 for most) will not be able to maintain a valid immigration for fall 2020. SEVIS records will be terminated.**
- **All students will need a new I-20 - either for study in the U.S., to defer their F-1 start date, or following a SEVIS termination for not being able to arrive in the U.S.**
 - **In the U.S. → No action unless new I-20 needed prior to 7/31**

www.nova.edu/interantionalaffairs/covid19

- **Already There:**
 - **Recordings & slides of previous presentations**
 - **Tuesday's webinar registration link**
 - **Existing information**
- **Coming Today:**
 - **Today's Slides & Recording**
 - **Comprehensive FAQ**
 - **Expedited I-20 Request Form**
- **Coming After 8/1:**
 - **Process for deferring I-20 & requesting winter I-20s**

Questions for Other Areas



- **Housing Questions** → housing@nova.edu
- **Quarantine Questions** → SharksReturn@nova.edu
- **Details about how your program's courses will be structured** → **Your academic program**

Q&A



THANK YOU

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

- Website: nova.edu/internationalaffairs/covid19
- Email: intl@nova.edu
- Advising by Zoom:
 - Monday-Friday: 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm
 - <http://bit.ly/nsuoissadvising>