

Virtual Town Hall: Frequently Asked Questions & Updates from ISO on Coronavirus/COVID-19 Impacts

Tuesday, March 18, 2020 • 12:15 pm Eastern



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Introductions

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Today's Agenda

Impact & Guidance due to Coronavirus

- ISO Business Operations
- Full-time Enrollment for F / J Students
- Travel Restrictions & Documentation
- Benefit Eligibility & Next Steps
- Available Resources

Enter questions into the Q&A tool!

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What changes has ISO
made to operate virtually
for the time being?

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ISO Business Operations

- Important functional changes are necessary
 - ISO Staff remain available & ready to help!
- Temporary adjustments to routine services
 - Appointments & Walk-In Hours suspended
 - Advising via email: questions@iso.rochester.edu
 - Inquiries will be prioritized based on urgency
 - Document distribution options under review (SEVIS Reporting: Issuance vs. Distribution)

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Future ISO Operations

- Resumption of appointments & walk-ins
 - Options for Phone & Zoom, as soon as possible
- Secure documentation submissions
 - *URcompass*: Under development; Info to come
 - Login with UR NetID (VPN access off-campus)
- Survey to assess current location & needs

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Is it a problem for
F-1 & J-1 students to
take classes online?

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Enrollment Requirements

- Temporary approval for online study
 - Viable for spring 2020; Unsure re: summer/fall
 - Enrolled students may remain in US, or abroad
- Full-time thresholds are unchanged
 - Credit requirements, or Reduced Course Load
 - Leave of Absence possible; SEVIS termination
- Maintaining progress/status (no 5-mos rule)

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Will I be able to return
to UR for Fall 2020?

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Travel Restrictions

- Indefinite impact & uncertainty, worldwide
 - New restrictions possible, as situation evolves
 - Quarantine periods, if entry is permitted
- *Example:* Canadian border closures
 - Announced restrictions for foreign nationals
 - No details or timing yet; Difficult to plan
- Monitor closely, in preparation for return!!

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Do I need a new travel
signature? What if my
visa is expiring?

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Travel Documentation

- Travel signatures are not urgent right now
 - ISO will reprint & ship docs; Online form soon
- Current visa expires in 2020, or earlier
 - Consular closures; Risks of access & demand
 - Remain in US; Return while valid; Renewal
- What documentation do I need for travel?
 - www.iso.rochester.edu/immigration/categories/index.html

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F-1 Students

Eligibility for the F-1 Student category is based on admission to a qualified institution and demonstrated ability to meet the financial expenses on your intended study. The University of Rochester is able to issue documentation for F-1 students attending Bachelor's, Masters, Doctoral, Certificate, and Special Visiting Student programs.

Travel Permissions & Required Documentation

Students attending a new program of study are permitted to enter the United States **up to 30 days** before the start date listed on the I-20, to allow for time to get settled at the school prior to the start of classes. This restriction does not apply to **Immigration Transfer** students who are already maintaining a valid SEVIS record. Once the program of study is complete, most F-1 students will receive a **grace period** for departure. F-1 travel documentation includes:

- Passport, valid 6 months into the future
- Original Form I-20, endorsed by the ISO each academic year
- Valid F-1 visa stamp (excluding **Canadian citizens**)
- Proof of financial support, as listed on the I-20
- Admission letter or UR transcript showing full-time enrollment
- I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt

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Can I still obtain US
work permissions?
Do I need to notify ISO?

Benefit Eligibility

- F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
 - Authorized remotely; Monitor company policy
- F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)
 - Apply prior to departure, or remain in US!
 - Coordination with ISO/employer, given limits
- Recent Graduates on OPT/STEM
 - Discuss & document any work adjustments

Other Transitions

- SEVIS Immigration Transfers
 - Remains viable, with proof of admission
 - Confirm policy/operations with new school
- Leave of Absence & SEVIS Termination
 - Spring enrollment; Summer vacation; Fall?
 - Return requires new record & documents
- Contact ISO, especially in coming weeks

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What should I do
next ... ?

Resources on Coronavirus

- UR's Coronavirus Update website
 - www.rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/
 - Updates on policy, operations, guidance, etc.
- Stay Connected!
 - Verify connectivity & test your technologies
 - Take advantage of academic advising resources
 - Community support, even during distancing
 - ISO here to help; We appreciate your patience!

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Q & A

Enter questions into the Q&A tool!



Thank You!

Look for additional sessions

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