

Spring 2021 information for F-1 students

On December 9, 2020, SEVP confirmed that the Fall 2020 COVID-19 guidance will remain in effect for the Spring 2021 semester. This guidance enables schools and students to engage in distance learning in excess of regulatory limits due to the public health emergency generated by COVID-19.

Ithaca College has confirmed that it will offer a hybrid format of instruction for the Spring 2021 semester. Students will be able to select courses in multiple formats: in-person, hybrid (a blend of in-person and online) and fully online instruction.

Based on the December 2020 SEVP notification, our current understanding of the SEVP guidance for the Spring 2021 semester for F-1 students at IC are as follows:

Continuing students:

- If you are currently in the US on an Active SEVIS record, you can take classes in various modes: in-person, hybrid, or fully remote. It is our understanding that whichever mode of classes you pursue, there will be no effect on your SEVIS record. We will be able to maintain your SEVIS record in Active status for Spring 2021 as long as you remain enrolled full time for the Spring semester and you continue to maintain your F-1 status.
- If you are outside the US: as long as you enroll full time at IC, we will be able to maintain your SEVIS record in Active status for Spring 2021. If you choose to take a Leave of Absence or enroll part-time, our office will close your SEVIS record for Spring 2021. At your request, we will create a new SEVIS record and we will generate a new I-20 for you when you are ready to return to IC.

New students (students on Initial I-20s) have the following options:

- Remain outside the US and defer their IC admission to a future semester – e-mail admission@ithaca.edu and our colleagues will assist you
- Remain outside the US and enroll full time online – we will defer the start date of your SEVIS record to next semester.
- Enter the US on an F-1 student visa and attend classes at IC, as long as the classes are not 100% online.

Keep in mind that you cannot participate in a degree program if you enter on a tourist (visitor) visa, you have to enter the US in F-1 student status. You may have a valid B (visitor) visa in your passport or you may be eligible to enter the US through the Visa Waiver Program – but keep in mind that you cannot be a student in the US in these tourist visa categories. Please contact us if you have questions.

Travel Documents

Ithaca College has announced that we will follow a hybrid format of instruction for the Spring 2021 semester. Here is a [letter](#) confirming the College's hybrid instructional plan.

As in the past, F-1 students will need the following **required travel documents** in order to enter the US in F-1 student status:

- valid passport
- valid F-1 visa (Canadian passport holders are visa-exempt)
- I-20 with a recent travel signature (within 1 year – except Canadian passport holders who need a travel signature every 6 months). See below for more information on electronic I-20s.

Optional but highly recommended other travel documents:

- Financial certification documents
- Continuing students - Enrollment [verification letter](#)
- New students – Admission letter
- Printout of your Spring 2021 class schedule
- Printout of the [travel letter](#) confirming IC's hybrid instruction plan.

The US Department of State and CBP have confirmed that they will allow **electronic issuance and signing of I-20 forms** for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. Contact us to request a new I-20 if you need one and we will send it to you electronically. Be sure that you **print out your I-20 prior to boarding your flight**. We also recommend that you print out the [guidance](#) and carry that on you when you travel into the US.

Travel bans

Some countries have placed restrictions for their citizens travelling abroad – keep an eye for the regulations about your country/area. The US still has a [travel ban](#) in place for travelers coming into the US from China, Brazil and Iran. As an F-1 student, you may be eligible for an NIE [national interest exemption](#) – at this time, the NIE is automatically available to students coming from the Schengen Area, the UK and Ireland. Check before you travel, these regulations change frequently.