

Dear students,

We hope this message finds you safe and healthy. Felice Dublon, vice president and dean of student affairs, sent you an email last week with information on the framework for the reopening of campus and course options for the fall semester. As noted in the email, **we anticipate a return to on-campus learning and living in September**. International Affairs is here to provide you with guidance on how to manage your immigration status this Fall.

Typically, international students on F-1 student visas are not permitted to study fully online. This spring the Department of Homeland Security's Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) provided [guidelines](#) granting an exception to this rule due to the Covid19 pandemic, allowing students to study fully online and still maintain their F-1 student immigration status to complete the term. We do not know if this exception will be extended through Fall. SEVP is currently working on updated guidance for international student study taking place this upcoming academic year. Once this information is released, we will provide details on any impact this has on your current F-1 immigration status.

### **Impacts Related to Fall Enrollment and your Immigration Status**

All students who remained enrolled full time for the spring semester remain active in the Student Exchange Information System (SEVIS) and may resume courses this fall.

If students resume study in person at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) in a combination of hybrid and in person classes, you will continue to maintain your F-1 student status without interruption.

If a student remains in their home country because they are unable to resume in person instruction within the US, their I-20 and F-1 immigration status will be terminated in SEVIS due to remote learning outside of the US. This does not impact your ability to remain enrolled for fall and continue your education from outside of the US. However, if you have less than two semesters remaining at SAIC, a termination of your record could impact your eligibility for Curricular Practical Training (CPT, needed for off-campus internships) or Optional Practical Training (OPT, needed to work for a year following graduation). If you will have less than two semesters (one fall and one spring) remaining when you return to SAIC, please contact us ([intaff@saic.edu](mailto:intaff@saic.edu)) to discuss your options.

### **Future Travel Information**

SAIC's International Affairs office would like to provide you information to help you navigate travel and status maintenance as more details become available. Please complete the survey below so we can best understand the different scenarios to consider when advising you about your immigration status. We will send out a follow-up email based on the information you provide with guidance on how to navigate moving forward.

Complete the [International Student Travel Survey](#).

## International Travel

At this time, International Affairs advises that international travel is very risky and should be avoided unless necessary, as travel conditions and country-specific travel restrictions can and have been changing frequently, often with little notice to the traveler. If you decide to travel internationally, please reach out to us so we can advise you on your specific information. If you need a new travel signature on your I-20, please complete the [Travel Signature Request Form](#). **Please note that, starting on July 15, students will be responsible for the cost of their I-20 shipment.** As a reminder, please check page 2 of your I-20 for the travel signature. Travel signatures are valid for 12 months for students (six months for students on OPT). If you need a travel signature to return to the U.S. this fall, please plan ahead.

We know this has been difficult for many students, and we are determined to provide you clarity and support as best we can. If you have any questions, International Affairs remains available and can answer questions via email at [intaff@saic.edu](mailto:intaff@saic.edu).

Kind regards,

Lawrence Rodriguez  
Director, International Affairs



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