

## OISS: Follow Up to Updated July 24<sup>th</sup> ICE/SEVP Guidance

Dear International Students,

Hello from Providence!

On Friday, July, 24<sup>th</sup>, “[Clarifying Questions for Fall 2020 Based on March 9 Spring Guidance Broadcast](#)” were released from ICE/SEVP (Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Student and Exchange Visitor Program). In addition, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) put out a [Broadcast Message: Follow Up: ICE continues March Guidance for Fall School Term](#). Both of these documents provide a slightly clearer path for all of you as we get ready to begin the Fall Term in a little over one month.

To provide some context and a brief timeline of what has happened over the last 4-5 months:

**March 9, 2020** - SEVP posted Spring 2020 policy guidance for U.S. schools hosting nonimmigrant international students for the quick changes that needed to be made in light of COVID-19

**July 6, 2020** - SEVP sent out the Fall 2020 policy guidance for U.S. schools hosting nonimmigrant international student pertaining to the fall 2020 semester

**July 7, 2020** - SEVP follow up with “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for SEVP Stakeholders about Guidance for the Fall 2020 Semester”. *\*The FAQs sent on July 7 contradicted the announcement from Monday, July 6 in regards to the actions that needed to be taken by schools\**

**July 8, 2020** - Harvard and MIT filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

**July 14, 2020** - The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security settled with Harvard and MIT to rescind the policy and revert back to the “status quo” of March 9, 2020 guidelines

**July 24, 2020** - SEVP issued “Clarifying Questions for Fall 2020 Based On March 9 Spring Guidance Broadcast”

We are very grateful for the advocacy efforts from the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, NAFSA: Association of International Education and for the amicus brief that President Somerson signed on behalf of RISD!

And... all of the above is to say that ... July has been a bit of a whirlwind for many - and particularly confusing and upending for all of you who hold F-1 student visas.

Below is an overview of the [July 24<sup>th</sup> Clarifying Questions for Fall 2020](#) and how they address the March 9<sup>th</sup> policy guidance from Spring 2020, based on your current immigration status and what mode of learning you will be participating in this fall:

In the fall of 2020, The Rhode Island School of Design will be operating with varied modalities of teaching, to include: online, in-person and hybrid (both online and in-person), with the majority of courses being offered in the hybrid model.

**[Returning Students and Transfer Students \(from institutions inside the U.S.\) who were enrolled at RISD or a different institution within the U.S. on March 9<sup>th</sup> or prior, will follow the guidelines below:](#)**

- If your SEVIS Form I-20 was in “Active” status, your record will stay “Active” for the Fall 2020 Term as long as you do the following:
  - **Enrollment:** You MUST BE enrolled full-time (12 credits) throughout the fall semester (September 10- December 15, 2020).
  - **Physical Presence:** You may be in the United States or outside of the United States to study in the fall term, but again, you MUST BE enrolled in AT LEAST 12 credits (can be online only or hybrid). *To apply to study remotely, please email: [remote@risd.edu](mailto:remote@risd.edu).*
  - **Travel:** To enter the U.S. students in “Active” or “Transfer Pending” status will receive a letter on OISS letterhead that outlines RISD’s fall plans. You should also travel with your valid F-1 Student Visa, your I-20 with an updated travel signature on page 2 and your valid passport. You will receive their I-94 Admission Record upon entry.

*Note: the OISS and Admissions teams are collecting travel information ([CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE the OISS: Fall Arrival & Travel Form](#)) from students so we can follow up with you upon their arrival to make sure you arrive safely in addition to continue planning for the fall.*

**YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM BY FRIDAY, JULY 31!!!**

**Reinstated Students and New Students (exceptions are: Transfers from within the U.S.- see above) who were not enrolled in a U.S. institution with an “Active” SEVIS record on March 9th or prior, will follow the guidelines below:**

- If your SEVIS Form I-20 is currently in “Initial” status, you must be aware of the following:
  - **Enrollment:** MUST BE enrolled full-time (12 credits) throughout the fall semester (September 10- December 15, 2020) - **AND!!!**
    - **If studying inside of the United States:** New Students with “Initial” status I-20s MUST BE enrolled full-time (12 credits) and in AT LEAST ONE in-person or hybrid course. You should check with your departments to make sure you have at least one in-person or hybrid course **AND** be living in Providence.
    - **If studying outside of the United States:** New Students with “Initial” status I-20s may be enrolled in online-only courses. Your I-20s will be updated with a new program start date and you will receive a new I-20 this fall. *To apply to study remotely, please email: [remote@risd.edu](mailto:remote@risd.edu).*
  - **Travel:** IF a student whose SEVIS Form I-20 is in “Initial” status can obtain an F-1 student visa and you have flight arrangements to enter the U.S. no later than September 2, 2020, **AND** they are going to be enrolled in AT LEAST ONE in-person or hybrid course (see above), they may study in the United States. You will require both a notation on your Initial SEVIS Form I-20 and you will receive a letter on OISS letterhead that outlines RISD’s fall plans. You should also travel with your valid F-1 Student Visa, your I-20 (no travel signature required for Initial I-20s), and your valid passport. You will receive your I-94 Admission Record upon entry.

*Note: the OISS and Admissions teams are collecting travel information ([CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE the OISS: Fall Arrival & Travel Form](#)) from students so we can follow up with you upon their arrival to make sure you arrive safely in addition to continue planning for the fall.*

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In addition to this updated July 24th SEVP Guidance, we realize there continue to be ongoing challenges for some of you with flight availability, travel restrictions - both from the U.S. and, in some cases, in leaving your home country. U.S. consulates and embassies are slowly reopening as of July 15, but it is country-specific and you should continue to check the website of the consulate/embassy in your home

country.

RISD's Office of International Student Services remains dedicated to supporting our international student community, so please ask any questions you may have. We do not have any policy guidance beyond the Fall 2020 term, so we will continue to operate under the Fall 2020 guidance until further notice. A version of this message was also shared with faculty and staff. The [OISS website](#) will also be updated this week to offer more detailed information in our FAQs.

Thank you,

*[Office of International Student Services](#)*

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