

---

---

DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL  
Please begin a new email so we do not lose responses in the  
thread.

[View email in your browser](#)



Dear International Students,

You made it! The semester has come to a close... and what a semester it has been. With all of the challenges that have been presented to us all in different ways throughout this year and the semester, we hope you take some time to appreciate your own strength and resilience. We think you are amazing!

**If you are an initial status student studying remotely outside the US** - please complete the:

[Future Study Plans 2021 Form](#)

This is how OISS will know whether or not you need an updated I-20 with a new program start date based on when you plan on entering the U.S. - not based on when your program may have started at RISD.

---

## OISS News

---

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has been made aware of a **spoofing scam** involving individuals using the **SEVP Response Center (SRC)** phone numbers

(703-603-3400 and 800-892-4829) and **claiming to be SRC representatives**. The fraudulent callers are inquiring about Form I-94 documents and asking students to provide information regarding monetary transactions.

**Things to remember:**

- SEVP officials will NEVER ask students to provide credit/debit card/gift card numbers, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers, or to make bitcoin deposits for any purpose.
- NEVER divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers.

If you receive a call like this please contact and report it to OISS immediately.

**OISS will be closed beginning on Thursday, December 24, 2020 and will reopen on Monday, January 4, 2021. The OISS ([oisss@risd.edu](mailto:oisss@risd.edu)) email account and the OISS main office number (+1 401-277-4957) will be checked once daily during this time.** If you have an emergency, please contact Public Safety at 401-454-6666. They are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and can get in touch with OISS, when necessary.

**OISS Wintersession 2021 Semester Drop-In Advising Hours:**

Tuesdays from 8:30am to 10am EST

Thursdays from 11:30am- 1pm EST

**To attend the OISS Drop-In Advising Hours:**

1. Register by filling out this [Google Form](#)
2. Receive the Drop-In Advising Zoom link upon completing the form.
3. Click on the link during the Drop-In Advising hours (Tuesday 8:30am - 10am & Thursday 11:30am - 1pm) - Speak to an OISS advisor!

Students will be served on a first-come, first-serve basis during Drop-In Hours. You will be assigned to a breakout room to speak to an OISS advisor for up to 15 minutes.

\*If you require more than 15 minutes, a scheduled appointment with an advisor is recommended and can be scheduled at: [oisss@risd.edu](mailto:oisss@risd.edu). We have access to other modes of communication too (WhatsApp, WeChat, KakaoTalk, LINE, Skype)- just ask! **We will continue to use the virtual space for our advising sessions for the 2020- 2021 Academic Year.**

**OISS hours are Monday- Friday, 8:30am- 4:30pm EST; however, we will have reduced hours from 8:30am - 1pm EST from December 21-23.** Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis with the understanding that many of you are in different time zones and outside of the U.S. We will find a time that works for you.

---

# Immigration Updates

---

## Travel Related

**I-20 Travel Signatures:** We have temporarily modified some of our processes regarding the I-20 Travel Signature due to COVID-19. The temporary changes have been guided by the SEVP (Student & Exchange Visitor Program) [Broadcast Message 2003-03: New Electronic Form I-20 Issuance Guidance on ICE.gov/COVID19](#) sent on March 26, 2020. To request an I-20 Travel Signature, you will need to complete this [I-20 Update/Travel Request Form](#) found on our website. Please do not come to our physical office for a travel signature, as we are currently working remotely.

New Students who are in the United States - you do not require a travel signature on your I-20 until the next time you plan to leave the U.S.

**Travel Letter Template:** See attached letter for any travel into the United States or visa appointments that this information may be helpful with.

**Note About Travel:** If you are currently in the United States with plans to work or study here in the near future, traveling outside of the U.S. is not recommended. With the current travel restrictions in the U.S. and in many other countries, when you might be able to return to the United States is unknown. This is not immigration-specific, but rather related to the global pandemic and the travel restrictions that are country-specific. Many are still not allowing for international travel- the U.S. included. Please contact [oiss@risd.edu](mailto:oiss@risd.edu) with any questions specific to your situation.

**Routine Visa Services:** Continued Slow Reopening: U.S. embassies and consulates have continued with their “phased resumption of routine visa services” and there are still delays and closings. We encourage you to monitor the embassies and consulates in your home country as appointment availability will depend on local conditions.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the most up-to-date ICE/SEVP Policy Guidance from August 7, 2020. We are still awaiting the ICE/SEVP Policy Guidance for the Wintersession and Spring 2021 terms and are currently operating under the August 7th Guidance

## Other Things to Consider

Information related to [Social Security Numbers and Driver's Licenses](#).

Information on [Scams in the United States](#). DO NOT give anyone money over the phone if they are threatening you in any way. No US Government office will demand money over the phone.

Previous [OISS Newsletters and the Webinar from November 12](#) that addresses questions about Wintersession and Spring 2021.

---

## Programming with OISS

---

The OISS Wintersession and Spring programs will be announced in the January 2021 Newsletter. Program topics will include: Optional Practical Training (OPT), Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Visa Options after Graduation with an immigration attorney, Taxes in the US, and other events that include fun and snacks! Stay tuned!

OISS will also be sending out a Satisfaction Survey during Wintersession so we can hear from you on how we are doing and where we might improve to better serve our international student community. Please watch for it!

For information on upcoming programs at RISD, remember to check out Involved at:

<https://involved.risd.edu>

Please stay in touch with us. We're here for you as you continue navigating your international student experience at RISD.

We wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy 2021!

**French** – Bonne Année.

**Spanish** – ¡ Feliz Año Nuevo!

**Welsh** – Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

**Italian** – Buon anno.

**German** – Frohes Neues Jahr.

**Dutch** – Gelukkig Nieuwjaar.

**Hindi** – नए साल की शुभकामनाएँ (naye saal ki shubh-kamnaye)

**Icelandic** – Gleðilegt nýtt ár.

**Japanese** (although this one is customary after midnight) – あけましておめでとう (Akemashite omedetou)

**Mandarin** – Xin Nian Kuai Le – (sheen nian kwai luh)

**Cantonese** 0 San Nin Fai Lok – (san knee fy lock)

**Turkish** – Mutlu yıllar Czech – Sřastný nový rok

**Danish** – Godt nytår

**Finnish** – Hyvää uutta vuotta

**Norwegian** – Godt nytt år

**Polish** – Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku

**Portuguese** – Feliz Ano Novo

**Russian** – S novym godom

The **Scottish** also say lang may yer lum reek for New Year, it translates as 'may you always have fuel for your fire.'

Sincerely,

***The Office of International Student Services Team***

*Kate Sacco, Director*

*Jennifer Dressen, Assistant Director*

*Amy Andrea Iglesias, International Student Advisor*

*Sachi Tan, Administrative Coordinator*

---

Follow us on Social Media!



© 2020 Rhode Island School of Design  
Office of International Student Services

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

TWO COLLEGE STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903 TELEPHONE 401-277-4957 FAX 401-454-6605

November 24, 2020

Dear Officer,

This letter is to offer further explanation on behalf of Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, Rhode Island, United States of America. On July 24, 2020 SEVP issued Broadcast Message (Message ID: MID189), Subject: Follow-up: ICE continues March Guidance for Fall School Term. On August 7, 2020, that policy guidance was finalized.

The previous SEVP Broadcast Message (Message ID: MID 187) issued on July 6, 2020 required institutions to update all Initial and Active Form I-20 student records to indicate the campus modality. On July 14, 2020 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement rescinded the July 6 directive. Based on the rescinded July 6 directive and the most recent broadcast message on July 24, it is our understanding the above-mentioned notation is no longer required; however, this letter serves to verify the following:

- Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), located in Providence, RI plans to adhere to the following schedule:

**Wintersession 2021(Jan 11- Feb 12): Operating entirely online\***

- Per current regulations students may enroll in remote courses and maintain status.
- **For students who have Active records in SEVIS:** According to the August 7th policy guidance, the student needs to maintain a full-time course load but may study in a fully online, hybrid or in-person course modality so long as they are making normal progress in their degree program.
- **For students who have Initial records in SEVIS:** According to the August 7th policy guidance, the student must be enrolled in at least one hybrid or in-person course if they are to study in the United States. In addition, they must be enrolled full-time and making normal progress in their degree program.

*\*Exceptions of programs that ARE offering hybrid or in-person courses: Industrial Design, Interior Architecture and Glass.*

**Spring 2021(Feb 22- May 27): NOT operating entirely online**

- **For students who have Active records in SEVIS:** According to the August 7th policy guidance, the student needs to maintain a full-time course load but may study in a fully online, hybrid or in-person course modality so long as they are making normal progress in their degree program.



- **For students who have Initial records in SEVIS:** According to the August 7th policy guidance, the student must be enrolled in at least one hybrid or in-person course if they are to study in the United States. In addition, they must be enrolled full-time and making normal progress in their degree program.

The student intends to return to campus to continue/start their studies. Wintersession courses will begin on January 11, 2021, however students are expected to arrive on campus by December 28, 2020.

Please note that for students traveling from Canada, travel to attend school is considered "essential travel" per the U.S. Customs and Border Protection rule from 5/22/2020 as found in the Federal Register and quoted below.

"For purposes of the temporary alteration in certain designated ports of entry operations authorized under 19 U.S.C. 1318(b)(1)(C) and (b)(2), travel through the land ports of entry and ferry terminals along the United States-Canada border shall be limited to "essential travel," which includes, but is not limited to...

Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions;

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/05/22/2020-11145/notification-of-temporary-travel-restrictions-applicable-to-land-ports-of-entry-and-ferries-service>

Additionally, per the travel.stage.gov website - Students traveling from the Schengen Area, the UK, and Ireland with valid F-1 and M-1 visas do not need to contact an embassy or consulate to seek an individual national interest exception to travel.

Should additional support be needed while in transit please contact RISD Public Safety. They are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and will be able to quickly reach the Office of International Student Services Staff (Kate Sacco, Director or Jennifer Dressen, Assistant Director).

RISD Public Safety:

+ 1 (401) 454-6666 OR + 1 (401) 454-6376

Sincerely,



Catherine Sacco, PDSO

Director, International Student Services

401.709.8474