COVID-19 Message

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

The following message was sent to all international students:

Dear Students,

Many of you have emailed OISS with questions about how the decision to move to online classes affects international students and their status in the U.S. Please know that we are working as fast as we can to provide answers to your questions and address your concerns. OISS will provide an FAQ and updates through our website [1] very soon. Also, keep monitoring the updates on the Yale COVID-19 site [2].

Remote coursework and its impact on your immigration status

U.S. universities received guidance from the Department of Homeland Security that allows students to continue this semester’s courses remotely without jeopardizing their immigration status. This means that you must continue to be enrolled full-time and be making normal progress toward the degree. Regardless of where you are participating in online classes, your immigration status will remain active. Please note that this is a temporary accommodation in place until this health crisis ends and in-person classes resume.

Travel issues

Many of you will be making decisions about where to reside while engaging in online courses. If you plan to leave the U.S. now, please review OISS travel guidance [3] about the documents you will need to re-enter. Please also keep in mind that the classes have been moved to online only until April 5th, but that situation could change.

- If the travel signature on the back of your I-20 (page two) or DS-2019 (page one) will expire before the end of August 2020 (they are valid for one year), stop by OISS between noon and 5pm for a new travel signature.
- Check the expiration date of your F-1 or J-1 visa as you will need a valid student visa to return (Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S.). If you need to apply for a new student visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, please keep in mind how long it might take to get a new visa and make your plans accordingly.
- If you are traveling internationally, please register your travel with Yale [4].
- Check to make sure if your home country (or any third country you might be connecting through) has placed any restrictions or required procedures for international arrivals.
- Before you travel, please check COVID-19 country specific information on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [5].

??OPT for F-1 Students

Please remember that you must be physically in the U.S. at the time you submit your Optional Practical Training (OPT) application. OISS will continue to process OPT as soon as we receive your complete application and will communicate with you about how to pick up and submit your application. If you are have not applied for OPT yet, but plan to do so we strongly encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible [6] (especially submit the OPT request in OISS Connect [7] without delay).

OISS Hours and Talking with your OISS adviser

OISS remains open, although our hours may change. For the moment, we ask that you communicate with your OISS adviser by appointment, either through email or virtually through Zoom. Make an appointment with your OISS adviser here [8].
For community health reasons, **OISS is temporarily suspending walk-in advising hours and all programs and events.** You may stop by for travel signatures and document pick-ups between 12 pm and 5 pm.

Please know that OISS is committed to supporting our international student and scholar community during this health emergency. While we must do a few things differently, we remain available, as always, to answer your questions and address your concerns.

Regards,
OISS Staff

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Links:
[1] https://oiss.yale.edu/
[8] https://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss