With the recent communication about the Fall semester from President Salovey and Provost Strobel, and your Dean, you may have questions about your status as an international student.

Nearly all of you now have your immigration documents (I-20s and DS-2019 forms) and are contemplating the next steps and the difficult decisions ahead of you. To date, there has been no announcement about the opening of U.S. consulates but some consulates are beginning to make appointments. And as long as the travel bans are in place, making your way to the U.S. remains problematic, even if you have a visa. The FAQs below provide you with the most up-to-date information available, but there are still many unanswered questions. Please know that both OISS and Yale University continue to monitor this global health crisis and will communicate with you regularly about any updates or changes.

For questions about the enrollment options for the fall semester, please refer to the communication from your school.

For more general information about how Yale will operate in the fall, please refer to these University updates.

### Contents

- What if I Do Not Yet Have My I-20?
- Visa Appointment Questions
- Travel and Arrival in New Haven
- Deferring the Start of Your Program
- SEVIS Transfer Students
- Enrolling in Class if my Travel is Delayed
- Change of Status Students
- Getting Help from OISS

### What if I Do Not Yet Have My I-20?

1. **I have not received my I-20? What should I do?**

   Be sure that you have submitted all the required financial documentation and that you have completed your OISS New Student Survey in our portal. If you are expecting your I-20 through the SEVIS Transfer process, please note that Yale cannot issue your new I-20 until after the transfer release date set up in SEVIS by your previous school. If you have questions about your document status please email newstudents.oiss@yale.edu.

### Visa Appointment Questions

2. **When will the U.S. consulates open for processing of student visas? Should I apply for a visa?**

   As of July 1, 2020, routine visa services at most U.S. embassies and consulates around the world remain suspended. Please check the webpage for the consulate you will be using, as well as the U.S. Department of State's visa page for announcements and updates. If you can make a visa appointment you should do so, knowing that it might be canceled. You will find updates from the U.S. Department of State here.
3. I have a visa appointment but it is not until after the start of classes, how do I get an earlier appointment?

Some embassies and consulates offer expedited appointment requests but the instructions are not the same for every location. Most often to request an earlier appointment you must first make an appointment and then request an expedite. Normal visa wait times are available on the U.S. Dept of State’s visa appointment page, and you should contact your local embassy or consulate for details on making an expedite request.

4. Can OISS or my school write a letter to prove that I need to be on campus by August to help me get a faster visa appointment?

Stay tuned and we will post additional information shortly about this. In the meantime, you can use the Yale announcements about the Fall semester as evidence of the fall opening.

5. My visa appointment was canceled, what should I do?

Appointments are being canceled based on local embassy decisions, often because U.S. consular staff are not in place and/or the COVID-19 conditions in-country. If your appointment is cancelled, rebook your appointment for the next available date and notify your OISS adviser of the new date.

Travel and Arrival in New Haven

Apart from U.S. embassies and consulates abroad being closed or having limited visa services, the White House has announced a series of travel restrictions related to COVID-19. Travel has also been affected by reduced or canceled flights to the U.S. For a detailed list of travel bans or restrictions in place now please check our international travel page.

6. If I have a valid F-1 or J-1 visa, can I travel to the U.S.?

If you have a valid visa, you may use that visa to enter the U.S. with your Yale I-20 or DS-2019 (see below for important start date reminders). However, you still need to consider existing travel bans and evolving travel restrictions, as well as your personal situation before deciding if travel is right for you. When making travel plans review your flights and remember that even if you start from a non-travel ban country, a layover in a country that is covered by a travel ban will likely prevent you from being admitted to the U.S.

7. What do I do if I cannot arrive by the start dates on my I-20 or DS-2019 form?

Regulations require that F-1 students arrive in the U.S. no later than the Start of Classes date listed on your I-20. If you will be traveling to Yale after this date, your I-20 will need to be amended with a new start date. If you are in J-1 status you can arrive up to 30 days after the DS-2019 start date, but this may need to be amended to facilitate your entry to the U.S. Amendments do not cancel your visa application or SEVIS ID, they only change information in your record which is then printed on a new I-20 or DS-2019. Within the next couple of weeks, OISS will be reviewing the possible changes in start dates and will let you know when and how you will receive a new document.

8. Can I travel to a country which is not under a travel ban and then travel to the U.S. after 14 days?
You may want to research this option, but given the constantly changing dynamics there are risks.

---

**Deferring the Start of Your Program**

9. If I defer my enrollment to Fall 2021 who should I notify?

If you decide to defer your enrollment, please let both your school and OISS know so we can stay updated on your enrollment plans. Depending on the length of the deferral, OISS will either issue an I-20 for the new date (January 2021) or cancel your current SEVIS record and issue you a new I-20 for the Fall 2021.

---

**SEVIS Transfer Students**

10. What if I am already in the U.S. on an F-1 or J-1 visa that I am transferring to Yale?

Once you have your Yale Transfer-Pending document you are ready to relocate to New Haven. Please get in touch with your OISS adviser about the steps to register your SEVIS record upon arrival at Yale.

11. What if I have a Transfer-Pending I-20 but I am outside the U.S. and cannot travel to New Haven?

We are awaiting guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on how to handle Transfer-Pending records if the student cannot return to the U.S. Please get in touch with your OISS adviser about your record status and options for maintaining status until you are able to arrive at Yale.

---

**Enrolling in Class if my Travel is Delayed**

OISS is awaiting guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on how to handle the immigration records if you are required to start your program abroad due to travel or visa delays. This includes questions of eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT) for one-year programs or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for two-year degree programs. We will update this section when we have detailed guidance.

12. I will have to start the semester online from my home country, can I still receive my Financial Aid or scholarship?

Questions about financial aid and Yale scholarships will be answered by your Yale school.

---

**Change of Status Students**

13. I am now in the U.S. on another non-immigrant status (H-1B, TN, etc.). What should I do?

Please review the information on the OISS website and get in touch with your OISS adviser immediately. Your course of action depends on many variables, and your adviser can help outline the issues.
14. I filed a Change of Status request with USCIS but the processing time may be 5-8 months, will I be able to enroll in classes?

A pending Change of Status request can sometimes permit class enrollment but it is crucial that you are able to maintain your underlying (most recent) status until the request is approved. If a change of status to B1/B2 is approved but your student status is not, you are unable to enroll while in a tourist status. As the Fall semester begins you should contact your OISS adviser [9] for more detailed instructions.

Getting Help from OISS

15. Who do I contact at OISS if I have questions?

You may either contact your OISS adviser [13] or send an email to newstudents.oiss@yale.edu [14]. We know this is a stressful time for you and that you are eager for answers. We are working as fast we can to answer your emails and will get back to you as soon as we can. Keep checking this site for updates.