

FAQs for Current Students

Last Updated January 19, 2021

[Traveling for winter or spring break? Read the Travel & Visa FAQs.](#)

[Will you be coming to Yale this semester? Check out the Arriving at Yale in Spring 2021 page.](#) [1]

Below you will find updated FAQs on specific topics, but here are the key takeaways from the most recent DSH/ICE guidance:

- **All new students studying in the U.S. for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semester** must have an in-person component in your course schedule. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has not issued additional guidance for the Spring 2021 semester so schools must follow the [guidance issued on August 7, 2020](#). [2]. Given the many different programs within Yale, specific questions about enrollment options for the spring semester are best answered by directly communicating with your school.
- **Continuing students in F-1 Active status** on March 9, 2020 are permitted to study in-person, 100% online or a combination of both. Continuing students who chose to study remotely from outside the U.S. may do so and will retain their active SEVIS record.
- If for public health reasons, Yale must shift to all online instruction at some point during the spring semester, all F-1 students holding Active SEVIS status (including newly arrived students who have checked in with OISS) will be able to maintain their nonimmigrant status.
- Students currently outside the U.S. need to be mindful of other international travel issues such as travel restrictions, transit rules, availability of flights, and limited operations at the U.S. Embassies/Consulates. Please review the [OISS Current Travel Restrictions Page](#). [3]

Note: J-1 students operate under different guidance issued by the U.S. Department of State. In the fall, the J-1 Exchange Visitor program announced that it is permitting “altered modalities” of study during the COVID-19 emergency either in-person. There has been no future guidance since the fall. .

In addition to the FAQs below please continue to monitor university, and school specific policy regarding the spring semester including the recent [Yale community messages](#). [4]

- [Getting Help from OISS](#)
- [Immigration Status Questions](#)
- [Travel and Visa Questions](#)

Getting Help from OISS

[Is OISS open?](#)

Advisers remain available [by email and Zoom appointment](#). [5] to answer your questions, and our visa sponsorship work has continued uninterrupted. Arrangements will be made upon request for those who need updated visa documents. Delivery will either be electronic or in paper.

[Can I pick up my documents at OISS?](#)

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Immigration Status Questions

[If I decide to remain abroad for the spring 2021 semester, do I still need to report a U.S. address?](#)

Yes, you need to keep a U.S. address in your Yale SIS and SEVIS records to maintain status. If you are not residing at the address currently listed as your "OISS U.S. Address" in your SIS account, please update this address to one where you can receive mail, such as a friend or Yale School address within 10 days. (Please follow the instructions under "[Continuing Students](#) [6]" and report using "OISS U.S. Address").

[I am a J-1 student, does the June 22nd Presidential Proclamation banning J-1 visa holders apply to me?](#)

The Proclamation "suspends the entry into the United States" of some categories of J-1 visas. **It does not affect the J-1 student category.**

[Are J-1 students allowed to study online?](#)

On June 25th the U.S. State Department distributed an email stating that J-1 visa sponsors could "...find alternative ways to maintain program objectives, including online classes or other arrangements, while preventing unnecessary exposure to COVID-19." At present this appears to permit continuing students to study in-person or remotely, from inside the U.S. or while outside the U.S. If you are a returning J-1 student, your SEVIS record will remain active as long as you are enrolled full-time and make normal progress towards your degree.

Travel and Visa Questions

Please check out our [Arriving at Yale in Spring 2021](#) [1] page as it contains many important resources and an arrival checklist.

[Can I travel during winter break? What if I am graduating in Spring 2021?](#)

You should be aware of the risks of leaving the U.S., especially if you are graduating in Spring 2021. For all students (graduating or not graduating) you should be aware that the public health crisis or political situation could worsen and prevent you from returning to the U.S. if travel bans or restrictions occur. Matters can be complicated further if you must apply for a new F-1 visa stamp; consulates could limit services or close. If this happens, you may not be able to return to the U.S. for an undetermined amount of time. Students graduating in Spring 2021 should also be aware that you must be physically present in the U.S. in order to apply for work authorization after graduation, called [Optional Practical Training](#) [7]. If you are not in the U.S., you cannot apply for OPT. Please speak to your designated [OISS adviser](#) [8] if you are graduating in Spring 2021 and plan to travel during winter break.

[My travel signature is expiring, how do I get a new travel signature?](#)

OISS can reprint your I-20 with a new travel signature and send it to you as an electronic form. Email your [OISS adviser](#) [5] to request a new travel signature I-20. Use the subject line: New Travel Signature Requested.

[Can I re-enter the U.S. on an expired visa?](#)

No. If your visa will have expired by the date you wish to re-enter the U.S., then you will need to obtain a new visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before you can re-enter the U.S. Due to current disruptions in visa services at consulates and embassies worldwide, OISS discourages travel abroad for students with an expired/expiring visa, if you are planning to return to campus in the fall.

[My visa is expiring and I am unable to travel to my home country currently. What should I do to renew it?](#)

You may stay in the U.S. on an expired F-1 or J-1 visa as long as you maintain your immigration status by being in possession of a valid I-20 or DS-2019 and by meeting normal enrollment requirements. (Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S.).

[Will the five-month visa expiration rule apply to my visa if I stay abroad during the fall semester?](#)

If you are maintaining full-time status until the end of the fall semester and intend to register as usual for the spring semester, this rule will not affect you. Remember that when classes resume fully in person, you must return to campus to maintain your immigration status.

[I applied for U.S. Permanent Residency. Can I leave the country now?](#)

If you applied to become Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status in the United States, consult an immigration attorney regarding international travel, which is generally not recommended.

[When I return to the U.S. will I need to quarantine?](#)

Yes. Yale is following public health guidelines and you will be asked to follow all instructions laid out on the [Yale Health Guidelines website](#) [9] as well as messages from your school.

Source URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-resources/for-students/faqs-for-current-students>

Links:

- [1] <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-resources/arriving-at-yale-in-spring-2021>
- [2] <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf>
- [3] <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-resources/current-travel-guidance-and-restrictions>
- [4] <https://covid19.yale.edu/community-messages>
- [5] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss>
- [6] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/report-your-address/f-1-j-1-students>
- [7] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/f-1-students/employment/f-1-optional-practical-training>
- [8] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss>
- [9] <https://covid19.yale.edu/health-safety-guidelines>

