

FAQs For New Students Arriving in Spring 2021

Updated January 15, 2021

Spring 2021 Semester

OISS welcomes new students to campus for the Spring 2021 semester. Please check out our [Arriving at Yale in Spring 2021](#) [1] page also as it contains many important resources and an arrival checklist. We hope that the FAQs below answer your questions. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to your [OISS adviser](#) [2].

As stated below, 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](#) [3]. 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. A [letter explaining Yale's instructional plan for the spring semester may be found here](#) [4].

Please know that both Yale and OISS are committed to supporting you through this difficult period and ensuring that you are able to participate in your academic program this spring, should you choose to do so.

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My I-20

[Do I need an updated I-20?](#)

Your OISS adviser will have recently provided you with a new I-20, sent electronically per [DHS guidance](#) [3] (page 5, question 8), that notes the new start date of your semester. Please make sure the start date of your most recent I-20 matches the start date of your academic program. OISS has also included a remark on your I-20 in an abundance of caution to clarify that Yale will have in-person courses available to students this Spring 2021. If you have any questions about your I-20, please [contact your OISS adviser](#) [2]. Please also [print this letter](#) [4] and have it ready with you when you go for a visa interview (if applicable) or enter the U.S.

In-Person Component Requirement

[Do I need to have an in-person component for my instruction during the Spring 2021 semester?](#)

Yes. All new incoming students in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 must have an in-person component to their

instruction, 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. Students can [download and print a letter explaining Yale's spring 2021 model](#) [5].

Visa Appointment Questions

[When can I get my F-1 or J-1 visa?](#)

Since the [Department of State first announced](#) [6] a phased-in resumption of visa services, OISS has had reports of students obtaining visa appointments for their F-1 or J-1 visas. If you have not done so yet, please pursue securing a visa appointment as soon as possible. If your visa appointment date is after the start of classes, please let [your OISS adviser](#) [2] know. Keep in mind that some country specific travel bans may make it difficult or impossible to secure an appointment. Please review all of the [Current Travel Restrictions page](#) [7] for additional information. Please also [print this letter](#) [4] and have it ready with you when you go for a visa interview (if applicable) or when you enter the U.S.

[How can I request an expedited visa appointment?](#)

Some embassies and consulates offer expedited appointment requests, but the protocols might vary at each location. You should first secure a visa appointment for any date (even if it is after the start of classes), and then request an expedited appointment. Normal visa appointment wait times are available on the U.S. Department of State's [visa appointment](#) [8] page, and you should contact your [local embassy or consulate](#) [9] for details on requesting an expedited appointment. Please note that some U.S. Embassy/Consulates allow you to request an expedited appointment only once, so make sure you understand the process before you submit a request. The reason for the expedite would be that you need to travel to the U.S. to study and there are no regular visa appointments available before your start date. However, please note that if the U.S. Embassy/Consulate is not ready to resume limited services, it is not unusual for your expedite request to be denied, so you might want to wait until you know that they are resuming visa services for students. In some cases, your program at Yale may be willing to write a statement on your behalf.

[Is it true that I may qualify for an exemption of the travel ban if I am living in a Schengen region country, Ireland, or the UK?](#)

Yes, the Department of State [announced exemptions](#) [10] in mid-July 2020. We recommend that you print and carry the linked announcement with you when you travel, since not all airline personnel or security staff at your departure, transit, or arrival points might be aware of this exception. OISS is aware that the procedures to request a national interest exemption for J-1 visa holders differ slightly depending on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Please check with your [local U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#) [9] for details.

Travel and Arrival in New Haven

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

[If I have a valid F-1 or J-1 visa, can I travel to the U.S.?](#)

If you have a valid F-1 or J-1 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. When making travel plans, please review your flight itinerary 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 prevent you from**

being admitted to the U.S. However, please review the section about certain exemptions covering the Schengen area, Ireland, and the UK above.

[Do I need proof of a negative COVID-19 test to travel to the U.S.?](#)

Effective January 26, 2021, all air passengers arriving to the US from another country are required to get tested for COVID-19 no more than 3 days before their flight departs and to provide proof of the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight. This rule applies regardless of vaccination status. For more information on this requirement, see the [CDC's Frequently Asked Questions](#) [11].

[What do I do if I cannot arrive by the start date on my I-20 or DS-2019 form?](#)

Regulations require that F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors arrive in the U.S. on or before their "program start date" listed on the I-20 or DS-2019. If you will not arrive by the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019, please notify [your OISS adviser.](#) [12]

[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, please understand that there are risks involved. If you are considering this option, please notify your [OISS adviser](#) [2].

Deferring the Start of Your Program

[If I defer my enrollment to Fall 2021 who should I notify?](#)

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

SEVIS Transfer Students

[What if I have a transfer-pending I-20 but I am **outside** the U.S. and plan to come to New Haven for Spring 2021?](#)

We hope to be able to issue you a new I-20 with the correct Spring 2021 semester start date, which will require your OISS to coordinate with the SEVIS Help Desk. Please notify your [OISS adviser](#) [2] in a timely fashion when you have concrete travel plans.

Enrolling in Class if my Travel is Delayed

[Can I take classes remotely while I am outside the U.S. if I cannot arrive for the Spring](#)

FAQs For New Students Arriving in Spring 2021

Published on Office of International Students & Scholars (<https://oiss.yale.edu>)

[2021 semester?](#)

New students in F-1 Initial status who cannot arrive in the U.S. on time may enroll remotely for the spring semester so long as your school permits it. Please note that this may impact your eligibility for CPT (should your school have this option), so please be sure to reach out to your [OISS adviser](#) [2] if you have questions. If you think there is a chance that you will arrive to the U.S. by the deadline set by your school during the Spring 2021 semester, please be sure to select at least one course that you will start remotely and will have an in-person component upon your arrival in the U.S., which is required for you to maintain your F-1 status.

Change of Status Students

[I am in the U.S. and 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 enrollment in classes, 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 Spring semester begins you should contact [your OISS adviser](#) [12] for more detailed instructions.

Getting Help from OISS

[Who do I contact at OISS if I have questions?](#)

You may contact [your OISS adviser](#) [13]. We know that this is a stressful time for you and that you are eager for answers. We are working as fast as we can to answer your emails and will get back to you as soon as we can. Please keep checking this page for updates.

Source URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-resources/for-students/faqs-for-new-students-arriving-in-spring-2021>

Links:

[1] <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-resources/arriving-at-yale-in-spring-2021>

[2] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss>

[3] <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf>

[4] <https://yale.app.box.com/v/fulltimeletter>

[5] <https://yale.box.com/v/fulltimeletter>

[6] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/phased-resumption-routine-visa-services.html>

[7] <https://oiss.yale.edu/covid-19-information/current-travel-restrictions>

[8] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>

[9] <https://www.usembassy.gov/>

[10] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/national-interest-exceptions-from-certain-travelers-from-the-schengen-area-uk-and-ireland.html#.XxDYpqq0BLo.twitter>

[11] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>

[12] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss>

[13] <https://oiss.yale.edu/contact>
