

# Immigration Services Fall 2020 FAQ

## General

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### Travel

#### **Can I travel internationally? Are there any entry restrictions to the U.S.?**

UGA Immigration Services currently does not recommend non-essential international travel due to the rapidly evolving [COVID-19 outbreak \(link is external\)](#) and impacts to global travel. International travel can be unpredictable and pose some risk in the current environment. If you make the personal decision to travel internationally, please carefully review the [Immigration Services Travel & Re-Entry page](#) for general information regarding travel and required re-entry documents. If your U.S. entry visa is expired, be aware that applying for a visa could be unpredictable and subject to further delays if U.S. Consulates are not open.

When returning from international travel, follow [CDC guidance \(link is external\)](#) and review UGA Campus guidance on the [UGA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information & Resources site \(link is external\)](#) and the [University Health Center COVID-19 Information \(link is external\)](#) page.

#### **I am arriving to the U.S. from another country. Will I have to quarantine when I get to Athens?**

Students arriving from international travel should take extra steps to monitor their health for 14 days after returning from travel. Please visit the [CDC's travel website](#) for post-international travel guidance. Check your symptoms each day through [DawgCheck](#) before coming to campus. If you are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID contact the University Health Center by calling [706-542-1162](#).

Visit [coronavirus.uga.edu](https://coronavirus.uga.edu) for the latest campus messages and information on COVID-19.

#### **Current Travel Restrictions for Students, Scholars & Non-Immigrant Employees**

A travel restriction currently suspends entry into the United States of most non-immigrants who were physically present within the countries outlined on the [COVID-19 Traveler Information](#) resource for a two week period prior to travel to the U.S. As of July 10, 2020, these countries include all Schengen countries, Iran, Brazil, China, United Kingdom, and Ireland. Please review updated information specifically for student and scholar travelers from the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Schengen countries.

## **Update for students and scholars traveling from Schengen countries, UK and Ireland**

Certain business travelers, investors, treaty traders, **academics, and students** may qualify for National Interest Exceptions under Presidential Proclamations (P.P.s) 9993 (Schengen Area) and 9996 (United Kingdom and Ireland).

**Students with valid F-1 and M-1 visas and their dependents may travel to the US while these Proclamations are in effect. They do not need to apply for a national interest exception to travel. They do have to have, or apply for and receive, a valid F-1 visa in order to travel to the U.S.**

**Students or scholars traveling as J-1 exchange visitors may contact the nearest embassy or consulate to initiate an exception request.** Travelers who believe they meet a national interest exception may request a visa appointment at the closest Embassy or Consulate and a decision will be made at the time of interview. Travelers are encouraged to refer to the Embassy/Consulate website for detailed instructions on what services are currently available and how to request an appointment. Individuals who already hold a valid travel document or can travel via ESTA may contact the closest Embassy or Consulate to initiate the national interest exception process.

You can find the website and contact information for the U.S. Consulate closest to you here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>

## **Mexico & Canada Travel Restrictions**

Effective through June 22, 2020 according to a [U.S.-Canada Border Federal Register Notice \(link is external\)](#) and a [U.S.-Mexico Border Federal Register Notice \(link is external\)](#), entry is only allowed to the United States through land ports of entry along the U.S.-Canada and U.S. Mexico borders for “essential travel” only. **“Essential travel” includes “Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions; Individuals traveling to work in the United States.”** A [separate order from the CDC \(link is external\)](#) also suspends “the introduction of persons into the United States” who are traveling from Canada or Mexico who are subjected to entry in a “congregate setting” at a Port of Entry or Border Patrol station. The order states that it is not applicable to “Persons from foreign countries who hold valid travel documents.” It is unclear how this could apply for travelers sent to [Secondary Inspection \(link is external\)](#), because their documents cannot be verified or if they are missing appropriate travel documentation.

## **Other Countries**

Additionally, [many other countries may have travel restrictions of their own \(link is external\)](#), which could impact your ability to enter those countries or move freely.

## **Can I apply for a U.S. visa right now? Are consulates and embassies open for applications?**

[Global travel conditions are highly impacted \(link is external\)](#) by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Department of State has [suspended routine U.S. visa services in most countries worldwide \(link is external\)](#). Visit your [local U.S. embassy or consulate website \(link is external\)](#) to confirm operating status and find information about appointment rescheduling and/or emergency services. If you do make the personal decision to travel

internationally, please carefully review the [Immigration Services travel page](#) for general information regarding travel and required re-entry documents. If your U.S. entry visa is expired, be aware that applying for a visa for entry could be unpredictable and could cause you to face further delays.

### **What does UGA Immigration Services mean when they say non-essential international travel is not recommended? What if I want to go home?**

From an immigration perspective, international travel currently can be unpredictable. If you are currently maintaining a student, scholar or employee immigration status in the U.S. and you depart, it may prove difficult to return to the U.S. in a timely manner, which could have an impact on your U.S. visa status if you are unable to resume your stay in the U.S. as a student, scholar or employee.

Immigration Services understands that you may have serious personal or health concerns which require you to depart, or that you may feel more comfortable with your family or in your home country. We want to make sure that as you make these important decisions, you understand the possible risks involved — including the fact that you may not be able to re-enter the U.S. at the time you intend. Additionally, many other countries have travel restrictions of their own, which could impact your ability to enter those countries or move freely.

If you are considering a short trip to a country which is not your home, you may also want to consider the risk that you could remain stuck there if the travel situation changes while you are away, possibly limiting your ability to enter to the U.S. (or any other country). Are you prepared to be delayed for a while in the country you are visiting? You'll have to decide for yourself how comfortable you feel with that risk. It might be important for you to rethink your travel dates and make adjustments later in the year.

### **Can I travel within the U.S.?**

Even within the U.S., different regions are experiencing travel impacts and restrictions. The [CDC: COVID-19 Cases in the U.S. website \(link is external\)](#) has updated numbers per state, but this is changing quickly. If you choose to travel domestically, please be sure to consider your own health and safety. We encourage you to follow the CDC and local recommendations for travel. Aside from any risk from COVID-19 itself, be prepared for possible localized shelter in place orders, transportation restrictions or infrastructure disruption which may impact your travel plans.

### **I need to leave the U.S. and Immigration Services has not signed my I-20 or DS-2019 document. Is that OK? How can I get an I-20 or DS-2019 signature?**

Yes, it's OK. Please know that you do not need a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 document to **depart the U.S.** You DO need a valid travel signature to return to the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status. A valid travel signature must be no more than twelve months old on the date that you return to the U.S. (For F-1 students on post-completion Optional Practical Training or STEM OPT Extension, travel endorsements are only valid for 6 months.) You will need a valid signature to apply for a new visa if the F-1 or J-1 visa stamp in your passport is expired and/or for your reentry into the U.S.

If you would like a travel signature, our office can print a new I-20 or DS-2019 with travel signature to be mailed out to you. Please log into [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu). Select F-1 Student Services or J-1 Student Services, then select “Replace I-20 or DS-2019 Document”.

**My visa is expiring soon. Do I need to return home to extend the visa stamp in my passport? I fear that I will not be able to return. What should I do?**

Please note that it is always important to make sure that your I-20 or DS-2019 has a future date on it to maintain its validity. So long as you remain in the U.S. with a valid I-20 or DS-2019 you are not required to extend the visa stamp in your passport. The visa in the passport only needs to be extended when you have departed and need to reenter the U.S. Accordingly, if you are presently in the U.S., your I-20 or DS-2019 is still valid, and your visa in your passport is expired, there is no need for you to make a trip just to extend the visa. If you must return home, and you do not have a valid visa, you will need to make a visa application appointment, and receive the new visa prior to returning to the U.S.

**What if I was in a U.S. travel restriction-impacted country *more than 14* days ago, and wish to re-enter the U.S.?**

You should try to have clear documentation about how long you have been outside that travel-restricted country. The current COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving and unpredictable. It's unclear how long the travel restrictions may remain in effect for re-entry to the U.S. and how entry could be impacted for travelers even after the 14-day window. Currently, Immigration Services does not have access to clear guidance on what documentation travelers may use to prove they were not present in travel restriction impacted areas within the indicated time period. Do you have access to immigration, residence documents, or other documentation which can officially confirm your location? Are you currently employed? Does your passport accurately reflect your entries and exits?

**My program is ending and I can't leave!**

Immigration Services is aware that many flights to impacted regions have been canceled, and that travel may not be available at this time. If your program is ending soon and you are unable to depart the United States, please [notify Immigration Services](#) to let us know about your situation. We will work with our clients on a case-by-case basis to determine the best path forward. We urge you to also contact your home country's local consulate or embassy in the U.S. for support and information regarding travel home. We will work with our clients on a case-by-case basis to determine the best path forward.

**I am arriving to the U.S. from another country. Will I have to quarantine when I get to Athens?**

Students arriving from international travel should take extra steps to monitor their health for 14 days after returning from travel. Please visit the [CDC's travel website](#) for

post-international travel guidance. Check your symptoms each day through [DawgCheck](#) before coming to campus. If you are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID contact the University Health Center by calling [706-542-1162](tel:706-542-1162).

Visit [coronavirus.uga.edu](https://coronavirus.uga.edu) for the latest campus messages and information on COVID-19. International students may contact International Student Life at [isl@uga.edu](mailto:isl@uga.edu) for guidance and assistance and [immigration@uga.edu](mailto:immigration@uga.edu) for assistance with immigration questions.

## **Health and Support**

### **I'm worried and stressed. Where can I find support?**

With the ongoing concerns around COVID-19, Immigration Services understands that there may be concern and anxiety about family around the world. In addition, with the increasing level of news coverage and concerns about the spread of the virus locally, some of you may be experiencing anxiety or stress. Please know that these reactions are normal and there are ways in which you can take care of yourself during these stressful times.

The university has many resources available to help you cope with these situations. At the following links you can access various resources that you may find useful about how to take care of yourself.

*Resources available for students, scholars and employees:*

- [University Health Center](#)

*Counseling resources just for students:*

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\) \(link is external\)](#)
- [BeWellUGA - Manage Stress and Depression \(link is external\)](#)

*Counseling resources just for scholars and employees:*

- [UGA Well Being- Employee Assistance \(link is external\)](#)

Immigration Services advisers are always ready and willing to be of assistance in any way we can. Please [Contact Us](#) or the [Department of International Student Life](#) for support or resources.

### **I am experiencing xenophobia, racism, harassment, or bullying. What can I do and where can I find support?**

Please [notify International Student Life](#) and [Immigration Services](#) so that we are aware of your situation and can assist with connecting you to support.

UGA is committed to upholding the [mission and goals](#) of diversity, to ensure that all members of our campus community, regardless of race or country of origin, feel welcome, safe, and respected.

Please know that these behaviors have no place in the UGA community. UGA prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of categories including race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation/identity and/or sexual violence status. If you have experienced physical assaults, hate crimes, and/or threats of violence, you have the right to report them to [UGA PD \(link is external\)](#)

Students can seek counseling support at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\) \(link is external\)](#), [Student Care and Outreach \(link is external\)](#) and the [Equal Opportunity Office \(link is external\)](#) will also be valuable resources. Scholars and employees can access counseling services through [BeWellUGA \(link is external\)](#).

## **F-1 and J-1 Enrolled Degree-Seeking Students**

### **General**

**I am an F-1 or J-1 enrolled degree-seeking student and I need to submit a request to Immigration Services for my I-20 or DS-2019 form. When will you process my new I-20/DS-2019? How can I receive it?**

Immigration Services will continue processing all e-forms submitted through [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu) (formerly iStart). All initial I-20s and DS-2019s will be processed and mailed to the student via express mail.

If you are a student who deferred their admission from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021, our office will be contacting you in late September with specific instructions on how to obtain your new I-20 or DS-2019.

Current students and those approved for OPT or STEM OPT may choose from two mailing options: [Immigration Services Document Retrieval](#).

**What can I do to receive a travel signature for my re-entry if I am unable to visit Immigration Services in person?**

If you would like a travel signature, our office can print a new I-20 or DS-2019 with travel signature to be mailed out to you. Please log into [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu). Select F-1 or J-1 Student Services, then select “Replace I-20 Document” or “Replace DS-2019 Document.” You will be asked why you are requesting a new I-20 form. For this, you should select “Updated”, then in the subsequent question, select “Travel signature”. If you are still inside the US, we will be able to mail this document to you. If you are outside the US, you will follow the instructions we will send to you on ordering shipment delivery.

### **My I-20 or DS-2019 is expiring, but I need more time to complete my degree. What should I do?**

Please submit a request to extend your I-20 or DS-2019 through [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu). If you will not be enrolled full-time, also submit a request to reduce your course load through [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu).

If you have already applied for F-1 OPT employment or J-1 Academic Training OR if you are eligible to apply now, please contact [an Immigration Services advisor](#) regarding your situation, so that we can determine your next steps.

**If you are OUTSIDE of the U.S. (or you are departing the U.S. before the end of your grace period) and 1) you WILL NOT return to the U.S. and 2) you do NOT intend to apply for post-completion F-1 OPT employment or J-1 Academic Training:** You can choose to allow your I-20 or DS-2019 to expire, but you will need to work with your academic department and advisers to be sure you can complete your requirements from abroad.

### **My I-20 or DS-2019 is expiring and I can't leave the U.S. due to flight issues. What can I do?**

If your program is ending soon and you are unable to depart the United States, please [notify Immigration Services](#) to let us know about your situation. We urge you to also contact your home country's local consulate or embassy in the U.S. for support and information regarding travel home. We will work with you to determine the best path forward. Some options include:

- Consider applying for [post-completion employment](#): F-1 OPT employment or J-1 Academic Training.
- Consider continuing your academic degree program into the summer if further enrollment is appropriate for you in your degree program. If you think it would be better for you to continue your degree program at this time, please contact [Immigration Services](#) regarding your situation, so that we can determine your next steps.
- Consider applying for a change of status through USCIS to that of a tourist (B1/B2) visa. The [USCIS website \(link is external\)](#) contains instructions, checklists, and filing tips. If you need further guidance then you may consider hiring an immigration attorney.

### **I will be outside of the U.S. for more than 5 months. Will I need a new visa? Will I have any problems re-entering the U.S. again as a student?**

The Department of Homeland Security provided guidance in Spring 2020 indicating that students may enter the U.S. if they have departed the country for more than 5 months, so long as they have maintained their status while they were in the U.S., continued to enroll full time while outside the U.S., and they are in possession of a valid, unexpired visa in the passport. Be sure to [properly maintain your student visa status](#) while abroad and have all required travel documents for re-entry when you return.

If you are currently outside of the U.S. and are unable to return to the United States to resume classes or your UGA employment, please [notify Immigration Services](#) to let us know about your situation. We will work with you on a case-by-case basis to determine the best path forward. Please also notify your academic advisor and instructors.

### **What details can you provide regarding Spring 2021 Instruction? How will that impact my visa status?**

Currently, there is no update on what plans UGA has for Spring 2021 Semester. There are also no regulatory updates on what allowances will be made for the F-1 and J-1 student visa statuses.

### **What will happen if I am unable to return and I withdraw or cancel my enrollment at UGA?**

If you are on a student visa status and you withdraw or cancel your enrollment, this will have a direct impact on your F-1 or J-1 student visa status. Please [contact an Immigration Services advisor](#) before you take any steps to officially withdraw or cancel future semesters. If you withdraw without communicating with Immigration Services, this may result in a negative termination of your student visa record.

### **Students who have deferred their admission and/or SEVIS record:**

#### **I am a student who was not able to attend UGA in-person for Fall 2020 semester. How do I request my new I-20 with a Spring 2021 program start date?**

Students who were accepted for Fall 2020 semester, but were unable to travel to the U.S. to attend in-person classes will need a new I-20 from our office that lists a Spring 2021 program start date. To request the new I-20, please complete the I-20 Request: Deferral to Spring 2021 form on [Compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu).

The documentation you must provide our office to be issued the new I-20 will depend on whether or not you enrolled online for Fall 2020. [Please use this chart](#) to determine what documentation is needed for the issuance of your new I-20.

## **F-1/J-1 Employment**

### **I am a NEW student. If I can't enter the U.S. to begin my new degree program in fall 2020, will this impact my qualification for F-1 CPT (or internships), post-completion OPT, or J-1 Academic Training?**

[F-1 Curricular Practical Training](#) (CPT) is used for internships during the degree program, and [F-1 Optional Practical Training](#) can be used for post-completion employment. [J-1 Academic Training](#) is used for internships during the degree and post-completion employment.

Yes, if you are unable to enter the U.S. to begin your degree program in fall 2020, it could have an impact on your F-1 CPT or OPT employment eligibility, or impact the duration of J-1 Academic Training available. Please be advised that this information is based on current Department of Homeland Security guidance and current F-1/J-1 regulations, and is subject to change.

**I am a CONTINUING student with an ACTIVE F-1 or J-1 record. Does attending classes remotely impact my eligibility for F-1 CPT or OPT/STEM or J-1 AT?**

If you have entered the U.S. and you are a continuing F-1 or J-1 student in Active F-1/J-1 status, or if you are outside the U.S. and maintaining your record by enrolling full time online, then any current remote instruction for spring, summer, and fall terms 2020 is counted towards your qualifications for F-1 OPT or J-1 AT. Your OPT/CPT or AT qualification period began at the start of your I-20/DS-2019, when you first entered the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status.

**I am outside of the U.S. and unable to enter to start or continue my F-1 student OPT or apply for OPT. What should I do?**

The current COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving and unpredictable. It's unclear how long the travel restrictions or other global travel restrictions may remain in effect for re-entry to the U.S. and how your entry could be impacted. If you are currently outside of the United States and are unable to return, please [notify Immigration Services](#) to let us know about your situation. We will work with our F-1 OPT students on a case-by-case basis to determine the best path forward. Be sure to review [OPT information](#) on the Immigration Services website, including the OPT workshop, application instructions, employment/address reporting, and required travel documents.

Be aware that you may not exceed 90 days of unemployment during OPT. If you are currently approved for OPT, you may need to determine if you can work remotely for your employer. If you do not have an employer, it's possible that you might exceed the 90 days of unemployment if you are unable to begin employment. Current guidance DOES allow less-than-full-time employment (meaning less than 20 hours per week) if the change is due to the COVID-19 emergency.

If you are currently outside of the U.S. and have not yet applied for OPT, you must re-enter prior to your program completion date in order to qualify to apply for OPT. Please [contact Immigration Services](#) as soon as possible for advising, which might include planning to extend your program of study.

**Has anything changed with regard to OPT processes in light of COVID-19? What if I cannot find an employer within 90 days of the start date of my OPT?**

*Please be advised that this information is based on current Department of Homeland Security guidance and current F-1/J-1 regulations, and is subject to change. There have been no changes to the application process for OPT or to OPT itself. We have not received any guidance regarding the possibility of extending the period of time when someone is not engaged in employment while under OPT or OPT STEM Extensions.*

Current guidance DOES allow less-than-full-time employment (meaning less than 20 hours per week) if the change is due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Please continue to check the [USCIS website \(link is external\)](#) for updates or visit the [USCIS COVID-19 response page \(link is external\)](#) regarding any changes to USCIS processing of requests.

If you are still finishing your degree and have concerns about your post-completion employment, you could also consider continuing your academic degree program, if further enrollment is appropriate for you in your degree program at this time. If you think it would be better for you to continue your degree program at this time, rather than continue with your OPT application, please contact an [Immigration Services advisor](#) regarding your situation, so that we can determine your next steps.

Immigration Services will continue to process all requests for OPT.

**I am an F-1 student and I have already applied for my post-completion OPT. Will my OPT processing be delayed due to COVID-19 impacts to USCIS?**

Immigration Services is not currently able to predict how this may impact USCIS services. We have heard that due to funding issues with USCIS, work card issuance has slowed. Please continue to check the [USCIS website \(link is external\)](#) for updates or visit the [USCIS COVID-19 response page. \(link is external\)](#)

**I am on F-1 OPT or OPT STEM Extension and I am working remotely. Is that OK? Do I need to report my remote work?**

Remote work is OK. DHS has indicated that you DO NOT need to update the employer address information in SEVIS nor on the Form I-983 for students working remotely. Students on OPT should be sure that the work continues to meet OPT requirements or STEM requirements for eligible employment. Make sure to continue to report any OPT/STEM changes in living address, employment, or unemployment via [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu).

**I am on F-1 OPT or STEM OPT Extension and I have been furloughed or laid off. What's the difference? How does this impact my OPT or STEM Extension unemployment days?**

Furlough, leave of absence, laid-off and termination have different meanings. You should confirm in writing with your employer exactly what your employment status is.

A furlough or paid or unpaid approved leave of absence may still be considered employment for OPT/STEM OPT purposes. F-1 regulations allow for “time off taken consistent with leave-related policies applicable to the employer's similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment.” If this is your situation, request documentation from your employer (usually your supervisor or HR) confirming that your period of furlough or official leave of absence.

A termination or lay-off would be an ending of the employment, and would result in the beginning of days of OPT or STEM OPT unemployment. You'll need to report your employer end date via the [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu).

### **I am on F-1 OPT or STEM OPT Extension and I have been furloughed or laid off. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?**

Immigration Services is unable to answer questions about eligibility for unemployment benefits. There is information [here \(link is external\)](#) about state unemployment programs. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has [confirmed \(link is external\)](#) that unemployment benefits are not considered “public benefits” that would violate the [public charge](#) rule. However, it is unclear whether use of unemployment benefits could make a student likely to be seen as someone who could become a public charge *in the future*. Being seen as a *potential* public charge could negatively impact applications for future visas or immigration benefits.

### **I am a J-1 student and my Academic Training employment has been terminated due to COVID-19. What can I do?**

Please [contact Immigration Services](#) as soon as possible so that we can advise you on your available options.

## **J-1 Visiting Scholars and International Faculty and Staff**

### **What are Immigration Services’ current procedures for J Scholar and Employment-based operations?**

Immigration Services staff on the J scholar and employment-based teams are continuing to issue DS-2019s and filing employment based petitions. During this period we continue to process cases and departments can continue to submit cases as usual through <https://compass.uga.edu>.

#### **Update for J1 Visiting Scholars traveling from Schengen countries, the United Kingdom, and Ireland:**

The State Department has announced that: “Certain business travelers, investors, treaty traders, academics, and scholars may qualify for National Interest Exceptions under Presidential Proclamations (PPs) 9993 (Schengen Area) and 9996 (United Kingdom and Ireland).”

J-1 Scholars in any of the above countries may apply for a national interest exception to the travel restriction at the local U.S. Consulate where they will apply for their J visas. Scholars who already have the J visa may still apply for the exception at the U.S. Consulate. Please refer to the specific Consulate for their procedures and requirements for this application. If a support letter is needed, you can apply for one by accessing our Compass portal at <https://compass.uga.edu>, and submitting the e-form: Program Verification Letter Request (found in the General category).

## **What can I do to receive a travel endorsement for my re-entry if I am unable to visit Immigration Services in person?**

If you would like a travel signature, our office can print a new DS-2019 with travel signature to be mailed out to you. Please log into [compass.uga.edu](https://compass.uga.edu). Select J-1 Scholar Services, then select “Replace DS-2019 Document”. You will be asked why you are requesting a new DS-2019 form. For this, you should select “Updated”, then in the subsequent question, select “Travel signature”. If you are still inside the U.S., we will be able to mail this document to you. If you are outside the U.S., you will follow the instructions we send to you on ordering shipment delivery.

## **I am a new visiting scholar or employee currently outside of the U.S. and I can't enter to start my program. Or, I am a continuing scholar employee, and I cannot enter to resume my appointment. What can I do?**

The current COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving and unpredictable. It's unclear how long the travel restrictions or other global travel restrictions may remain in effect for re-entry to the U.S. and how your entry could be impacted. If you are currently outside of the United States and are planning to enter the country, please [notify Immigration Services](#) to let us know about your situation. We will work with our clients on a case-by-case basis to determine the best path forward, and (for new scholars or employees) if your start date and documents should be adjusted. Consult with your UGA faculty sponsor, human resources representative, or department administrator, and [contact Immigration Services](#) if there will be any changes to your program dates or affiliation.

If you made plans to travel to the U.S. to begin an upcoming UGA program or appointment, there are several factors to consider. More information is available on the [UGA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources & Information \(link is external\)](#) and the [University Health Center COVID-19 Information \(link is external\)](#) page.

## **What will happen if I end my UGA appointment early and/or I depart the United States and do not intend to return to the U.S. for my J program?**

If you are a scholar and you depart the U.S. early (more than 15 days before your DS-2019 end date) and you do not intend to return to the U.S. for the remainder of your J program, please discuss this with your faculty sponsor and human resources representative. Please also email [immigration@uge.edu](mailto:immigration@uge.edu) so that we can advise you on the steps and the visa implications of ending your program early.

## **Our department is inviting a Visiting Scholar who is currently overseas to join our department. When will they be able to start?**

U.S. embassies overseas remain closed for routine visa services, and we anticipate a backlog once operations resume. Therefore, even after J-1 scholars receive their Forms DS-2019, it may take several months before they are able to secure visas and arrive on campus. We therefore require new cases submitted to have start dates no earlier than August 20th unless permission is received by the Office of Research at UGA.

## **Are there any current travel restrictions for Permanent Residents?**

On Wednesday, April 22, 2020 the President issued [a proclamation \(link is external\)](#) suspending the entry of certain **new** immigrants. Nonimmigrant visa holders including **F-1 students, J-1 Exchange Visitors, H-1B, TN and O-1 workers are NOT impacted**. The proclamation DOES NOT impact [F-1 or J-1 Student employment options](#).

The proclamation DOES NOT affect **U.S. green card holders, spouses and children of U.S. citizens, and EB-5 investor immigrants** all of whom are exempt from the order, which is set to take effect at 11:59pm on April 23, 2020. **Applications for permanent residence filed in the U.S.** (adjustment of status applications) are also not affected. The proclamation ONLY impacts pending immigrant visa applications (applications for permanent residency) for persons who: were outside the U.S. on the effective date of the proclamation (04/23/2020); and who do not have an approved immigrant visa or some other already issued official travel document (such as an advance parole document).