FAQ Regarding Immigration Status and Services at UGA

Spring-Summer 2020
Immigration Services | Office of Global Engagement

1. I need assistance from my immigration advisor. How can I ask a question or seek advice?

Although in person advising is not available currently, international visitors on campus have options to reach the advisors in our office:

- Email – all advisors are working remotely during business hours and are available via email. If you do not know your advisors direct email, please email immigration@uga.edu
- Phone – if you need to speak with an advisor, please email and provide a good time to call you and a contact number. You can also call our main number and leave a message for a callback at (706) 542-2900.
- Virtual Advising—Advisors are available to video-conference with you. To schedule an appointment via Zoom, please click HERE https://uga.zoom.us/my/immigration
- For emergency immigration concerns, you may call the Director’s cell phone: 706 202-2546

2. What do the terms “isolation” and “quarantine” mean?

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Safety: Isolation and quarantine are public health practices used to stop or limit the spread of disease.

- **Isolation** is used to separate ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases. For example, hospitals use isolation for patients with infectious tuberculosis.
- **Quarantine** is used to separate and restrict the movement of well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Quarantine can also help limit the spread of communicable disease.
- **Isolation and quarantine are used to protect the public by preventing exposure to infected persons or to persons who may be infected.**
3. **What are UGA’s requirements regarding self-quarantine for people returning from travel outside the U.S.?**

   a. The U.S. State Department has declared a Global Level 4 Health Advisory. If you have traveled anywhere outside the United States over Spring Break, you **MUST NOT** return to a UGA campus or facility. Anyone who has traveled internationally in the past 14 days **MUST** self-quarantine until you have been asymptomatic for a period of 14 days from the date of entering/reentering the United States.

   b. What does it mean to self-quarantine? You must stay home for 14 days from the time you returned to the United States and practice social distancing. You will need to:

      • Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period. Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work.
      • Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
      • Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing.
      • Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters), and limit your activities in public.
      • Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

   c. If you get sick with fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing:
      • Seek medical care. Call ahead before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room.
      • Tell your doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms.
      • Avoid contact with others.

d. At all times, each of us should follow the general CDC guidance offered here: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html)

e. If you or anyone with whom you come into contact experiences symptoms of illness that may be consistent with COVID-19 (cough, fever), it is of paramount importance to seek professional medical assistance immediately through the resources most available to you locally.

4. **Where can I find accurate and updated information regarding Coronavirus, or COVID-19?**


   Additional information is located on the UGA Health Center’s website: [https://www.uhs.uga.edu/healthtopics/coronavirus](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/healthtopics/coronavirus)

5. **How often do I need a new travel signature on my I-20 form, or my DS-2019 form?**

   We recommend all students and scholars have a travel signature every 6 to 9 months.
6. I am departing the U.S. and traveling to my home country. How can I receive a new travel signature on my I-20 form (F-1) or DS-2019 form (J-1)?

For F-1 students:
If you would like a travel signature, our office can print a new I-20 with travel signature to be mailed out to you. Please log into compass.uga.edu. Select F-1 Student Services, then select “Replace I-20 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.

For J-1 Exchange students and scholars:
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. Select J-1 Student 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 US, we will be able to mail this document to you. If you are outside the US, you will follow the instructions we send to you on ordering shipment delivery.

7. Will my I-20 or DS-2019 request be processed and mailed?
Immigration Services will continue processing all e-forms submitted through compass.uga.edu (formerly iStart). All initial I-20s and DS-2019s will be processed and mailed to the student via express mail. Current students and those approved for OPT or STEM OPT may choose from two mailing options: Immigration Services Document Retrieval

8. I plan to remain in the United States. What resources are available to me?

International Student Life at UGA
Resource Page
https://isl.uga.edu/content_page/isl-service-continuity-resource-content-page

Health Center
https://www.uhs.uga.edu/

Health insurance information
https://hr.uga.edu/students/student-health-insurance/mandatory-plan/

Housing
https://housing.uga.edu/

Meals
https://dining.uga.edu/

Transportation
https://routes.uga.edu/

Academic advising
https://advising.uga.edu/

Undergraduate Admissions
https://www.admissions.uga.edu/

Graduate Admissions
https://grad.uga.edu/

Law School: https://law.uga.edu

Pharmacy School: https://rx.uga.edu

Veterinary School: https://vet.uga.edu
9. I need assistance with my Compass.uga.edu account!

Compass services are functioning normally and are being updated regularly to reflect any changes in our business processes.

For anyone having difficulty logging in:
   a. Please be sure you carefully follow the instructions in the email you were sent regarding login.
   b. If you still have trouble accessing Compass, open a different browser or incognito window and try again.
   c. Contact mariet@uga.edu for assistance if you are still unable to log in.

10. I am an F-1 or J-1 student and I plan to return home and complete my semester at UGA through my online classes. Is this permitted?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program issued guidance to schools last week, permitting students to keep their visa status active while taking online courses - even if they are outside the U.S. in their home country. This means students must continue to meet the academic requirements of your online coursework, and maintain a full time course load. If you are outside the country for more than 5 months, please contact our office prior to your return to receive the most recent information regarding travel and your SEVIS record.

Be sure you have updated your address in Athena.

If your Travel Signature will older than 6 months at the time of your return, you can request a new I-20/DS-2019 with travel signature to be mailed to you. See Travel Signature information for directions on how to request this.

11. I will graduate in May 2020. What are my options for work authorization?

Our website has information regarding employment options for international students: https://globalengagement.uga.edu/international-students/current-international-students

Graduating students are usually eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Our advisors are processing OPT applications as usual. While we will not be able to offer an in-person review of your OPT application packet, we can still review your packet virtually. You may scan copies of your OPT packet to be reviewed by an advisor. Remember, our OPT and STEM OPT workshops provide step-by-step instructions on how to assemble your application packet and information on how to fill out the I-765.

Regulations require you to be physically present in the U.S. in order to file your application for OPT. If you are in your home country, we can still issue the OPT I-20 form, however your application may be denied.
12. I have been admitted to UGA for the Fall 2020 term. What plans should I make for enrollment?

The situation with the COVID-19 outbreak is changing constantly. Currently there are many travel restrictions between countries, and many Consulates and Embassies are not accepting visa application appointments. Nonetheless, our immigration advisors are processing admissions documents, and sending admitted students their I-20 forms, or DS-2019 forms, for the fall academic term. We advise you to carefully monitor the situation in your home country, and in the U.S. If travel restrictions are eased by summer, and Consulates again open for visa processing, you will be in a good position to begin the visa application process. If there are still restrictions and Consulate closings, we can defer your start date to the spring term, 2021.

13. Does my UGA Health Insurance cover COVID-19 testing?

UnitedHealthcare is waiving costs for COVID-19 testing provided at approved locations in accordance with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Please review additional information and contact UnitedHealthcare directly with further questions: https://www.uhc.com/health-and-wellness/health-topics/covid-19

14. Can Immigration Services mail a scanned copy of my I-20 form to me?

In certain limited circumstances, yes, however it is safer to send you the paper I-20. We are not yet sure that a scanned copy with be accepted by the U.S. Embassies or by Customs and Border Protection at the Port of Entry.

15. I am an international student and I am studying online from off campus. My on-campus work supervisor wants me to continue working—is this possible?

Yes, you can, if you are still in the United States, under guidance issued from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. Note that if you are working from your home country, UGA is still working out how to pay you for remote work performed outside the United States.

16. Must students cease engaging in OPT if they are now working fewer than 20 hours a week due to the economic impacts of COVID-19?

For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, SEVP considers students who are working in their OPT opportunities fewer than 20 hours a week as engaged in OPT.

17. Do F and M students need employment authorization to volunteer as part of COVID-19 relief efforts?

No, F and M students who work without wages, taxable compensation or other remuneration are considered volunteers and are not required to obtain an employment authorization document.
Additional immigration questions have been answered directly by the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). SEVP updates can be found on NAFSA's SEVP COVID-19 Guidance Sources page. Information on this page is for students and for school sponsors. Some details may not apply to your student record.

SEVP's FAQ is a PDF document on the ICE website. If your browser opens up a version of this PDF document that is earlier than the last updated date, try refreshing your browser screen or clearing your browser cache.