

COVID-19 IMMIGRATION INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In light of the [announcement from President Hemphill](#) sharing the decision to continue the online of courses content through the end of the semester (May 8, 2020), please find below some important information.

Office Operations

Please note that beginning on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, the Center for Global Education and Engagement will start working virtually. That is, the physical office in Cook Hall will be closed and students are encouraged to contact us via email at gloaled@radford.edu. We are also available for virtual meetings (such via Zoom, Skype, etc.).

Reporting Your Change of Address

To comply with immigration regulations from the Department of Homeland Security, you must report to our office any changes of address while you remain inside the U.S. Please provide us with your U.S. physical address and phone number via email to gloaled@radford.edu.

I-20 Signatures and Program Extensions

Signatures

If you are departing the U.S. and plan to return to campus in the Fall 2020 (August), please check page #2 of your I-20 to ensure it has been signed within one (1) year from your last re-entry. If I signed your I-20 in November 2019 or December 2019, you do not need a new signature.

If you need a signature, please contact Teresa King at tking54@radford.edu. A new I-20 will be issued, signed for travel, and shipped to the address you want, so please let us know the address. We will ship your I-20 via courier (UPS) and will notify you via email of the UPS tracking number when mailed.

Program Extensions

Check your program end date in your I-20. If your I-20 expires this upcoming May 2020, and you are continuing your studies beyond May 2020, please submit the [Request for Extension of Program](#).

Travel

We realize you may want to return home for the remaining semester and summer. Please be aware of the current COVID-19 situation, and keep in mind there may be travel restrictions in place (by the US or other countries) at any point in time. Unfortunately, if there is a US travel restriction on your country in August 2020, you may not be able to enter the US for the Fall 2020 semester. If you cannot return to Radford for the Fall 2020 semester, you will need to take a [Leave of Absence](#) for Fall 2020 and your F-1 immigration record will be terminated; you would then need a new I-20 **and** a new F-1 visa to enter the US for the Spring 2021 semester. Please be sure to consider your options as you make decisions about travel.

Refunds

If you live on-campus or University-owned apartments, information was sent to your email from the Housing Office regarding how to request a refund or credit to your student account. Please follow those procedures closely. If you plan to depart the U.S., we highly recommend you begin the process for a refund prior to your departure. If you are currently outside of the U.S., please submit the refund request and contact Teresa King (tking54@radford.edu) for additional assistance.

Graduating in May and Applying for OPT

If you plan to graduate in May or July (the program end date in your I-20 must be in May or July 2020), and you are planning to apply for OPT, be advised that the USCIS has not changed any regulations regarding the application process. Additionally, be aware that the Form I-765 requires a mailing address in the US, where the USCIS will mail your EAD card (work authorization card) as well as any official correspondence. Please read the following 3 scenarios carefully:

- a. If you have already applied for OPT, you can depart the US while your OPT application is pending but keep in mind there are some risks associated with this option. Any OPT-related mail, including requests for additional information, will be sent to the mailing address in the US that you listed on the Form I-765. As a result, if no one is available at that address to receive your mail, you will need to choose another mailing address in the US and [report it to USCIS](#) in order to avoid any delays or the denial of your application.

If your OPT is approved while you are outside of the US, you will need to have your OPT EAD card in hand before returning to the US. Please note that you will not be allowed to return to the US until your OPT is approved.

- b. If you are planning on applying for OPT but haven't yet, apply while you are still in the US. Then refer to "a" above.
- c. If this is your final semester and you have already departed the US without applying for OPT, at this time, you will have to return to the US before your program end date (May 8 for May graduates, and July 31 for summer graduates) and apply. Given the current travel restrictions, this might not be possible, and therefore, you might be forfeiting your OPT benefit.

Additional OPT Information

Working Remotely/Self-Isolated

If your employer allows you to work remotely, there is no impact on your OPT due to self-quarantine. Similarly, if you are able to take leave (sick leave, vacation days, etc.), there is no impact on your OPT due to self-quarantine. Per F-1 reporting requirements, you must update your “employer address” in the [SEVP Portal](#) within 10 days if you will be working at another location (including your home) for more than 10 days.

Outside the U.S. and Unable to Return

If your employer allows you to work remotely or if you continue to be employed while on a period of authorized leave from work, the time you spend outside of the U.S. will not count as ‘unemployment’. You do not have to worry about accruing days towards your 90/150-day unemployment limit. Since the SEVP Portal only allows U.S. addresses, please keep your “employer address” as is (assuming you have not changed employers).

Unknowns at This Time

There are still a few unknowns at this time. We are aware that discussion and advocacy is occurring between our profession in international education, SEVP, and government agencies, and we expect to receive more information in the coming weeks. We will send messages when we have definitive information.

- Unpaid Leave or Inactive Status Due to COVID-19: At the moment, we do not have guidance for those who must transition to unpaid leave or inactive status and the impact on the 90-day unemployment regulation.
- OPT Expiring and Cannot Depart U.S.: We have received no specific information for students whose OPT will end within the next few months and cannot find flights to depart the U.S. during their remaining grace period.

COVID-19 University Resource Webpage

Please refer to Radford University’s “[Monitoring the Coronavirus](#)” website often for important university information and other information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.