



Fall 2020 Online Classes Frequently Asked Questions

Updated July 10, 2020

1. What is the new policy?

On July 6, 2020, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) [announced](#) that international students would no longer be permitted to enroll only in online courses. More details regarding this announcement can be found in the [Broadcast Message](#).

2. Based on the guidance, which model is MSU following (online, hybrid, or face to face)?

Because MSU plans to offer a mixture of face to face and online courses, we will fall into the hybrid model of school instruction for the fall.

3. Based on the hybrid model that MSU is following, can an international student take a full online course load?

No. Based on the guidance, "students attending schools adopting a hybrid model—that is, a mixture of online and in person classes—will be allowed to take more than one class or three credit hours online." MSU must also certify "that the program is not entirely online, that the student is not taking an entirely online course load for the fall 2020 semester, and that the student is taking the minimum number of online classes required to make normal progress in their degree program."

4. What courses are considered face to face? Are research/dissertation hours face to face?

Any course (or research hours) that has "F" under delivery method will be considered face to face. Hyflex courses which require in-person attendance for some portion of the course will also satisfy the face to face requirement. These courses will be marked with a "Q" under delivery method.

5. I looked at my schedule and all of my classes are online? Does this mean I need to leave the US?

According to the guidance, students that are attending hybrid institutions must not be in online only classes. We would suggest working with your academic advisor to find either a face to face course or a hyflex course to satisfy the face to face requirement. If you are unable to do that, it may require you to leave the US or transfer to a school that can accommodate in person classes.

6. If I am in my home country and am planning to enroll in online courses from outside the US, what happens to my I-20 and SEVIS record?

Since Mississippi State is considered a hybrid model for Fall 2020, the guidance states that we must terminate records for students who are outside the US and unable to join in person classes. Your record will be terminated for authorized early withdrawal and you will work directly with our office to have it reactivated prior to your return.



7. The guidance says that I need a new I-20. How do I get that?

The International Services Office will be working in the coming weeks to reprint I-20s for students. Please make sure to fill out the **Fall 2020 Survey** regarding your status for fall to assist with the I-20 issuance. Students who remain in the US and will be enrolled in the fall semester at MSU will receive a new I-20 certifying that they are not taking a full online course load. International Services will notify students when these I-20s are ready.

8. I am a new student outside the US with an I-20 from MSU for Fall 2020. What do I need to do?

MSU will also be issuing new I-20s to you certifying that we are not completely online for fall. We also understand that many of you may not be able to make it for the fall semester due to consulate closings and travel restrictions. We are working on some alternatives for you to be able to begin your programs from your home country as well as virtual programming to welcome you to the MSU family and connect you to campus in preparation for your arrival.

Students who remain outside the US and take online MSU online courses, will not need to reapply for admission. However, students who remain outside the US, whether enrolled or not, will require a new I-20 and may have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee again before coming to campus in a later semester. We will be reaching out to these students with information about an updated I-20 where necessary.

9. I am an international student on campus. What happens if we move to an online environment part of the way through the fall semester?

It is our intention that graduate students who are in face to face research hours will be able to continue to conduct their research and meet with their advisor face to face in order to satisfy the government requirement. Undergraduates who are interested in research may also be able to enroll in undergraduate research credits. For non-thesis graduate students and undergraduates who can't enroll in research hours, the university will be working to identify face to face classes which could continue to meet face to face even if the university changes campus operations.

10. I am currently in the US but am considering leaving the US and returning before the fall semester begins. Is this advisable?

Because of the unknowns involved with international travel, visa operations, and border closings as well as the rapid nature with which these things change, it is our recommendation that students who are already in the US remain in the US prior to the start of the fall semester. If you choose to exit, there is no guarantee that you will be able to return and this may impact your progress towards your degree, your immigration status, and your eligibility for certain immigration benefits (CPT, OPT, etc.). If you absolutely must travel, please remember that you must obtain a travel signature from our office prior to leaving the US.