

# COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Continuing F-1 International Students

**Please note that this is a very dynamic situation and the information below is current as of March 16, 2020. Remember to check your email and the websites below for the most up-to-date information.**

## **Where can I get the most up to date information about COVID-19, campus closures, and my status as an F-1 international student?**

Please check your email as we will continue to send you important updates as they happen. You can also monitor the [Foothill COVID-19 Update Website](#) as well as the [International Student Programs \(ISP\)](#) page for more information.

## **Is the campus closed?**

As of Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Foothill College campus will be closed as a precautionary measure. There are no diagnosed cases of COVID-19 on campus. Most services will be offered online and you will be able to complete your winter 2020 classes and receive grades and credit for your classes.

## **Is the International Student Programs (ISP) Office still open?**

The ISP office is currently closed; however, our staff will continue to respond to your inquiries via email at: [fhinternational@fhda.edu](mailto:fhinternational@fhda.edu) between the hours of 9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 4pm Fridays (Pacific Standard Time). If you have a specific question for our Immigration Advisor, Ms. Barbara Brown, you can email her directly as well.

## **How do I access services such as counseling, immigration advising etc.?**

Most student services will be offered remotely, including counseling and immigration advising. Please see below for more information about who to contact with questions or to schedule a virtual appointment:

### Immigration Advising:

**Barbara Brown – Immigration Advisor ([brownbarbara@fhda.edu](mailto:brownbarbara@fhda.edu))**

### International Counseling:

You can schedule a virtual counseling appointment by visiting this [website](#). For more information about counseling services, please visit the [Counseling website](#).

## **How will I know what I need to do to complete my class virtually?**

Your professors will be in touch with you with further instructions and course requirements. Please continue to monitor your email for important updates. If you have questions about course requirements, please contact your professor directly.

## **If all of my classes are held virtually, what does that mean for me as an international student?**

Courses that would have been regularly held in-person, including hybrid courses, will be held using virtual methods for the foreseeable future. The college will return to face-to-face instruction as soon as possible. During this time, these courses will be considered as hybrid courses for immigration purposes, which is allowable per federal regulations. Unless you register for 100% online courses you should be ready to return to campus when the situation improves.

If you register for 12 online units, and decide to study remotely, you may continue to maintain your F1 status abroad. Note: This is an exception only due to the emergency situation for the spring quarter. We will continue to update you with any changes as they unfold.

### **Can I finish the winter quarter online from outside the United States?**

Please follow instructions from your professor about completing your winter quarter courses as some course materials or examinations may not be available outside the United States. If you plan to leave the United States, please ensure that your I-20 has a valid travel signature and check in with ISP if you have any questions. Please note: Even with a valid F-1 visa, international travel back to the U.S. may continue to be restricted. Immigration, travel, and health screening policies may change without notice. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

### **Can I travel outside the United States over the spring break and come back to start the spring quarter?**

Yes, you may travel outside the United States, but please ensure that your I-20 has a valid travel signature. Please also be aware that even with a valid F-1 visa, international travel back to the U.S. may continue to be restricted. Immigration, travel, and health screening policies may change without notice. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

### **Can I complete the spring quarter online from outside the United States?**

**Important note: we do not have directions from the State Department regarding the validity of your visa. If you are outside the United States for 5 months or more, you may be required to pay the SEVIS fee again and apply for a new visa.**

If you decide to complete the spring quarter from your home country, you do so at your own risk.

- **If you plan to leave the U.S. and take courses in your home country, we strongly recommend that you only enroll in courses that are fully online and have course codes that end with a 'W.'**
- Please follow instructions from your professor about completing your spring quarter courses as some course materials or examinations may not be available outside the United States.
- If courses that have been held in virtual formats return to in-person, on-campus courses, students will be expected to return and be physically present on campus in order to successfully complete the class
- You will remain in F-1 status only if you register for in a minimum 12 units for the spring quarter.

### **What if I decide to take the spring quarter off and want to continue in Fall 2020?**

If you do not register for 12 units for the spring quarter by April 13, 2020, your status will be terminated for Authorized Early Withdrawal. You will be required to reapply to Foothill College, obtain a new I-20, re-pay the SEVIS fee, and obtain a new F-1 visa. If you do not return for the spring quarter the next available quarter is fall 2020.

### **How will I complete my math and/or English placement test?**

Please monitor your email for updates. Most math and English placements will now take place online and we will provide an update soon.

### **I need to a travel signature on my I-20. What do I do?**

You can request an I-20 travel signature. Please contact Ms. Barbara Brown ([brownbarbara@fhda.edu](mailto:brownbarbara@fhda.edu)) for more information or to schedule a virtual appointment.

### **Does my international health insurance cover the cost of COVID-19 testing? What about treatment if I get sick?**

The mandatory health insurance through Foothill College covers the cost of COVID-19 testing as well as treatment for F-1 students. If you have any further questions about health insurance coverage, please contact Lark Cratty ([crattylark@fhda.edu](mailto:crattylark@fhda.edu))

If you have a health emergency, please dial 911.

**I'm a new student and my health insurance coverage doesn't begin until April 15<sup>th</sup>. What can I do?**

We strongly encourage students to purchase one additional month of insurance, which will cover you from March 15th until April 14th. The cost for an additional month of insurance is \$131.50. If you are interested in purchasing one additional month or have questions about your health insurance, please contact Lark Cratty ([crattylark@fhda.edu](mailto:crattylark@fhda.edu))

**I want to return to my home country immediately. Would it be safe to say online is the plan for the remainder of the quarter and I can go home?**

At this point, we do not have any further information about how long the campus closure and virtual course instruction will continue. If you would like to return home for the spring quarter, we strongly recommend that you enroll in 12 units of fully online courses (those course codes that end in 'W'). If courses that have been held in virtual formats return to in-person, on-campus courses, students will be expected to come and be physically present on campus in order to successfully complete the courses.

**I do not want to study virtually, what can I do?**

We understand your concern. This is an unusual situation and our staff and faculty are here to support you. We have moved to virtual classes to ensure the health and safety of everyone.