

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

## General Information for All Students

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

Please check your email regularly as we will continue to send you important updates and instructions. You can also monitor the following websites:

<https://foothill.edu/virtualcampus/>

<https://www.foothill.edu/healthservices/corona-virus.html>

<https://www.foothill.edu/international/covid-19%20updates.html>

### **Is the campus closed?**

Yes. Foothill College campus is currently closed per the Santa Clara County Shelter in Place order. Courses and services will continue to be offered remotely.

### **Is the fall 2020 quarter going to be online?**

Yes, most of our fall 2020 quarter courses will be delivered virtually with a limited exception for a select number of lab courses and hybrid courses for specific allied health programs.

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

Yes. The ISP office is currently offering virtual services. Our staff will continue to respond to your inquiries via email:

*Current/Continuing Foothill students:* [fhinternational@fhda.edu](mailto:fhinternational@fhda.edu)

*Applicants/Incoming Foothill students:* [fhintladmissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu)

If you have a specific question for one of our Immigration Advisors or International Counselors, you can reach out to them as well. Please be patient with our response due to a high volume of email inquiries.

### **How do I contact my professors if I have a question?**

Contact information for instructors is found in your course syllabus.

### **How will I know how my online classes will be structured?**

We highly recommend that all students review course descriptions when selecting and enrolling in online courses. Some courses may still have designated virtual meeting days/times, so you need to consider if these courses will work for your schedule, especially if you are studying outside of the U.S.

Once you register and begin your course, you should review the syllabus to get more information about course requirements, assignments, and expectations. If you have further questions, please contact your professor directly.

**Will the required course books be electronic too? What if I need a physical book(s)?**

Most required books have e-book versions available for purchase online from various sources. Information about required textbooks can be found in the syllabus of each course. If you have a question about course materials or requirements, please contact your professor directly.

**If classes are online, why do I still have to pay the same cost for tuition?**

Many factors are taken into consideration when calculating tuition and fees, including our ability to offer access to leading faculty and educational resources. Tuition and fees also help us provide student support services such as tutoring, counseling, and International Student Programs, all while ensuring that your courses are transferable no matter how they're delivered. Additionally, these fees are required to be set by local governing boards in accordance with very prescriptive Education Code requirements, including minimum nonresident tuition fee levels that must be charged. There will be no changes or reduction of our tuition or fees based on the instructional method. International students will continue to receive a high quality, affordable education from one of the top community college Districts in California.

**Are online courses still transferrable to 4-year universities?**

Academic online courses are reviewed the same as in-person courses for transfer to the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and many other 4-year institutions. If you have further questions, please discuss your education and transfer plan with an international counselor.

**I've never taken a fully online course. Are there any resources if I have questions?**

Yes. You might find the information on the [Online Learning Resource Hub for Students](#) helpful. On this page, you will find live tech support, tips for using Canvas and Zoom, and more.

**Are online courses accessible for students with learning differences? Can I still get support services?**

Yes. Foothill's Disability Resource Center is still offering accommodations and support services for students online. To learn more and to request assistance, please visit the [Disability Resource Center's](#) website.

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

Yes. 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 at [crattylark@fhda.edu](mailto:crattylark@fhda.edu)

If you have a health emergency within the U.S., please dial 911.

**If I am not in the U.S., do I still need to pay for health insurance?**

No. If you are taking classes online, outside the U.S., you will not be responsible for our health insurance fees. The health insurance is only mandatory for students who are physically in the U.S. If you have questions about health insurance, please contact Lark Cratty at [crattylark@fhda.edu](mailto:crattylark@fhda.edu)

## **New/Incoming Fall 2020 Students**

**I'm a newly admitted student (INITIAL I-20) planning to come to campus from abroad to begin my studies this fall. Will I be allowed to enter the USA?**

The current U.S government guidance states, "if Initial students have not arrived in the United States, they should remain in their home country." We do not know if this guidance will be revised to give more information before the beginning of the fall quarter. As such, students who are travelling to the United States for the first time to start classes need to be aware that it is possible they might not be allowed admission into the U.S.

Also, due to the COVID pandemic, the U.S. government has imposed travel restrictions on individuals coming from certain countries. As you make your fall plans please continue to check both the [CDC website](#) and the [U.S. Department of State website](#) for travel restrictions and other updates. Please note that the rules and restrictions around COVID and travel are dynamic and may change.

**I have obtained my F-1 visa and plan on traveling to the US. How will I be affected by the newly released SEVP guidance?**

The current U.S government guidance states, "if Initial students have not arrived in the United States, they should remain in their home country." New students who wish to attempt entry into the U.S. for Fall 2020 should be aware that they are travelling at their own risk, and we cannot predict their reception by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Our best advice is that new F-1 students who choose to attempt entry to the U.S. enroll in a combination of online and hybrid classes. A hybrid class is designated by a "Y" on the class schedule.

**I am a new student (INITIAL I-20) for fall quarter. Do I need an updated I-20 to apply for a visa and/or enter the US for Hybrid instruction?**

Some embassies are requesting that the school issue updated I-20s confirming that the school is engaging in a hybrid model of instruction. If you have a scheduled visa appointment for fall quarter, please contact us to request an I-20 with a remark that Foothill is offering a hybrid model of instruction. Please email: [fhintl admissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu) with your full name and the specific date of your visa appointment and/or entry to the US date.

**I'm admitted, but the consulate in my country is closed, and I can't get a visa. Can I study online from my home country?**

Yes. We understand that many consulates around the world remain closed. Since we are offering courses and services remotely, you can begin your studies outside the U.S. Once the consulates and campuses reopen, you can choose to join us in-person for a future quarter. Please read the [Fall 2020 Updates and Resources for New International Students](#) for important information on taking online courses.

**If I begin my studies outside the U.S., what does that mean for my I-20 and F-1 status?**

While you will still be a Foothill College student, if you are unable to obtain a visa and enter the U.S. to activate your record with ISP, you will not be in F-1 status. If you have already been issued an I-20 for the Fall 2020 quarter, please contact ISP [fhintl admissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu)

**If I obtain my visa and decide to study from my home country, will my visa be cancelled?**

Your visa in your passport will not be canceled if you decide to study from your home country. You will be able to use it to enter the United States for the winter 2021 quarter if you request and receive an updated I-20 document with winter 2021 dates.

**If I paid the SEVIS fee and cannot get a visa appointment, will I be refunded the fee?**

The I-901 SEVIS fee is not refundable; however, if you defer your admission, and promptly request an updated I-20 as soon as you are able, then you can keep the same SEVIS ID number and your [SEVIS fee](#) will be applied to the new term.

**How will you send me the new I-20?**

We will continue to send electronic signed I-20s via email directly to the student until further notice.

**How does the 5-month rule apply to F-1 international students who are transferring from another SEVIS-approved school?**

According to the July 15 FAQ, the five-month rule related to transfer students will not apply to students affected by COVID-19. SEVIS transfer students who exceed the 5-month period should contact the De Anza admission office at: [fhintladmissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu) first. Depending on the circumstances, the international student adviser may have to request a data fix of their record from SEVP.

**The consulate in my city will reopen after the fall quarter begins (late September/October/November). Can I start the quarter online and then come in person later during the fall quarter?**

No, you must enter the U.S. before the first day of the Fall quarter, which is September 21. If you cannot get your visa and enter the U.S. before September 21, you will need to wait until the next available quarter (winter or spring 2021); however, you can complete your entire fall quarter courses virtually from outside the U.S.

**I'm a transfer student to Foothill College and plan on studying from my home country for the fall 2020 quarter; how is my status affected?**

Transfer in students who do not enter the United States for fall 2020, will have their SEVIS record remain in **initial status**. When the student is ready to return to the US for the winter 2021 quarter, the student must contact the ISP (International Student Programs) office at: [fhintladmissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu) in advance and, depending on the circumstances, the ISP office may have to request a data fix of student's record from SEVP.

**I'm a transfer student to Foothill College, I'm currently overseas but plan on returning to the US before the fall 2020 quarter begins.**

Transfer in students who will enter the US before the Fall 2020 quarter begins (September 21), **MUST** report to the ISP office to have their SEVIS record activated. Information on how to activate your SEVIS record will be sent to students via email and will be reviewed at the virtual International Student Orientation on September 1.

**Do I need to attend orientation?**

Yes, there will be a virtual orientation. During orientation, we will share important information that will help you to be successful at Foothill. You will learn about campus services, counseling, ISP services, etc. More information will be sent to you.

**What's the next available quarter after Fall 2020?**

The next available quarters are winter and spring 2021. Winter 2021 courses begin in January 2021, and spring 2021 courses start in April 2021. For more information on quarter start times and deadlines, please check our [academic calendar](#).

**How many times can I defer my admission or defer the issuance of my I-20?**

We have waived the application and I-20 shipping fee for the Fall 2020 quarter only. You can defer your admission or the issuance of your I-20 once to either the winter 2021 or spring 2021 quarter. You may decide to defer beyond the winter or spring 2021 quarter; however, at that point, you will have to pay the \$75 shipping fee to receive your I-20 outside of the U.S.

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

At this time, math, English, and ESL assessments are offered online. Admitted students will receive instructions on how to sign up for Assessment.

**Fall 2020 is my first quarter at Foothill College, and I want to defer my admission to winter or spring 2021.****What do I have to do?**

Please contact our Admission Advisor at: [fhintladmissions@fhda.edu](mailto:fhintladmissions@fhda.edu) if you wish to defer your admission to the winter or spring 2021 quarter. Please include your full name and CWID in your email.

**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 our classes and services to a virtual format to ensure the health and safety of everyone. You can choose to defer your admission to a future term if you'd prefer not to study online.

## Current/Continuing International Students

**I am a continuing F-1 international student. If all of my fall classes are held virtually, what does that mean for me?**

For the summer and fall 2020 quarters, most courses will be held using virtual methods. You will remain in F-1 status as long as you register in and complete a minimum of 12 units during the fall quarter. You can take your classes in the U.S. or from overseas while maintaining your F-1 visa status per federal regulations. You may choose to take courses during the summer 2020 session if you'd like; however, taking classes during the summer is optional.

**I am still in the U.S. Can I travel outside the United States over the summer and come back to the U.S. to start the fall quarter?**

Yes, you may travel outside the United States. Please ensure that your I-20 has a valid travel signature or be prepared to request an I-515A at the airport if needed. Please 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.

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

If you have a signature on Page 2 of your I-20 that is dated within the last 12 months, you can travel with the current signature.

If you do not have a current signature on your I-20, email Merry Quittner at [quittnermerry@fhda.edu](mailto:quittnermerry@fhda.edu) to request an electronic signature on your I-20 up to one month before you are scheduled to return to the U.S. To request a travel signature, please email the following information:

1. Passport name
2. CWID or student ID number
3. Birthdate and/or SEVIS ID number
4. Subject: I-20 travel signature
5. The date you plan to return to the U.S.

During the COVID-19 pandemic only, international students are permitted to travel using electronic signatures on their I-20s, which can be scanned or digitally produced signatures.

### **Can I complete the fall quarter virtually from outside the United States?**

Yes, you can choose to complete the fall quarter online from outside the United States. Please keep the following in mind:

- You will remain in F-1 status only if you register for and complete a minimum of 12 units for the spring quarter. You can choose to register for as many online 'V or Z' courses as you'd like, but when selecting courses, we recommend that you select classes that do not have a meeting day/time in the course description.
- Please ensure that you will have regular access to a computing device and a reliable internet connection.

### **Can I take off the fall quarter and continue my studies in the winter or spring 2021 quarter?**

If you wish to skip the fall quarter entirely (not take any classes), please contact:

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

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

Student Services will be available virtually, including counseling and immigration advising. Please see below for more information about whom to contact with questions or to schedule a virtual appointment.

Immigration Advising:

Barbara Brown [brownbarbara@fhda.edu](mailto:brownbarbara@fhda.edu)

International Counseling:

Set an appointment through counseling: <https://www.foothill.edu/counseling/>

