

Dear Students,

As many of you have seen, the government released new guidance for enrollment requirements for Fall 2020 yesterday. It is important that you fully understand these rules and how they interact with UVM's plans for reopening this fall semester. We have summarized the core concepts below in a chart and then with answers to questions we know you may have. If you have additional questions after reading this fully, please [schedule an appointment](#) with our staff.

My best,

Emma Swift

Associate Director, Office of International Education

| | In the United States in Fall 2020 | Outside of the United States in Fall 2020 |
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| Undergraduate Student | <p>You may remain in the US if you return to Burlington to take a full schedule of courses (12+ credit hours), with as few online courses as possible to meet degree requirements. Must have at least some required in –person component.</p> <p>Cannot elect the “at home” option.</p> <p>Immigration record will stay active, and new I-20 will be issued to reflect Fall 2020 plans. You will remain eligible for any on-campus employment and off-campus practical training opportunities you would have been eligible for normally.</p> | <p><i>If you want to take Fall 2020 courses, you should select the “at home” option and enroll in coursework from abroad. Remember that “remote” courses will happen on a Vermont time zone. “Online” courses are <i>asynchronous</i> and are completed on your own time.</i></p> <p><i>If you do not want to take Fall 2020 classes, you must work with academic advisor to take a leave of absence.</i></p> <p>Regardless of enrollment, F-1 record will be terminated for “Authorized Early Withdrawal” and you will have to work with OIE to get new I-20 prior to returning to US in future semester. Will need new visa if you have been out of status for five or more months at the point of reentry into US.</p> |

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| Graduate Student | <p>May remain in the US if you return to Burlington to take a full schedule of courses (9+ credit hours), with as few online courses as possible to meet degree requirements. Must have at least some required in-person component. Thesis credit registration counts as in-person as long as you remain in US.</p> <p>Immigration record will stay active, and new I-20 will be issued to reflect Fall 2020 plans. You will remain eligible for any on-campus employment and off-campus practical training opportunities you would have been eligible for normally.</p> | <p>Cannot hold Fall 2020 assistantship (this is a tax related matter).</p> <p><i>If you want to take Fall 2020 courses, enroll in all online coursework.</i></p> <p><i>If you do not want to take Fall 2020 classes, speak with program coordinator/advisor about potential leave of absence.</i></p> <p>Regardless of enrollment, F-1 record will be terminated for “Authorized Early Withdrawal” and you will have to work with OIE to get new I-20 prior to returning to US in future semester. Will need new visa if you have been out of status for five or more months at the point of reentry into US.</p> |
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Questions for Continuing Students about Coursework and Immigration

How do I know if courses will be online/remote or in person? Undergraduate students should reference the [July 2, 2020 email from Provost Prelock](#) for additional details about timelines. Graduate students should follow guidance from the Graduate College.

There are no in-person courses being offered that help me with my degree requirements – everything I need is online or remote this fall. Is this OK? If you wish to remain in the United States, you need at least some in-person component. Please speak with your academic advisor about identifying a course that is in-person or hybrid this fall.

What is the maximum number of credits I am allowed to take online/remote? You must take the minimum number of online credits necessary to make progress towards your degree and you must have some in-person component. For example, if there are two different electives to choose from and one is in-person and the other is online/remote, you should select the in-person option. Your academic advisor can help you determine your course registration needs.

I am in Burlington already, but I don't feel comfortable taking any in-person/hybrid classes because of the potential transmission of COVID-19. Can I take online coursework only? Unfortunately, the federal regulations do not permit that option this fall. Your academic advisor may be able to help you identify

classes that have fewer in-person meetings.

Undergraduate Students Only: I have a friend/family members who live in the US – can I select the “at home” option and do my remote coursework from there? No, that is not possible. Your F-1 record requires that you are enrolled in at least some in-person coursework in Burlington. Any student who selects the “at home” option would not be able to maintain their F-1 status and should make plans to exit the United States.

Do “hybrid” courses count as in-person? Yes, as long as a course has some required in-person components it meets the in-person requirement for Fall 2020.

Graduate Students: Does dissertation/thesis credit or continuous registration meet the in-person requirement? Yes, but you must be in the Burlington area. Please consult with the OIE if you hope to register only for thesis/dissertation credits but be outside of Burlington.

If UVM shuts down again in the middle of fall semester and goes fully online, will I be allowed to remain in the United States? The regulations recently issued by SEVP currently state that if UVM goes fully online later in the semester that any students in the US would need to exit the US.

If I stay outside of the US this fall, will I be eligible for OPT if I only return to UVM and complete my program in one semester? As the regulations are currently written, no. Being eligible for OPT and CPT requires being in active F-1 status for two semesters prior to filing for those authorizations.

Undergraduate Students: If I return home and my F-1 record is closed, will classes I take still count towards my degree? Yes – any UVM classes you take would count the way they normally would. Speak with your academic advisor to make sure the courses you take help keep you on track.

Graduate Students: I will be overseas this fall. Why can I not still hold my assistantship? Your assistantship involves payment, and there are tax reasons why we cannot pay someone who is overseas.

I am staying in Vermont and taking a mixture of in-person and remote coursework. How do I get my new I-20? We will be emailing students about how to get updated I-20s for Fall 2020 later this month. Keep an eye on your email.

If I am outside of the US for fall 2020, how do I get a new I-20 to return in Spring 2021? You will request this in iStart starting in September.

Will these rules change? It is possible. These are not UVM’s rules, but rather those of the Federal Government. In Spring 2020, the agency that issues these kinds of rules changed them several times in a short period of time. We will continue to update these questions and send emails for any significant updates.