



**Homeland
Security**

Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman

August 25, 2022



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The CIS Ombudsman's Webinar Series:
**Interagency Engagement on
International Student Issues**

Disclaimer

This webinar material is intended solely as informational. It is not intended to, does not and may not be relied upon to create or confer any right(s) or benefit(s), substantive or procedural, enforceable at law, by any individual or other party in benefit applications before DHS, in removal proceedings, in litigation with the United States, or in any other form or manner. This webinar material does not have the force of law, or of a DHS directive.

Questions

- Submit written questions to the subject matter experts through the “Q&A” box that appears to the right of the slide deck on your screen.
- We will review every question submitted and determine if we can address concerns arising from the stakeholder community.
- After the engagement, the CIS Ombudsman will work with the subject matter experts to formulate responses to the themes that emerge from the questions.
- If you are a member of the media, please reach out to DHS Public Affairs with any inquiries.

Opening Remarks

- CIS Ombudsman's mission
- Annual Report to Congress
- Recommendations related to international student issues
- Other issues affecting the international student community



2021 Annual Report Recommendations

- Foster collaboration between USCIS and ICE through the development of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) working group designed to:
 1. Identify and share best practices;
 2. Develop and issue coordinated guidance to mitigate communication gaps and create a unified data set; and
 3. Resolve conflicts in program operations;
- Enhance training for DSOs to improve understanding of advanced issues and fraud, including how to report student visa exploitation and national security vulnerabilities
- Eliminate communication barriers and address privacy concerns by establishing a process whereby students may authorize DSOs to contact USCIS on their behalf

Students are a Top Priority for the Department of State

- The United States remains the top global destination for international students - more than 914,000 students came to study in the U.S. between 2020-2021
- Ensuring students have access to visa appointments is a top priority
- **F-1 student adjudications for June & July were the highest since 2016**
- For the first time since 2016, we've adjudicated more than half a million F-1 student visas in the first 10 months of this fiscal year



Student Visas By The Numbers

- Prioritization of student visa appointments and Student Interview Waiver authorities are driving these numbers
- As of July, Embassy Tokyo adjudicated 63% more student and exchange visitors this fiscal year compared to last year
- From Jan-July 2022, 25% of Mission India's total output was student and exchange visitor visas, up from 8% for the same time period in 2019
- As of July 28, we adjudicated 25% more F1 student visas this fiscal year compared to same time period in pre-pandemic fiscal year 2019

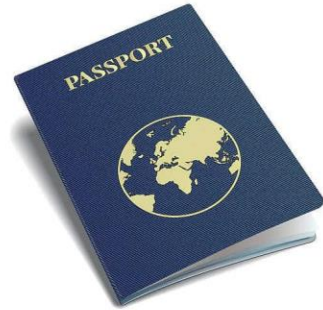


Student Visa Interview

- Visa adjudications are consistent world-wide, but some processes, like appointment systems, can differ
- COVID rates may impact access to appointments – check travel.state.gov or embassy/consulate website for latest
- Complete DS-160 visa application, pay application fee, pay SEVIS fee, schedule interview appointment
- New interview waiver authorities may allow applicants to apply without an interview
- Expedite appointments may be available



Required Documents



Passport



Photo



DS-160 Confirmation Page



I-20 (F/M visas) or DS-2019 (J visas)



Receipts for the visa application and SEVIS fee

Additional documentation - refer to embassy/consulate website for suggested additional documents



Possible Outcomes

F1 visas issued:	J1 visas issued:
80% in FY 2021	92.5% in FY 2021

Refused:	
Most common refusals:	
214(b)	221(g)



Updated Student Residency Guidance

In early 2022, Department of State updated FAM guidance to direct officers to focus on a student's immediate or present intent to depart the US after completing studies, and to consider a student's unique profile.

- Residency requirements for students inherently differ from B visitors
- Adjudicate residency based on present intent - not on contingencies of what might happen in the future, after a lengthy period of study in US
- Do not possess ties of property, employment, and continuity of life
- More complex because students typically stay in the U.S. longer
- Not expected to, or do not necessarily have, a long-range plan

We also emphasized that attendance at a little-known university, college, or community college is not grounds for a visa denial.



Expanded Interview Waiver Authority

- Waives in person interview for F, M and academic J applicants for applicants:
 - who were previously issued a visa in any visa class
 - or who are citizens or nationals of a Visa Waiver Program Country and have previously traveled to the U.S. on ESTA
- Implementation will vary by post, be sure to check embassy or consulate website for more information
- Applicants must be a national or resident of the country where they are applying
- Policy is currently in effect until December 31, 2022



Acceptance of Electronic I-20s

- DHS has indicated that DSOs may electronically send Forms I-20 to student email addresses listed in SEVIS
- Schools do not need to request permission or report plans to electronically send Forms I-20
- Electronic signatures are valid for 12 months for F visas and 6 months for M visas
- Students must print their forms and bring them to their interview
- Hard copy “wet signed” DS-2019s are still required for J visa applications



Commitment to International Students

- F-1 student adjudications for June & July '22 were the highest since 2016
- Prioritization of student visa appointments
- Extension of student interview waiver program
- Commitment to continued outreach





- J-1 College and University Students



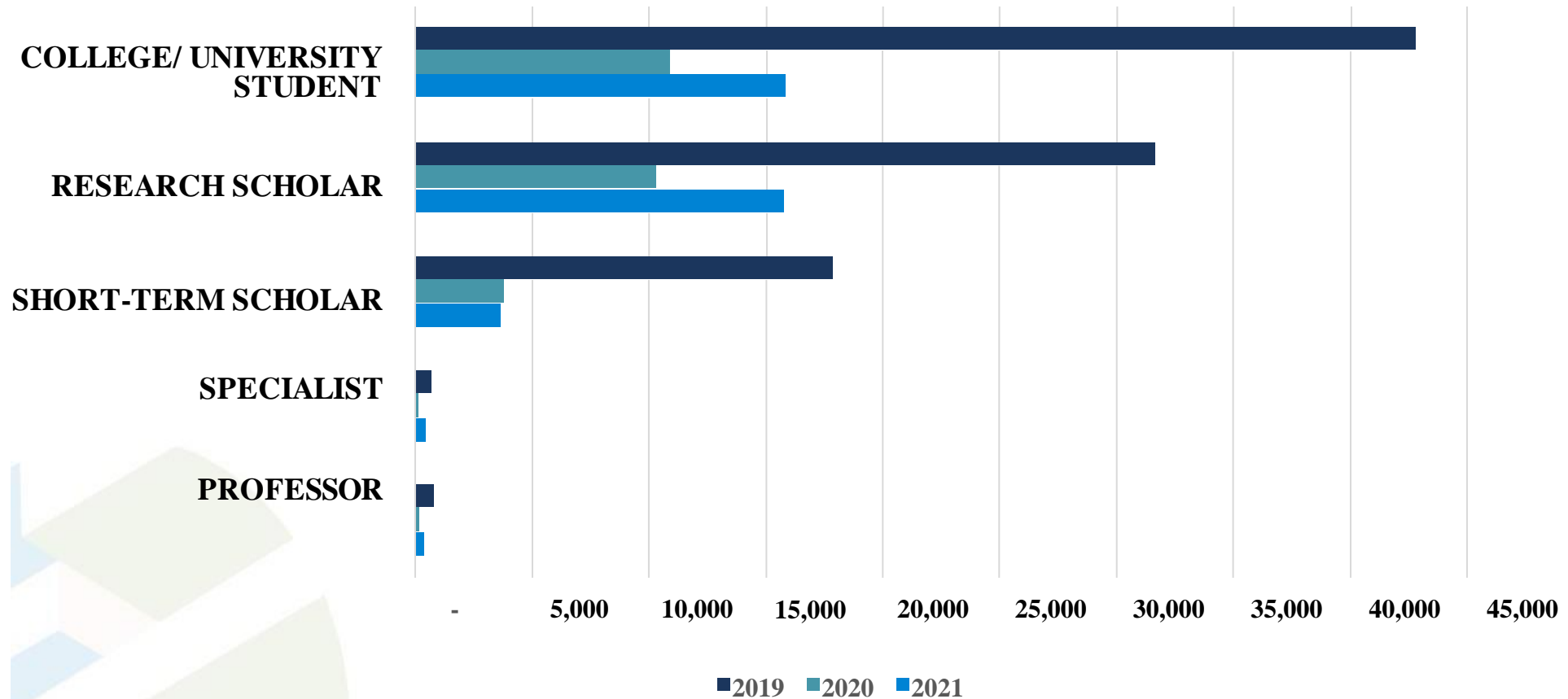


J-1 BridgeUSA - EVP Data Snapshots

- Thank you for your annual reports!
- College and university student totals for 2019, 2020 and 2021
- Outlook for 2022-2023 academic year
- STEM initiatives
- Social media, EV stories and outreach



Exchange Visitor Counts 2019-2021





J-1 BridgeUSA - EVP Data Snapshot: Active College and University Students

August 2021	August 2022
11,030	15,286



J-1 BridgeUSA - EVP Updates

- Temporary COVID modifications – extended to June 2023
 - STEM initiatives
 - Academic training extension
 - Early Career STEM Research Initiative
 - 5,762 students currently studying STEM
 - Most popular STEM fields
 - Econometrics and quantitative economics, electrical and electronics engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, and computer science
- j1visa.state.gov/programs/stem-initiatives/



Engage with BridgeUSA

We want to hear from you!

- Share your BridgeUSA stories
- Exchange visitor accomplishments
- Early career STEM success stories
- Alumni stories

Like and follow us on social media!



j1visa.state.gov



[ExchangeProgramsAtState](#)



[ECAatState](#)



[ExchangeOurWorld](#)





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Questions and Answers

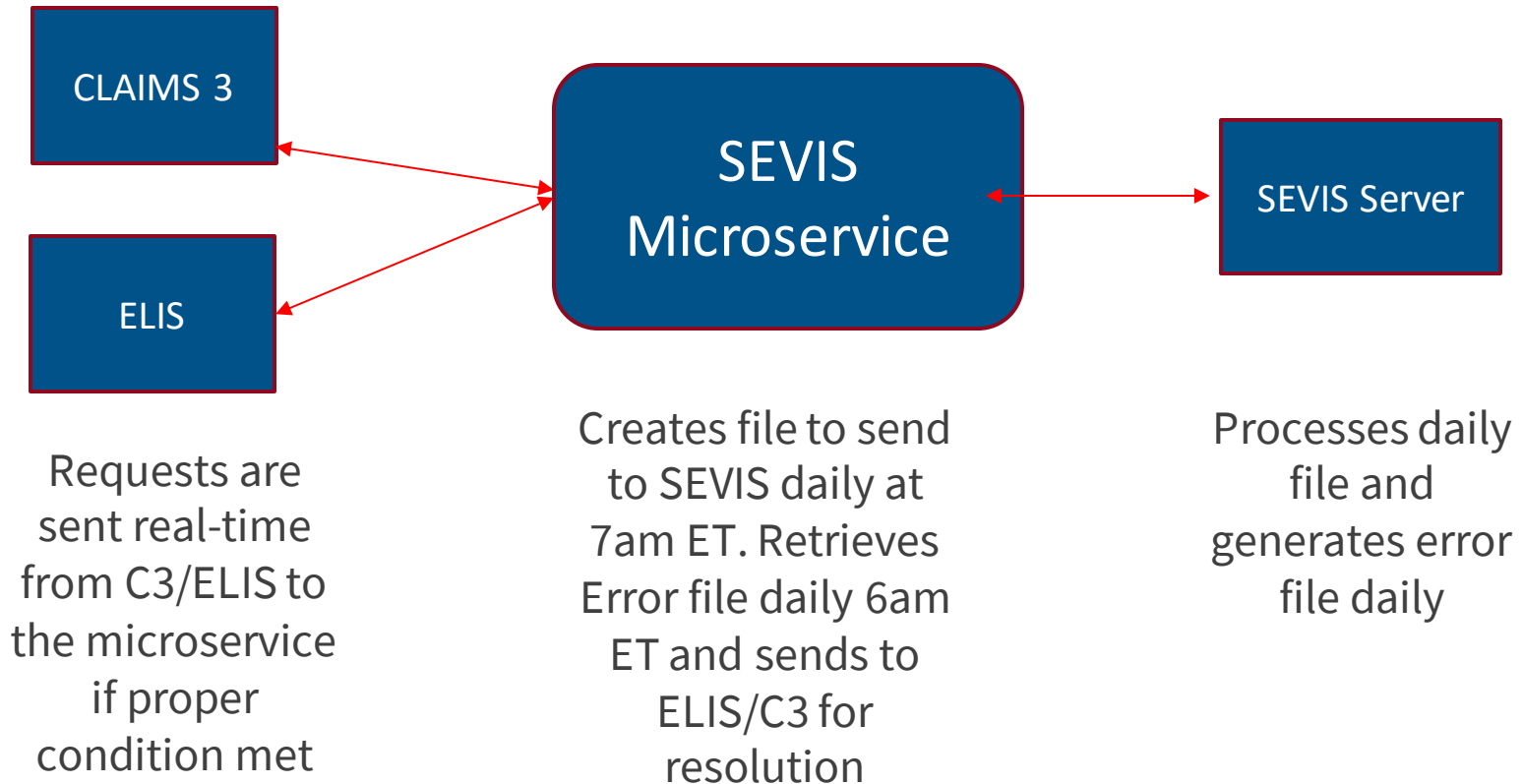
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Updates: SAVE

- Overview of Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)
- SAVE Manual Reviews
- Helpful Tips

USCIS Updates: Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Interface

- USCIS case management systems process & send data to SEVIS for the following transaction types:
 - I-765 C(03) Optional Practical Training (OPT), Off-Campus Employment (OCE) through sponsorship, OCE citing severe economic hardship
 - I-765 C(05) Spouse or minor child of an exchange visitor (J2)
 - I-765 C(06) M-1 Student Seeking Post-Completion OPT After Completing Studies
 - I-539 M Extension, M Transfer, F/M/J Change of Status
 - I-129 Change of Status for F/M/J Class of Admission
- Case information is transmitted when status is updated to PENDING, APPROVED, DENIED or WITHDRAWN
- Transaction types are monitored and pushed to internal interface database every 5 minutes
- Interface service creates and transmits file to SEVIS daily at 7am ET
- Interface service retrieves and processes Error file from SEVIS daily at 6am ET. Errors are resolved by the system admin or user depending on the type of error.

USCIS Updates: SEVIS Interface Process



USCIS Updates: J-1 Waiver Delays

- Form I-612, Application for Waiver of the Foreign Residence Requirement (Under Section 212(e) of the INA, as Amended), is adjudicated at the California (CSC) and Vermont (VSC) Service Centers
- Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
- When to directly file at the CSC
- Two-prong process for cases at the CSC
- Department of State's role
- Vermont Service Center's role

USCIS Updates: Form I-765 Filing Tips

- Read the instructions carefully
- Wait for designated school official (DSO) recommendations
- Passport photos

USCIS Updates: Change of Address – uscis.gov/addresschange

- Must report address change within 10 days of moving
- Fortunately, it's easy!
- Satisfy legal requirement & update address for pending cases in a few minutes
- Don't forget to update your address with USPS

The image shows a side-by-side comparison of the USCIS Change of Address form. On the left is the 'Old Address' section, and on the right is the 'New Address' section. A double-headed arrow labeled 'change to' points from the old address fields to the new address fields. Both sections contain the following fields: 'Street Number and Name' (text input), 'Apartment/Floor/Suite (optional)' (dropdown menu with '- Select One'), 'Unit Number (optional)' (text input), 'City' (text input), 'State' (dropdown menu with '- Select One'), and 'Zip Code' (text input).

USCIS Updates: Change of Address – uscis.gov/addresschange

Demo

The screenshot shows the USCIS website's 'How to Change Your Address' page. The page is structured with a left-hand navigation menu and a main content area. The navigation menu includes sections for 'Forms', 'Filing Guidance', 'Filing Fees', and 'Forms Updates'. The 'Filing Guidance' section is expanded, showing sub-items like 'Form Filing Tips', 'Forms By Mail', 'Expedite Request', 'Preparing for Your Biometric Services Appointment', 'How to Change Your Address', 'Card Delivery Tracking', and 'Paperwork Reduction Act'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Forms > Filing Guidance > How to Change Your Address'. The title 'How to Change Your Address' is prominently displayed. Below the title, there is an introductory paragraph and a list of two methods for changing an address: through an existing USCIS online account or by filing Form AR-11. At the bottom of the page, there is a partially visible section titled 'Victims of Domestic Violence, Trafficking, and Other Crimes' with a dropdown arrow.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Topics Forms Newsroom Citizenship Green Card Laws Tools

Home > Forms > Filing Guidance > How to Change Your Address

How to Change Your Address

We strongly encourage you to update your address with USCIS to ensure you receive all correspondence and benefits from us in a timely manner and avoid possible delays related to your case.

Changing your address with the U.S. Postal Service will not change your address with USCIS. Please update your information with both USCIS and USPS.

If you fall into any of the categories below, please read the information in the corresponding section. However, most individuals can change their address in two ways:

- Through your existing [USCIS online account](#) if you filed your form online; or
- Filing Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, online using the [Change of Address](#) page (as long as you didn't file one of the forms in the sections below). Filing Form AR-11 online will update your address on all pending applications, petitions, or requests that you include on the form. You do not need to mail Form AR-11 if you use the change of address webpage.

Close All Open All

Victims of Domestic Violence, Trafficking, and Other Crimes

Form I-751 Abuse Waivers

U.S. Citizens

Civil Surgeons

Attorneys of Record/Registered Representatives

Close All Open All

Now will provide a quick overview of how you

USCIS Updates: STEM Resources

The screenshot shows the USCIS website page for 'Working in the United States'. The page features a navigation menu with 'Working in the United States' highlighted in yellow. The main content area includes a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Working in the United States', a search bar, and a 'Sign In' button. The page text provides information on employment-based nonimmigrant and immigrant visa classifications, temporary worker classifications, and pathways for STEM employment. It also includes a list of bullet points regarding status changes and adjustments.

uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states

USCIS Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)

Español Multilingual Resources

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Search our Site

Sign In

Topics Forms Newsroom Citizenship Green Card Laws Tools

Home > Working in the United States

Working in the United States

Working in the United States

- International Entrepreneur Parole
- Temporary Workers
- Permanent Workers
- STEM Employment Pathways**
 - Immigrant Pathways for STEM Employment in the United States
 - Nonimmigrant Pathways for STEM Employment in the United States
- Students and Exchange Visitors
- Temporary Visitors for Business
- Information for Employers and Employees

Many aliens want to come to the United States to work. This page provides a summary of employment-based nonimmigrant and immigrant visa classifications and other categories of aliens who are eligible for employment authorization. Each classification provides a link to more detailed information on its requirements.

A common way to work temporarily in the United States as a nonimmigrant is for a prospective employer to file a petition with USCIS on your behalf. The [Temporary \(Nonimmigrant\) Workers webpage](#) describes the main nonimmigrant temporary worker classifications.

If you have the right combination of skills, education, and/or work experience, you may be able to live and work permanently in the United States by seeking an employment-based immigrant visa. The [Permanent Workers webpage](#) describes the five employment-based immigrant visa preferences (also called categories).

If you live outside the United States and want to work here, you generally must apply for a visa from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), unless a visa is not required for people from your country of nationality. You may visit [DOS' Travel Without a Visa page](#) for more information.

In many cases, USCIS must approve your petition before you are eligible to apply to DOS for a visa or seek admission at a port of entry. Before entering the United States, you must present yourself to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer and receive permission to enter the United States and engage in your proposed activity.

If you are in the United States in a lawful nonimmigrant status that does not provide employment authorization, you generally may apply for:

- A change of status to a nonimmigrant classification that provides employment authorization; or
- An adjustment of status to become a lawful permanent resident. This may be a [concurrent filing](#) with an immigrant visa petition or, depending on the circumstances, may require an applicant to obtain an approved immigrant visa before applying for an adjustment of status to become a lawful permanent resident.

Marissa Tinsley

Student and Exchange Visitor Program
Strategic Communications and Training Team
Team Lead

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Updates

- As of November 8, 2021, the Presidential Proclamation *Advancing the Safe Resumption of Global Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, requires all non-immigrant, non-citizens to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to travel by air to the United States.
 - Only Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or World Health Organization approved vaccines can be utilized to meet this requirement
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection has no role in implementation and enforcement of this proclamation
 - Commercial airlines have the responsibility for implementation and enforcement prior to boarding and the CDC is responsible for ensuring compliance of the public health order
 - CDC travel guidance and next steps for air travelers can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/noncitizens-us-air-travel.html

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Updates

COVID-19 Vaccination

As of April 22, 2022, per the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) notice announcing the extension of current Title 19, *Notification of Temporary Travel Restrictions Applicable to Land Ports of Entry and Ferries Service Between the United States and Canada / Mexico – 19 CFR Chapter 1*, CBP will continue to require non-U.S. individuals seeking admission to the United States via land ports of entry and ferry terminals at the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.- Canada borders to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and provide related proof of full vaccination upon request. These restrictions will remain in effect until the Secretary of DHS amends or rescinds them.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Updates

- Non-U.S. citizens traveling to the United States via land ports of entry or ferry terminals, whether for essential or non-essential reasons, must:
 - Verbally attest to their COVID-19 vaccination status
 - Provide proof of a CDC-approved COVID-19 vaccination
 - Present a valid Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)-compliant document, such as a valid passport, Trusted Traveler Program Card, or Enhanced Tribal Card
 - Be prepared to present any other relevant documents requested by a CBP officer during a border inspection
 - Meet all other existing requirements for entry not related to COVID-19

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Updates

- CBP is temporarily accepting scanned or digitally signed Form I-20, in response to Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Student and Exchange Visitor Program temporary accommodation due to COVID-19
- The statute and regulations regarding the inspection of processing of F, M and J nonimmigrant visas remain unchanged
 - Except for certain students from the People's Republic of China (PRC), who are subject to Presidential Proclamation (PP) 10043
 - PP 10043 specifically suspends entry of certain Chinese students and researchers connected to the PRC "Military-Civil Fusion Strategy"
- **Know Before You Go** – Check <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors> for any latest updates regarding inspection/processing at ports of entry
- In addition, the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) is a single point of contact for individuals who have inquiries or seek resolution regarding difficulties they experienced during their travel screening and can be found at <https://trip.dhs.gov/>



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Questions and Answers



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