

CLARK UNIVERSITY



Fall 2020 International Student FAQs

What is Clark's academic model this semester?

Clark University will be operating in a hybrid format for the Fall 2020 semester and will be offering a mix of on-line and in-person courses.

Do I need a notation on my I-20 indicating that Clark has a hybrid academic model this year?

No, SEVP rescinded the requirement for I-20 notations. However, you can request a visa appointment or travel support letter providing more information from the ISSO.

Can the ISSO provide I-20s electronically?

Yes, SEVP has permitted school officials to continue to distribute I-20s electronically and sign them with a digital signature.

Does the March SEVP guidance and July 15, 2020 FAQs apply to ESL students?

Yes, the relaxed regulations for Active and Initial status F-1 students apply to ESL students in addition to degree seeking students.

Continuing International Students

Can I take 100 percent online courses in Fall 2020 but stay in the United States this semester?

Yes, F-1 students who were in valid F-1 nonimmigrant status on March 9, 2020, including those previously enrolled in entirely online classes who are outside the United States and seeking to re-enter the country this fall can take all online courses.

Can I take a reduced course load this semester?

Clark intends to offer a full range of on-line and in-person courses this semester. If you would like authorization for a reduced course load, you must get approval in advance from the ISSO. Reduced Course Load authorization is only available for students experiencing academic difficulty in their first

semester or for students with medical needs. All other students should plan for full-time enrollment in Fall 2020.

If I choose to stay in my home country to study this semester, will the five-month rule apply to me?

According to the July 15, 2020 SEVP FAQs, the five-month rule will not apply to students who remain in Active status. This means that if you have a valid F-1 visa, you will not need a new visa to return to the United States to study in a later semester. You will remain in Active F-1 status as long as you maintain a full-course of study abroad and make progress towards degree completion.

If Clark shuts down in the middle of the semester due to COVID-19 and all courses go entirely online, can I stay in the United States?

Yes, continuing F-1 students would be able to remain in the United States and take their coursework exclusively online should Clark close the campus.

I want to take a leave of absence for the Fall 2020 semester and will not be taking any classes online. What will happen to my I-20?

If you chose to take a leave of absence, your I-20 will be terminated for Authorized Early withdrawal. You will need a new I-20 and be required to pay the SEVIS fee again in order to re-enter the US to start classes again in a future semester. You will also lose any time accrued towards OPT or CPT eligibility.

I am choosing to take my courses online from my home country in Fall 2020 and then come back to Clark for the Spring 2021 semester. What happens to my I-20?

If you are studying full-time from your home country in Fall 2020, the ISSO will keep your I-20 active and will register you in SEVIS. You will continue to accrue time towards OPT or CPT eligibility. When you return to Clark's campus, you should request a new travel signature from the [ISSO Portal](#).

How do I become eligible for OPT or CPT?

Students must study full time in F-1 student status or another qualifying nonimmigrant status for two full semesters in order to become eligible for CPT and OPT. If you experienced a break in your previous F-1 status through having your I-20 terminated, you will need to return to the United States and study for two full semesters before becoming eligible for OPT or CPT.

I will be graduating in December and taking my fall courses online from my home country. Can I get OPT?

We are still waiting on clarification from SEVP and USCIS on whether students can apply for OPT from outside the United States due to the COVID-19 emergency. Regulation currently state that students must be physically located in the US when submitting their OPT applications.

What if I am not able to get a flight to arrive on campus for the start of classes? Can I arrive later in the fall?

It depends. Your SEVIS status will allow you to enter the United States as long as you are in Active status with a valid travel signature. However, on-campus housing may not be available. You should also check with each of your instructors to make sure you will be able to complete all required coursework from abroad.

New International Students

Can I come to campus this semester and take all my courses online?

No, students with a new, Initial Form I-20 must take at least one course in-person to come to Clark's campus this semester. If you choose to take all online courses, you must remain outside the United States.

Can I choose to study in my home country for the first semester?

Yes, you can study online from your home country, however, you will not receive an I-20 until you are able to physically come to campus.

I am choosing to study from my home country for my first semester and come to the Clark campus for the Spring 2021 semester. When will I get my I-20?

New international students will receive an I-20 with a Spring 2021 start date. The first day of classes for Spring 2021 is February 22, 2021. If you have already received an I-20 with a Fall 2020 start date, you will be receiving an updated I-20.

I want to participate in OPT or CPT. How will studying online from my home country effect CPT or OPT eligibility?

F-1 students must study for two full semesters before qualifying for OPT or CPT. You must be physically present in the United States to start accruing time towards OPT or CPT. Since you will be studying from your home country without an I-20, you will not start accruing time until you physically arrive in the United States.

There are no visa appointments or flights available before the start of classes on August 24. Can I arrive later in the semester if I can get my visa sometime this fall?

If you are not able to arrive on campus by the end of the Add/Drop period (September 2), you will need to wait to come to campus until the Spring 2021 semester.

What if I am able to arrive on campus for Fall 2020 and Clark changes operational models to exclusively online due to COVID-19, will I need to leave the country?

No, you will not need to leave the United States. When you arrive on campus, the ISSO will register you in SEVIS and you will receive a Continuing Form I-20, which will mean the guidance for continuing students will apply to you.

Insurance

Do I need to pay for Clark health insurance if I am choosing to study from my home country and not come to campus this fall?

Only international students who are on campus for the Fall 2020 semester will need to pay for health insurance. If you choose to return to campus for the Spring 2021 semester, you will need to purchase Clark Health Insurance for the Spring semester. For more information, contact Student Accounts at saccounts@clarku.edu or visit their [website](#).

COVID-19 Testing

Do I need to be tested prior to arriving on campus?

Clark is now recommending that students receive a COVID-19 test prior to arriving on campus, but is not requiring it in most cases. Please refer to the [Healthy Clark website](#) for more information. All students will be tested when they arrive on campus.

Housing

If I live off campus, do I have to wait for Clark to issue me a date and time to move into my space?

No. If you live off campus in a space that Clark does not manage, and for whom you did not attain housing from the Office of Housing & Residential Life, you can move into your space when your lease allows. You will need to follow the Massachusetts's Travel Requirements and quarantine in your space as required, but you do not need to wait for a move-in time and date from Clark University.

If I live off campus, do I need to wait to receive a time and date from Clark to come to campus for anything?

Yes, you may not come to Clark's campus, even after you move into your off-campus space, until Clark issues you a date and time to come to campus for initial testing. You cannot come to campus at all until you have been tested, on your assigned date and time, and then receive negative test results.

If I live on campus, do I have to wait for Clark to issue me a date and time to move into my space? Is this date and time negotiable?

Yes, if you live on campus and were assigned housing by the Clark University, you must move in on your assigned date and time that you received by Clark email. You may not come to campus before that time, and if you miss your time, you must email reslife@clarku.edu to obtain a new move-in date and time.

Can I move in early to my on-campus apartment?

No, if your travel plans get you to Clark in advance of your move-in date and time, you must make lodging arrangements until it is time for you to move into your room on campus. Similarly, if you arrive later than your original date and time to move in, you must email reslife@clarku.edu to obtain a new move-in date and time.

Social Security Numbers

I am trying to apply for a Social Security Number, and have been denied. I need the SSN to work. What should I do next?

Due to COVID-19 Social Security Offices are closed. You need an in-person interview to get approval for your card. The [Social Security Website](#) states "In-person service is by appointment only and for limited, dire need situations". If you have received a denial letter, you should contact the Social Security Office and request to speak to a supervisor regarding your denial letter and request an interview. Explain you need a social security card to work, you have a job offer, or an internship for a class, depending on your circumstances, and you are requesting an interview. You need to be able to explain why this is a dire need. Give as much information as possible including the start date and that your employer will not allow you to start work without the Social Security Number. Hopefully a supervisor will call you back.

However, a second denial letter may be their response. At this point please contact the ISSO office for possible next steps.

Resources

[ISSO Portal](#)

[SEVP Fall 2020 Guidance](#)

[Healthy Clark Covid-19 Planning](#)