

March 16, 2020

The updated March 13 directive from Chancellor Subbaswamy (<https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/news/covid-19-campus-announcement>) has now mandated that the UMass campus take additional measures of precaution based on Federal, state and local public health authorities to combat the COVID-19 virus.

Please continue to monitor the following website for all official campus notifications and alerts:
<https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/>

- **The IPO office building is closed to the public until further notice:** The IPO staff however, remains fully operational and accessible via email and telephone. Please contact your assigned IPO advisor by email or phone for further inquiries: <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/ipo-advisors> Please only contact your assigned advisor and not the entire IPO staff
- **Living on campus:** Residential students who have been granted permission to remain on campus over spring break may continue to do so but are advised to depart from campus by March 21. All other students should remain away from campus until further notice. It is acknowledged that many members of the UMass international community are dependent on campus living and dining. These situations will be accommodated. Student Affairs and Campus Life will be providing more information, including details on procedures for how students can request on-going accommodations and how students may return to campus at a later date to retrieve their belongings. Additional information and other related formalities will be provided directly from the Office of Residential Life (<https://www.umass.edu/living/365>). If there are any additional changes or amendments to your campus residential options you will be contacted directly by Residential Life directly.
- **Remote instructional delivery:** All information regarding your specific academic obligations and (non-classroom) remote delivery instruction will be communicated directly from your faculty member and/or your affiliated academic college or department. The IPO cannot advise on any academic-related obligations or methodology, academic credit or graduation requirements
- **F-1 & J-1 immigration status:** These temporary non-classroom remote instruction methods are indeed permissible under your current F-1 or J-1 immigration status. This has been confirmed in recent guidance from the U.S. immigration service. **There are absolutely no changes to your underlying student visa status during this time and you remain enrolled as full-time for the spring semester and in full compliance with F-1 and J-1 student visa regulations.**
- Related to the above point, **the 5-month absence from the U.S. regulatory rule does not apply in these particular circumstances.** If you will need to be outside of the US for the next several months, as long as you remain enrolled and participating in temporary remote instruction at UMass, there is no change to your underlying immigration status

- **International travel:** Given the ever increasing disruption to international air travel, and mounting restrictions other countries are implementing on entry, **the IPO continues to discourage all non-essential international travel at this time.** Ultimately, the decision to travel and return home internationally is entirely you and your family's decision and we completely respect that. If you do plan to travel internationally you should plan in advance for all possible contingencies and the distinct possibility that you will not be able to return to the U.S. until further notice. Valid visa, passport and signed I-20 or DS-2019 forms for re-entry to the U.S. are still an international travel obligation as usual
- **I-20 & DS-2019 travel signatures:** **The IPO cannot provide travel signatures in person until further notice.** It is important to remember that **you do not need your I-20 form or DS-2019 form to depart the US.** The IPO can gladly facilitate new travel signatures through our standard E-ship system once you plan to return to the US:
 F-1/I-20s: <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/f-1-student-travel>
 J-1/DS-2019s: <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/j-1-student-travel>
- **Other document pick up:** If you have already been notified by the IPO that you currently have a document to pick up in our office, please email your IPO advisor directly
- **OPT, CPT and Academic Training applications:** Your IPO advisor will continue to process F-1 CPT and OPT applications and J-1 Academic Training applications. Please see <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/f-1-student-employment> and <https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/j-1-student-employment> for further information

Stay well and take care,

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