Agenda

☐ USDHS Guidance for Fall 2020 – Current Perspectives

☐ Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates

☐ Travel Bans/Restrictions

☐ Other Issues

☐ Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

This ISO Virtual Forum slides will be posted on the ISO website after the session. A recording of the Forum will be posted as soon as available.

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Before or After This Session, Please Review:

- ❑ ISO Update on USDHS Guidance posted on July 18, 2020
  - ❑ https://iso.mit.edu/news/iso-updates-spring-2020/
- ❑ Major Immigration Alerts & Updates
  - ❑ https://iso.mit.edu/news-and-announcements/major-immigration-updates/

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USDHS Guidance for Fall 2020 – Current Perspectives

- Reflects initial review

- Awaiting additional guidance/clarification from USDHS on certain issues

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J-1 Visa Holders

□ USDHS guidance does NOT apply to J-1 visa holders

□ U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program, who oversee the J visa program, in June 25, 2020 guidance indicates that new J-1 visa holders may NOT pursue fully online coursework in Fall 2020

USDHS July 6 Guidance Rescinded

- USDHS/USICE rescinds July 6 DHS Guidance on Fall 2020 following MIT-Harvard lawsuit
  - https://iso.mit.edu/news/usice-rescinds-july-6-guidance-on-international-students-and-online-learning/
  - Would have required continuing students in F-1 status to depart the U.S. if principally in-person coursework could not be pursued
  - New Students appear subject to pre-COVID-19 regulations

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DHS Guidance for Fall 2020

- Fall 2020 will be governed by continued March 2020 USDHS Guidance/FAQ for Spring and Summer 2020

- Colleges/universities have been seeking further clarification, especially related to New/Transfer Students entering from abroad

- USDHS/Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) may provide new information, in which case, we will notify the community once we receive and review updates

  - We may not receive any additional guidance for Fall 2020

The following initial takeaways are subject to update from USDHS

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Continuing Students

- Students who have already been inside the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status pursuing their current MIT degree program

- Continuing Students whose F-1 or J-1 status (SEVIS record) is "ACTIVE" status may remain in or enter the U.S. and pursue in-person, hybrid, or fully online coursework

- Continuing MIT students in "ACTIVE" SEVIS status may also continue their studies full-time remotely/online from abroad while maintaining SEVIS status

Student with Change of Visa Status Pending

☐ students <u>inside the U.S.</u> with pending Change of Status applications with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may remain in the U.S. and pursue studies while their application is pending to F-1

- ❑ All students with a pending Change of Status application must contact [ISO Advisor](#) to confirm any limitations on study based on current visa status

- ❑ Employment (on- or off-campus employment) many not be allowed until Change of Status to F-1 is approved

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Change of Degree Level

- Students <u>inside the U.S.</u>, who have completed an MIT degree program and will be starting a new MIT degree program in Summer 2020 or Fall 2020, may remain in the U.S. and pursue in-person, hybrid, or fully online coursework

- (*Awaiting Clarification*) - Students <u>outside the U.S.</u>, who completed an MIT degree and will start a new MIT degree program in Fall 2020, will have an "Change Degree Level" Form I-20 that is an initial status in SEVIS; may require majority coursework with in-person components rather than fully online in Fall 2020

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Transfer Students (New to MIT)

- Transfer Students, <u>currently inside</u> the U.S. in F-1 status who will begin their program of study at MIT in the Fall 2020 term—including those moving from high school or another university degree program to MIT—can remain in the U.S. and pursue in-person, hybrid, or fully online coursework

- *(Awaiting Clarification)* – Transfer Students <u>currently outside</u> the U.S. and would be entering the U.S. to begin their MIT program of study, may require majority coursework with in-person components rather than fully online in Fall 2020

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New Students

- *(Based on current guidance)*
  - New Students with "Initial Attendance" Form I-20, who will begin their MIT degree program in Fall 2020, who are <u>currently outside the U.S.,</u> will not be permitted to enter the U.S. if their program courseload is fully or mostly online
  - For eligible students, the earliest entry to the U.S. is 30 days prior to the start date for the Fall 2020 semester
    - Earliest arrival date is August 1, 2020 (due to change in Fall 2020 start date of August 31, 2020 – Registration Day)

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New Student/Transfers Enrollment Requirements (inside U.S.)

- Pre-COVID-19 regulations apply to New Students/New Transfer Students

- Limit of 1 subject (12 units/credits) of fully online coursework towards maintaining full-time enrollment

- Must enroll in at least 36 total units/credits to be full-time student in Fall 2020

  - At least 2 subjects (24 units/credits) of in-person/hybrid coursework (with in-person components)

  - Additional subjects (at least 12 units/credits) could be in-person, hybrid, or fully online

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New Student/Transfers Enrollment Requirements (inside U.S.)

- If a New Student's program has decided to have fully remote/online coursework in Fall 2020, then the New Student would not be able to enter the U.S. to study in Fall 2020

- ISO will assist these students in issuing updated visa documents with a Spring 2021 arrival date to the U.S.

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Pursuing Fall 2020 from Abroad

- New Students may pursue Fall 2020 semester fully online from abroad
  - MIT ISO will issue a new Form I-20 with Spring 2021 arrival date

- Students enrolled full-time, even from abroad, are required to have health insurance coverage
  - Will be billed for the MIT Extended Student Plan
  - May apply for a waiver if can show proof of enrollment in a comparable plan abroad

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Remote Appointments Outside U.S.

☐ May a student pursue an Research Assistantship (RA) or Teaching Assistantship (TA) remotely from outside the U.S.?

❑ Formal process, coordinated with your academic department, to review if type of research or payment can be done abroad

❑ Process outline from the Office of the Vice Chancellor

■ https://iso.mit.edu/news/remote-student-appointments-performed-outside-the-u-s/

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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates

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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- **July 15, 2020 -- [USDOS Provides Details on Phased Resumption of Routine Visa Services](#)**

  - Monitor U.S. Embassy/Consulate website (http://usembassy.gov) for confirmation of when services will resume at their particular consular post

    - procedures for scheduling a visa interview appointment

    - guidance on the ability to apply for an expedited/emergency appointment once Consulate re-opens

  - Consulates have traditionally prioritized student visa interview scheduling

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Visa Interview Guidance

- Schedule interview for whatever time you can reserve, even if after the start date for the Fall 2020 term
- Procedure to request earlier visa interview time only possible when have an initial time scheduled (no guarantee)
- Expedited/Emergency appointments available if sufficient staffing, resources, and local conditions allow
- NOT possible to request expedite of Administrative Processing (security checks)
  - Embassy/Consulate does NOT have control over Administrative Processing (U.S. State Department and other government agencies in the U.S. responsible for these security check procedures)

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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- Report your scheduled Visa Interview Appointment and Visa Approved/Received in iMIT
  - login to iMIT
  - Click on left-hand menu "Admission"
  - Select on the "Visa Interview & Approval" button and complete the appropriate eforms
- ISO providing a support letter for visa applicants for entry in Fall 2020
  - Download/print a copy of the appropriate letter (versions for new or continuing students)
    - Click on link above, scroll down and click on "Log on with Shibboleth", and complete Duo authentication

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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- Reports of Visa Officer requesting new Form I-20 with notation "Student not pursuing fully online coursework"
  - Part of the July 6 USDHS Guidance that was rescinded
  - Consulates have been updated in recent days of corrected guidance
  - No new I-20 needed
  - Notify ISO if at visa officer requests updated Form I-20
- ISO providing a letter for visa applicants for entry in Fall 2020
  - [Download/print](#) a copy of the appropriate letter (versions for new or continuing students)
    - Click on link above, scroll down and click on "Log on with Shibboleth", and complete Duo authentication

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Visa Processing at U.S. Embassies/Consulates Abroad

- Studying remotely/online abroad for Fall 2020, how early can a visa interview appointment be scheduled?
  - U.S. Consulate can issue the visa no earlier than 120 days prior to program start date listed on Form I-20/Form DS-2019
  - With January 29, 2021 as Spring 2021 Semester start date, schedule visa interview on/about October 1, 2020

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Travel Bans / Restrictions

Major Immigration Alerts & Updates

https://iso.mit.edu/news-and-announcements/major-immigration-updates/

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Travel to U.S.

- If you are currently inside the U.S., recommend you remain in the U.S.

- Travel Ban and Travel Restrictions
  - Subject to a current Travel Restriction (14 days from when last in country before arrival to US):
    - Europe (Schengen countries plus UK and Ireland)
      - DOS announced on July 16 exemption for certain visa holders
        - F-1 visa holders now exempt
        - J-1 (students) may request exemption at U.S. Embassy/Consulate
    - China
    - Iran
    - Brazil

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Travel to the U.S.

- Travel Ban and Restrictions
  - Syria
    - Visa application undergoes additional review for a "waiver" of the Travel Ban restriction

  - US-Canada-Mexico Travel Restriction
    - recently extended to 08/21/2020
    - "essential travel only" – study is considered "essential"

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Presidential Proclamation – Graduate Students/Researchers from China

- June 1, 2020 - [Presidential Proclamation – Suspension of Entry of Certain Students and Researchers in F and J status from China](#)

  - Does NOT apply to undergraduate study

  - suspends entry if an individual is connected to an entity that "implements or supports" the government of China's "military-civil fusion strategy."

  - An individual is considered to have a connection to such an entity if he or she has been funded by, employed by, studied or researched at, or on behalf of the entity.

  - No advance determination – notified at time of visa application at U.S. Embassy/Consulate or upon entry to the U.S.

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How Late Can I Arrive to MIT for Fall 2020?

- Correction: No Later than November 9, 2020
  - In-Person/Hybrid instruction for Fall 2020 semester ends November 20
  - Student must arrive, complete required testing and self-isolation before accessing campus, attend in-person subject components, and ISO must report to SEVIS your arrival to the U.S.
- Your academic program may set an earlier deadline to arrive based on program curriculum

Other Issues

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Gap Year

- **Undergraduates**: Contact the MIT Undergraduate Admissions Office at gapyear@mit.edu
  - ISO will be notified once your Gap Year has been approved
  - Undergraduates may not only take the Fall 2020 semester off
- **Graduate Students:** Contact your academic program
- ISO will amend your SEVIS record with a Fall 2021 expected start date
- In March 2021, students will need to request a new Form I-20, providing updated financial documentation

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

How early may I re-enter the U.S. from abroad for the Fall 2020 semester?

Students may re-enter up to 30 days prior to the start date of the Fall 2020 semester.

With the start date for the MIT Fall 2020 semester changing to one week earlier (August 31, 2020 Reg Day), Continuing students may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior (August 1, 2020).

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

MIT has changed the Fall 2020 start date. My Form I-20 has a September 8 start date, but now August 31 is the scheduled arrival date. Will I receive a new Form I-20 with the new Fall 2020 start date?

All New Student's SEVIS records have been updated to reflect the new Fall 2020 semester arrival date (August 31, 2020 – Reg Day). USDHS has not clarified if a student must have a new Form I-20 with this update, but the ISO is processing the new documents and will notify you how you will receive this new Form I-20 electronically next week.

In the meantime, you may use your current paper Form I-20 with the September 8, 2020 start date to schedule your visa interview appointment and to attend your visa interview.

ISO also provides a letter on the ISO website to download/print that confirms the new MIT Fall 2020 semester start date. It is recommended you carry the letter to your visa interview and to enter the U.S.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

I have a valid F-1 (or J-1) entry visa from my previous program of study in the U.S. Can I use this visa to enter in the same status to begin my program of study at MIT?

Yes. As long as the visa is to enter in the same visa status, has not expired, and has not been marked "cancelled" or "revoked". Students must carry not only the MIT Form I-20 (or Form DS-2019), but also the Forms I-20 (or Forms DS-2019) from your previous school for which you were issued and used that visa. If you do not have your previous Forms, students are advised to contact their previous school and request photocopies of the Forms or a letter from the school confirming your dates of enrollment at that school in the visa status for which the visa was issued.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

What documentation must I carry with me when entering the U.S.?

You must carry your Form I-20 (F-1 visa holders) or Form DS-2019 (J-1 visa holders), valid passport, valid entry visa in the passport, your financial support documentation, copy of your letter of admission, copy of your SEVIS fee receipt.

Details on entering the U.S. is available on the ISO webpage "Entering U.S. Borders".

The ISO also makes available a letter to download/print from the ISO website for students to carry when applying for their visa and for entering the U.S. in the Fall 2020 semester.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

Can a new student pursue MIT coursework remotely from abroad for the Fall 2020 semester?

Yes. While your visa status will not begin until you enter the U.S. in your student visa status, you can enroll and pursue the Fall 2020 semester as a full-time student from abroad.

If you will not be arriving to campus until the Spring 2021 semester, the MIT ISO will need to issue an updated Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 with your updated arrival date in January 2021.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the course of action for an MIT international student / scholar with valid paperwork who are denied entry by a CBP officer at the port of entry?

The ISO does have an emergency phone number to call if you have any issues while with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) at the U.S. port-of-entry.
Please call 617-258-5480 and you will be connected with an ISO Advisor.

This number should be called if there are problems with entry to the U.S., not to report a successful entry to the U.S.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

My subjects for the Fall will only be virtual. Can I arrive to the U.S. in the Fall?

Unfortunately, no. If your subject enrollment will be majority online then you will not be able to enter the U.S. in Fall 2020. Students can pursue their Fall 2020 coursework fully remote/online from outside the U.S.
If you will be studying abroad in Fall 2020, the ISO will process an updated Form I-20 with the Spring 2021 start date (January 29, 2021 – Spring 2021 Registration Day). Students would be able to arrive to the U.S. up to 30 days prior to that date (no earlier than December 30, 2020).

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

My US visa will expire before my program ends. I hope to do post-completion work permission (F-1 OPT / J-1 Academic Training). Do I need to renew my visa?

The entry visa issued by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad is like a ticket to get into the U.S. Once you are inside the U.S., the visa can expire and you can remain in the U.S. as long as you are maintain your visa status as an enrolled full-time student or have authorization for post-degree-completion training. It is not possible to apply for/obtain a new visa from inside the U.S. You would apply for a new visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate the next time you travel abroad and need to re-enter the U.S. in student visa status (even on OPT or AT).

Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

If I cannot get my visa from the U.S. Consulate before Sept. 1st, but I can probably obtain one in late September or October, can I firstly enroll online and then convert to in-person mode after I get the visa and arrive at MIT?

Yes. Students are allowed to begin their Fall 2020 semester online until they are able to secure their visa and enter the U.S. to start their in-person/hybrid coursework. Students will need to arrive at MIT no later than November 9, 2020 to participate in in-person/hybrid coursework in the Fall 2020 term.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

Does the ISO require a Transfer In Form to be completed by my previous school to process my MIT Form I-20/Form DS-2019?

There is not a paper form that is completed, but in iMIT there is an eform called "Other Information for MIT 2020" that includes providing the name and email address of your international student advisor at your previous school. The completed eform generates an email to your previous school to complete an electronic confirmation of your status, including the release date of your SEVIS record from your previous school to MIT.

Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

I am currently on post-completion OPT from my previous school. I understand that my internship/OPT must end once the I20 transfer is completed. By "transfer completion," does it mean the date when my new MIT I-20 is generated?

The transfer release date is the date that your previous school releases your record in SEVIS to MIT (which is needed before MIT can generate your MIT Form I-20 or Form DS-2019). If currently on post-completion OPT, you do not want your previous school releasing your SEVIS record until after you complete your OPT employment. The latest date the record can be released is the start date of your MIT degree program.
MIT ISO will then issue your MIT Form I-20/DS-2019 within 10 days of the your MIT program start date.

Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

As a new F-1 student, if I am not able to arrive to MIT until the Spring 2021 semester, will I be eligible for off-campus employment authorization in Summer 2021?

Under the F-1 regulations, a student is not eligible for off-campus employment authorization until the have been pursuing a full-time program of study inside the U.S. for at least "one full academic year". The only exception to this rule is if the graduate academic program requires all students in the program to pursue a mandatory internship/experience towards graduation requirements before fulfilling "one full academic year" in status.

So a student in a program without a mandatory internship requirement, entering the U.S. starting in Spring 2021, would not be eligible to obtain U.S. off-campus employment authorization until after the Fall 2021 semester.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

Is there any update on if the Visiting Student Program will be active in the Fall 2020 semester?

Due to Fall 2020 planning related to MIT's COVID-19 response, the Visiting Student Program will not be welcoming new Visiting Students in the Fall 2020 semester.

Visiting Students with appointments to start in the Fall 2020 semester should contact their host faculty member or the ISO regarding an update on a future projected start date.

It is not possible to have a remote Visiting Student appointment from abroad in Fall 2020.

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Additional Pre-Submitted Questions

If I am a New Student and I have already received my visa from the U.S. Consulate, may I enter the U.S. to take online only courses in the Fall 2020 semester?

Unfortunately, no. A New Student may not enter the U.S. and pursue a fully online course of study.

New Students can pursue fully remote/online coursework from abroad in the Fall.

The MIT ISO will need to issue an updated Form I-20/Form DS-2019 with the Spring 2021 arrival date for the student to join MIT in-person in the Spring 2021 semester.

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Additional Questions?

- Please submit any additional questions to the ISO Virtual Forum online form: https://tinyurl.com/y59g8orn

- For answers to common questions, please see the ISO Knowledge Base on the ISO website.

- Submissions to the Virtual Forums will be incorporated to the Knowledge Base.

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Important Links

MIT International Students Office – http://iso.mit.edu

- ISO Updates – Spring/Summer 2020
  http://iso.mit.edu/news/iso-updates-spring-2020/

- Major Immigration Alerts & Updates
  http://iso.mit.edu/news-and-announcements/major-immigration-updates/

- Visas and Travel
  http://iso.mit.edu/visas-and-travel/

- Employment
  http://iso.mit.edu/employment/

- Contact your ISO Advisor
  http://iso.mit.edu/about/student-advisor.shtml

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