

Dear International Bruins,

I hope you are healthy and well as you continue to engage with UCLA in the U.S. or overseas during this unprecedented time. Since my last message to you in mid-November when winter quarter instruction plans were announced, a new U.S. president was sworn into office, a number of COVID-19 vaccines have been made available and vaccination programs are being rolled out across the world. I am hopeful that we are a few steps closer to being able to manage this pandemic and safely be in community again on campus.

Last month, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Emily Carter announced [UCLA's plans for spring quarter instruction](#). [Per orders from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health \(LACDPH\)](#) and recommendations from [UCLA's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Task Force](#), we will continue to offer remote-only instruction for the spring quarter, with the exception of a limited number of [in-person or hybrid courses](#) necessary to train students for essential workforce positions.

Please understand that UCLA must adhere to LACDPH protocols for the safety and welfare of all students. International student well-being remains a priority for UCLA, but UCLA does not have the power to issue different protocols or make exceptions for visa compliance purposes. We understand that these announcements may have impacted your academic and career plans in the U.S. and acknowledge the frustration many of you may be experiencing. UCLA continues to advocate for international students to be able to safely travel to the U.S. and engage in academic and student life on campus. For more information about UCLA's advocacy efforts for international students during the COVID-19 pandemic, please see [this list of actions](#) from UCLA Federal Government Relations (FGR).

The Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars (Dashew Center) will send a separate message regarding [summer quarter instruction](#) in the coming weeks.

Guidance on travel into the U.S.

The Dashew Center would like to provide you with updated guidance on travel into the U.S. and F/J visa status requirements so you can make informed decisions about your plans moving forward.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will continue to maintain its latest guidance for F-1 and J-1 status requirements:

- F-1 students: [SEVP's Frequently Asked Questions \(PDF\)](#), last updated on August 7, 2020
- J-1 students: [Exchange Visitor Program Information on Coronavirus](#)

Per the latest SEVP and Department of State (DOS) guidance:

- International students with a Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record status in "Initial Attendance" (e.g. Initial and Initial Transfer I-20/DS-2019 documents) will be required to enroll in a minimum of one in-person class during their first enrollment term **and each consecutive academic term** in the U.S. to be eligible to:

1- enter the U.S. in F-1/J-1 status, and

2- maintain valid F-1/J-1 status.

- F-1 students who established their F-1 status in the U.S. with UCLA in fall 2020, winter 2021 or spring 2021 and are planning to meet the one-year F-1 status requirement for [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\) or Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) eligibility with summer enrollment must be enrolled in at least one approved, in-person class for the summer.
- Continuing F-1/J-1 status students (e.g. students who established their F-1/J-1 status in the U.S. with UCLA before March 2020) may continue to maintain F-1/J-1 status inside or outside of the U.S. with full-time enrollment in online courses.

Newly admitted students who started their degree programs through remote learning while outside of the U.S. and who have not yet established F-1/J-1 status in U.S. are not considered continuing F-1/J-1 students for visa status purposes.

Unfortunately, we do not expect that the federal government will update the current guidance or make exceptions for the in-person course requirement for F-1 or J-1 students with ‘Initial Attendance’ SEVIS records for the remainder of 2020–21 academic year.

On-site/In-person Instruction

UCLA-approved on-site classes are delivered in person, with students and instructors physically present in a learning environment. The Registrar’s Office has compiled [a list of approved on-site courses \(PDF\)](#) for spring quarter for your reference. At present, in accordance with LACDPH requirements, the only in-person classes UCLA is able to offer are certain courses necessary to train students for essential workforce positions.

UCLA has not yet released a list of approved on-site courses for the summer.

We would like to remind students that in-person course enrollment is not a new requirement to maintain F/J visa status in the U.S. (see our [F-1](#) and [J-1](#) pages for information about enrollment requirements). [SEVP](#) and [DOS](#) made significant exceptions in their COVID-19 guidance to temporarily allow continuing F-1 and J-1 students to count online classes towards a full course of study. Federal immigration agencies have not extended the temporary exception to international students who have not yet established their F/J visa status in the U.S., especially on the basis to meet eligibility requirements for benefits such as practical training (e.g. CPT, OPT, Academic Training).

Reminder:

Courses not included in the approved on-site course list for spring quarter will not be considered as in-person courses for F-1/J-1 visa status purposes. In addition, if a course is included in the approved on-site courses list, it does not guarantee that the course is available and will be held in person as conditions may change or academic departments may decide to offer the course remotely. We strongly recommend that you check and verify in-person course availability with the academic department that is offering an in-person course before making your travel plans to the U.S.

Individual arrangements made directly with professors to conduct in-person academic or research activities will not constitute approved in-person course enrollment for purposes of F-1/J-1 visa status validation if the course is not included in the approved campus list.

For additional information, please refer to the Registrar's Office's [COVID-19 FAQs](#).

International students who are required to enroll in an approved in-person course should not attempt to enter the U.S. if they are not enrolled in a course as listed on the approved list of classes. Please note that even if students enter the U.S. in F-1/J-1 status, the Dashew Center will not be able to register or validate "Initial Attendance" F-1/J-1 records for students who are not enrolled in at least one UCLA-approved in-person class. Consequently, students will be in violation of their student visa conditions.

Travel

Effective January 26, 2021, the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) will require proof of a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 for all air passengers arriving from a foreign country to the U.S.

In addition, all travelers arriving in California from other states or countries should self-quarantine for 10 days, according to the [California Department of Public Health](#). Travelers over the age of 16 entering Los Angeles from another state or country must complete a [Traveler Form](#) in addition to the 10-day self-quarantine.

For a list of presidential proclamations and current travel restrictions, please see the [Presidential Proclamations](#) and [Recent Updates](#) pages on our COVID-19 Updates website.

Resources

We understand that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, prolonged remote instruction, travel restrictions and visa limitations present an array of challenges for many of you. UCLA remains committed to providing resources to support your health and wellness during this time:

- [Ashe Student Health and Wellness Center](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [My Student Support Program \(My SSP\)](#) - 24/7 access to phone, video and chat support in a student's preferred language.
- [The Resilience in your Student Experience \(RISE\) Center](#) - online wellness resources live virtual events and a holistic healing library.
- [Case Management Services](#) and the [Consultation & Response Team \(CRT\)](#)

Although spring and summer instruction will be primarily offered online, [UC leaders are optimistic that we will be able to offer in-person instruction for fall quarter](#). I hope you and your families stay healthy and safe and continue to follow [public health guidelines](#) wherever you reside. I urge you to review the updated information on our [COVID-19 Updates](#) page and do not hesitate to [contact us](#) if you need any assistance or need to speak about your status. We are here to support you.

Sincerely,

Sam Nahidi
Director