

July 23, 2020

Dear International Students,

First, I would like to commend you all for the resilience you have demonstrated over the past few months. Whether you are a current student who had to leave campus and continue your courses online or a new student who has fielded a tremendous amount of uncertainty to begin your studies at Pepperdine, you have persevered. We are proud of you and eagerly look forward to welcoming you back to Malibu. As you know, Pepperdine was actively planning to hold both in-person and online classes to accommodate the needs of our international students. However, as indicated in the most recent communication from President Gash, Pepperdine will be suspending in-person classes for the fall 2020 semester and transitioning to a fully online term. Our expectation is that this shift in modality will not exceed one semester, and we expect and are actively planning for your return to campus for the spring 2021 term.

As you are likely aware, the Trump administration and the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) withdrew the requirement necessitating all international students to enroll in a mixture of in-person and online courses if residing in the United States. This policy shift indicates that international students already in the US may remain and enroll in fully online classes. Unfortunately, we were very disappointed to learn the policy confirmed that *new students may not enter the United States if their university is fully online*. ICE and SEVP did not provide clear guidelines on a myriad of other student scenarios, thus multiple associations and universities have reached out to the government requesting further clarification. Our hope is that additional guidance will be provided very soon.

I am sure you have many questions about what these updates mean for you. In anticipation, we will explain the few scenarios that apply to most of our international students and offer guidance for what students in these situations should do while we await further guidance.

**1) New ("initial attendance" and "transfer pending") students who are, at present, outside of the United States:**

- a) Government guidance currently states that students with a Form I-20 issued for "initial attendance" or "transfer pending" are ineligible to come to the US to attend schools that offer only online courses. Therefore, new students are *no longer eligible* to travel to the United States since we have moved to fully online.

- b) Inform the OISS if you plan to enroll in fully online courses from your home country by completing the [International Student Online Course Notification](#) form.
- c) Complete a [Travel Permission or I-20 Update Request](#) form with the date you will arrive in the US for the spring term (allow at least 10 business days for processing).

**2) New students who are already here in the United States and were planning to live on campus:**

- a) Complete the [Mandatory Arrival Report \(MAR\)](#) as soon as possible, but no later than within seven days of your program start date.
- b) Due to the transition to fully online instruction, Pepperdine will cancel all fall housing contracts and room assignments. Further action from students is not required, and the Housing Contract Terms and Conditions are annulled for the fall 2020 semester. Students are not required to pay the balance.

Although we are not presently permitted to reopen our Malibu campus for normal residential life, we will be able to house students who demonstrate a compelling hardship that necessitates residing in on-campus housing this fall. Students who want to seek an exception to live on campus beginning in mid-August may do so by completing [on-campus housing petition form](#), beginning immediately.

**3) New students who are already here in the United States and were planning to live off campus:**

- a) Complete the [Mandatory Arrival Report \(MAR\)](#) in the OISS portal as soon as possible, but no later than within seven days of your program start date.

**4) New students who no longer plan to enroll in Fall 2020 classes:**

- a) Email the OISS at [oiss@pepperdine.edu](mailto:oiss@pepperdine.edu) for next steps.

**5) Current students who are, at present, outside of the United States and were planning to return to the United States:**

- a) The July 15 ICE guidance indicates that "students who continue to make normal progress in their course of study remain eligible for admission into the United States." However, some universities have reported students being denied entry.
- b) *If you decide to travel to the US before further guidance is provided*, please review your Form I-20 for accuracy and make sure the travel endorsement DSO signature on page 2 is valid. If it is valid, we strongly recommend that you print and carry [this letter](#) and your course registration, along with your I-20. (If you

have only an electronically signed I-20, you should print it out and sign it on the student signature line.)

- c) If your I-20 does not have a valid travel endorsement, you need to immediately request one by submitting the [Travel Permission or I-20 Update Request](#) form and contacting the OISS at [oiss@pepperdine.edu](mailto:oiss@pepperdine.edu).
- d) Due to the transition to fully online instruction, Pepperdine will cancel all fall housing contracts and room assignments. Further action from students is not required, and the Housing Contract Terms and Conditions are annulled for the fall 2020 semester. Students are not required to pay the balance.

**6) Current students who are already in the United States and were planning to live on campus:**

- a) Report any changes in address by submitting the [Address Update](#) form in the OISS portal within 10 days of the change.
- b) Due to the transition to fully online instruction, Pepperdine will cancel all fall housing contracts and room assignments. Further action from students is not required, and the Housing Contract Terms and Conditions are annulled for the fall 2020 semester. Students are not required to pay the balance.

Although we are not presently permitted to reopen our Malibu campus for normal residential life, we will be able to house students who demonstrate a compelling hardship that necessitates residing in on-campus housing this fall. Students who want to seek an exception to live on campus beginning in mid-August may do so by completing [on-campus housing petition form](#), beginning immediately.

**7) Current students who are already in the United States and were planning to live off campus:**

- a) Report any changes in address by submitting the [Address Update](#) form in the OISS portal within 10 days of the change.

**8) Current students who are, at present, outside of the United States and plan to enroll online:**

- a) If you are taking online courses from outside of the United States, you should complete the [International Student Online Course Notification](#) form.
- b) Complete a [Travel Permission or I-20 Update Request](#) form in the OISS portal with the date you will return for spring term (allow at least 10 business days for processing).

**9) Current students who no longer plan to enroll in Fall 2020 classes:**

- a) Complete the [Exit or Transfer Request](#) Form.

- b) Officially drop or withdraw from your courses if you are enrolled. Seaver students can withdraw by contacting [OneStop](#).
- c) Request to waive your [Student Health Insurance](#) (if applicable).

For additional questions, please consult the following resources directly:

- Academic-related questions - contact your school or program directly
  - GSEP - [gsep.studentservices@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gsep.studentservices@pepperdine.edu)
  - PGBS - [stan.woo@pepperdine.edu](mailto:stan.woo@pepperdine.edu)
  - Straus - [randi.redman@pepperdine.edu](mailto:randi.redman@pepperdine.edu)
  - CSOL - [nicole.serleto@pepperdine.edu](mailto:nicole.serleto@pepperdine.edu)
  - SPP - [christopher.j.jones@pepperdine.edu](mailto:christopher.j.jones@pepperdine.edu)
  - Seaver - [OneStop@pepperdine.edu](mailto:OneStop@pepperdine.edu)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Student Health Center](#)
- [Other University resources](#) and information related to COVID-19

I recognize this has been a stressful and difficult time. As always, we will continue to support and advocate on your behalf. Please continue to monitor your Pepperdine email for further updates from University leadership and consult [official University resources](#) and the [OISS website](#). Do not hesitate to reach out to us at [oiss@pepperdine.edu](mailto:oiss@pepperdine.edu) for any remaining questions that were not addressed. We are here to help.

Finally, I understand that the move to remote learning means that our students will be missing out on one of the best things about Pepperdine, our on-campus community and student life. Although we lament this unfortunate reality, the OISS remains committed to helping our international students connect with one another. Our International Student Ambassadors will be spearheading this cause. If you would like to assist in this effort, please email them at [isap@pepperdine.edu](mailto:isap@pepperdine.edu).

Warm regards,



Brooke O'Donnell Mitchell  
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Pepperdine University