

From: [International Student & Scholar Services](#)
Cc: [International Student & Scholar Services](#)
Subject: ISSS Update: Enrollment Options & F-1 Status (per July 24 SEVP Update)--Decide by Aug 3, please.
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 4:05:54 PM
Attachments: [Middlebury College-Fall 2020 Program Update Ltr--July 30.pdf](#)
[07-30-2020-ISSS Update to New Students--OPTIONS.pdf](#)

Dear incoming international students,

(Our international student email list includes incoming new students and students who will enroll in February 2021 and possibly beyond. It also includes individuals who do not need visa support. This email focuses on F-1 visa-related issues, so if this does not apply to you, please disregard after reading item #1. F-1 students starting this fall, read on!)

We know you have been awaiting an update from ISSS. Thank you for your patience. This is a long email and we ask that you read it today in its entirety because it contains valuable and timely information.

*The College must determine which students will study remotely and who will need housing in the next week. **By Monday, August 3 at 5pm EDT, we ask you to notify us of your plan to enroll remotely, to be on campus, or to defer to a future term.** If you will need to obtain a visa and have not secured an appointment that is on or before August 14 or if you face U.S. travel restrictions or flight limitations from your home country, you will need to choose to be remote or delay your start date.*

- 1) **Return to Campus Expectations:** First, we want to encourage all of you to review the [email sent on July 24](#) and the College's [Return to Campus Guide](#), which outlines expectations for students returning to Vermont. You will also find other informative resources regarding fall term on the [Middlebury 2020-2021](#) website. There is a lot of information to consider. We encourage you to take some time to review it carefully so you know the commitment you are making in returning in person to the area. Please also remember to bring a mask and a personal thermometer with you, as you must wear a mask at all times except when you are alone and take your temperature daily.
- 2) **SEVP/Immigration Updates:** We know that there has been much uncertainty swirling around all of us since the ICE/SEVP broadcast message on July 6 and the July 7 FAQ, followed by the July 14 U.S. District Court announcement. Then, the quickly produced July 15 SEVP FAQ contained conflicting and unclear guidance with regard to fall semester 2020. This lack of clarity affected ISSS's ability to advise you effectively with regard to your enrollment plans and other concerns you have. We provide this update to help you make an informed decision about your fall semester plans.

On July 24, SEVP provided additional guidance that helped make the situation clearer, especially with regard to the College's planned academic approach to fall term. The [July 24 SEVP guidance](#) and associated FAQ provide more flexibility to the full-time enrollment requirements. For now, the guidance only applies to fall 2020. In keeping with the guidance, ISSS will submit our fall procedural adaptation update to SEVP.

Attached is an ISSS update outlining enrollment options to help you make an informed decision about your fall plans.

ISSS also prepared a Middlebury College program update letter for visa applications and travel (attached to this email). The letter may be used to request an expedited visa appointment, to present at your visa appointment (if asked), and to show the CBP officer when you request entry to the U.S. (if asked for details about Middlebury College's plans for fall).

We will be adding this to our [ISSS COVID-19 FAQ & Fall 2020 Updates](#) and anticipate that you will have additional questions. If you need further guidance, please email the ISSS team at iss@middlebury.edu or arrange for an appointment with an advisor through our [calendly](#) online scheduling tool.

The ISSS team is committed to supporting and advocating for Middlebury College's international community. This has always been central to our work. The ISSS team is grateful for the opportunity we have to help our international students continue their Middlebury education and experience. Remember—we're here for you!

We hope this information helps you with your decision. Please reach out to us, if you need further input.

Best wishes for continued good health for you and your families.

~Kathy

and the ISSS Team—Kelly O'Connell, Christy Fry, Kas Singh, Loren Scott, and Carolyn Dahm

Kathy Foley (pronouns: she/her/hers)

Associate Dean and Director of ISSS

Middlebury College and Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)

Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753

Phone: 802-443-5858

Email: iss@middlebury.edu

Web: <http://go.middlebury.edu/iss>

Need to meet virtually with us?

To make an appointment, use our online scheduling tool at: <https://calendly.com/middleburyiss> or e-mail iss@middlebury.edu with your available days/times.

**If you need to submit a document to ISSS, please use the Document Submission Form:*

<https://forms.middlebury.edu/international/iss/document-submission-form>

Middlebury College – International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

For incoming international students who anticipate being in F-1 status.

This ISSS update contains an outline of enrollment options (on campus, remote, or leave of absence) and their impact on F-1 student visa status, travel guidance, and a next steps summary.

On July 24, SEVP provided additional guidance that helped make the uncertain situation for F-1 students clearer, especially with regard to the College's planned academic approach to fall term. The [July 24 SEVP guidance](#) and associated FAQ provide more flexibility to the full-time enrollment requirements. For now, the guidance only applies to fall semester, based on the program update the College will provide to SEVP.

On July 24, SEVP provided additional guidance that helped make the situation clearer, especially with regard to the College's planned academic approach to fall term. The [July 24 SEVP guidance](#) and associated FAQ provide more flexibility to the full-time enrollment requirements. For now, the guidance only applies to fall semester, based on the program update the College will provide to SEVP.

The College must confirm decisions about fall courses, housing assignments and pre-arrival preparations soon. If you have not yet notified your dean of your enrollment plans, please do so **by 5 pm EDT on Monday, August 3**. If you cannot confirm by August 3 that (1) you have already secured a visa appointment on or before August 14 and (2) you have no other barriers to travel (i.e. U.S. restrictions or flight limitations from your home country), then you will need to decide to either enroll remotely from abroad or defer your entry to a future term.

Enrollment options for Middlebury College students in light of the July 24 SEVP guidance:

1. [New international students may enroll in a full-time course load from outside the U.S. to begin their studies.](#)
 - a. New students are eligible to enroll in Middlebury College courses remotely by taking courses delivered online or in the hybrid/hyflex modalities. An online-only, full-time course load is allowed.
 - b. While students can engage in courses that count toward their Middlebury degree, they will not attain an F-1 status until they enter the U.S. with a new I-20 (and valid F-1 visa, if applicable) to enroll in their program on campus. *(They can study from abroad, but will not have F-1 status yet.)*
 - c. ISSS will communicate with these students 2-3 months in advance of the expected start date when they will begin in-person studies at Middlebury to initiate the I-20 process.
2. [New international students who come to campus to study in Vermont](#) will only attain and maintain F-1 status if they enter the U.S. to pursue a full-time course load that is not entirely online.
 - a. Students who enter the U.S. with an "initial status" I-20 (including students who transferred their SEVIS records to Middlebury) will be required to take at least one course that requires in-person presence or physical attendance for an integral aspect of the course to maintain their F-1 status.
 - b. Middlebury's in-person or hybrid/blended courses fulfill this requirement. A hybrid/hyflex class could also satisfy this obligation if they participate in the on-campus, in-person aspects of a hyflex course. Keep this information in mind when you choose courses for your fall semester.
 - c. If the College switches from in-person or hybrid instruction to fully online at some point in the semester, students will be able to maintain their non-immigrant status as long as they do not violate U.S. laws or regulations that require SEVIS record termination or their removal.
3. [International students who transferred their SEVIS record from another U.S. institution to Middlebury College and are still within the U.S.](#) will receive their I-20 soon and will report to campus on August 26. They will need to complete the SEVIS transfer process with ISSS within 15 days of their arrival. ISSS will provide more information when you arrive on campus.

4. [F-1 students whose SEVIS records transferred to Middlebury who will study from outside the U.S.](#) will need to contact ISSS to confirm next steps. *(We anticipate that students who were in F-1 status as of March 9, 2020 may be eligible to retain their SEVIS record while studying remotely. ISSS will provide guidance at the appropriate time.)* These students will remain in “initial” status in SEVIS until they enter the U.S. to begin studies in person on campus in Vermont. Once you alert your dean that you will be remote, contact ISSS and we will determine next steps.
5. [Incoming international students who choose to defer their entry to Middlebury to a future term](#) will not be “active students” at the College for fall. You will not be actively enrolled or in F-1 status.
 - a. **If you will join us in February 2021** and ISSS already issued your I-20 for fall 2020, we will update your SEVIS record with the new entry date. ISSS will contact you regarding next steps in October.
 - b. U.S. Consulates can only issue an F-1 visa no more than 120 days prior to the program start date. Students who secured a visa appointment and cannot expedite it in time for our late August arrival day will need to postpone their appointment. They will need a new, updated I-20 with the February start date for the visa interview; they will only be eligible for an appointment after October 10.
 - c. **If you will join us in September 2021** and ISSS issued you an I-20, we will cancel your SEVIS record for now. You will initiate the process for a new I-20 in May/June 2021.
 - d. ISSS will notify students if they need to return their I-20 issued for fall 2020 to ISSS.
 - e. A SEVIS fee receipt for the I-901 payment is valid for one year from date of payment. You may use it for a future visa appointment within the next 12 months.
 - f. ISSS will contact students who defer to a future term about 2-3 months prior to the start date of their intended return to initiate the I-20 process. *(I-20 applications are due November 1 for February entry and June 1 for September entry.)* Please do NOT use your current SEVIS information to schedule an interview or to pay your SEVIS fee at this point.

Next step:

- For students who intend to come to Vermont to pursue their studies, the new student arrival date is Wednesday, August 26. Due to COVID-19 precautions and arrival testing, you must arrive on this date so please make your travel arrangements accordingly. See the [Return to Campus Guide](#) for instructions about the pre-arrival quarantine and more.
- If by August 3, you cannot confirm that you secured a visa appointment for a date before August 14, you must then choose to either study remotely or defer to a future term.
 - To defer to a future term: notify the Dean of Admissions **by Monday, August 3**. This will allow the College to make appropriate arrangements for the opening of school.
 - To confirm your decision to be a remote learner: contact your dean—based alphabetically by your last name **by 5pm EDT on Monday, August 3**.

<u>Last name starts with</u>	<u>Contact</u>
A–Farr	Dean Scott Barnicle
Fat–Lap	Michelle Audette , Assistant Director of Student Success
Lav–Rob	Dean Emily Van Mistri
Roch–Z	Dean Matt Longman
- If you secured an appointment before August 14 (or do not need a visa yet need your hard copy I-20 for travel), please be sure to submit your information via [this ISSS form](#), if you have not already done so. Completion of this form will prompt ISSS to print and send the hard copy of your I-20 Form to you. You will need to bring the I-20 document to the visa appointment, along with the SEVIS Fee receipt.
- A few of you may have appointments scheduled between August 15-25. If you are in that situation, please complete [this ISSS form](#) and email ISSS right away. We will determine if it is feasible for you to arrive and whether the College will allow you to proceed with fall entry.
- When you register for fall classes, if you will be in the U.S. you need to be sure to select at least one course that satisfies the in-person/physical attendance requirement.

Travel Guidance:

- **Travel restrictions** into the U.S. still exist for several countries (including Brazil, China, and Iran, as well as the Schengen Area, UK, and Ireland—unless granted a national interest exemption). Please review the [Proclamations](#) and consult with ISSS if you want to make plans to enter the U.S. The restrictions relate to geographic locations not citizenship, in most cases, so you may be able to visit another country and then enter the U.S.
- **National Interest Exemptions:** The U.S. Department of State, in their [July 22 announcement](#), provided a blanket exemption for F-1 students from the Schengen Area, the UK and Ireland to allow entry to the United States. F-1 students from Europe may now seek entry to the United States. On July 23, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials at Logan International Airport confirmed that CBP is following that guidance and students should proceed with travel accordingly, per the DOS announcement. Students should monitor the [Department of State website](#) for updates due to the rapidly changing nature of the current landscape.
- **ISSS prepared a Middlebury College program update letter for visa applications and travel.** It is attached to this email and may be used to request an expedited appointment to renew your visa (if needed), to present at your visa appointment (if asked), and to show the CBP officer when you request entry to the U.S. (if asked for details about Middlebury College's plans for fall).

Summary:

To summarize, international students must:

1. Choose an enrollment option (enroll on campus in Vermont, enroll remotely from abroad—at Middlebury College or in an approved study abroad program, or take a leave of absence) **by Monday, August 3** at the latest, if you have not already done so.
2. Communicate with their dean to confirm their remote status or with the Dean of Admissions to request deferral to a future term. (*If you already completed this step, no action needed.*)
3. Intend to enroll in courses from on campus in Vermont if they do not notify the dean otherwise.
4. Register for and enroll in a full-time course of study (for students with an initial I-20, it must include at least one course that requires in-person presence).
5. Anticipate and adhere to travel restrictions or barriers, as well as pre-arrival quarantine protocols.
6. Carry the Middlebury College program update letter in hand when entering the U.S.

We intend to add to our [ISSS COVID-19 FAQ & Fall 2020 Updates](#) and anticipate that you will have additional questions. If you need further guidance, please email the ISSS team at iss@middlebury.edu or arrange for an appointment with an advisor through our [calendly](#) online scheduling tool.

We hope this information helps you with your decision. Please reach out to us, if you need further input.

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)
Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont
iss@middlebury.edu / 802-443-5858