

F-1 Visa International Student FAQ

Center for Global Study & Engagement

October 14, 2020

This document addresses *Initial I-20* questions for our FIRST-YEAR F-1 visa students.

DSO = Designated School Official

I deferred to the Spring 2021 semester start...

If you were issued an initial I-20 over the summer, your I-20 has already been deferred to the Spring. You should have received this via email several weeks ago as a PDF attachment. If you did not, please let us know.

If you were never issued an initial I-20 over the summer because you had already chosen to defer, and you still have not received your initial I-20, you should plan to receive it via email from one of our DSO's in the next two weeks. Assuming you have completed the process in Studio Abroad and uploaded all of the necessary documentation, we are working hard to process the last few initial I-20's for everyone starting this Spring 2021.

I deferred to the Fall 2021 semester start...

If you were issued an initial I-20 over the summer, your I-20 has already been deferred to the Spring. You should have received this via email several weeks ago as a PDF attachment. We will defer your I-20 to reflect your new Fall 2021 start sometime in early January. Look for additional communications from us at that time.

If you were never issued an initial I-20 over the summer because you had already chosen to defer, our team of DSO's will plan to issue these early in the Spring 2021 semester. Look for additional communications from us at that time.

I attended high school in the U.S. and already have my F-1 visa. My SEVIS record was transferred to Dickinson over the Summer 2020...

If your SEVIS record was transferred to Dickinson and you were an active student this semester *inside of the U.S.*, your record has been activated and there is no need for further action.

If your SEVIS record was transferred to Dickinson and you are *not located inside the U.S. this semester*, our DSO's were required to leave your record in draft/initial status in SEVIS. The SEVIS Helpdesk has confirmed with us directly that we will be permitted to reinstate your record and print your initial I-20 60 days prior to your new Program Start Date. Your new Program Start Date is currently set for 01/15/2021. 60 prior to that date is Monday, November 16, 2020. One of our DSO's will contact SEVIS on that date to request each of you be reinstated. Please expect to hear from us after that time.

I am attending one of the Dickinson Study Abroad Programs for International Students...

Although you are already a full-time Dickinson student, our DSO's were not permitted to activate you in SEVIS as an F-1 visa student. Because you are a first-year in "initial status," activation can only occur when you have crossed U.S. borders and reported to campus in Carlisle.

If you have not yet received your deferred I-20 with a January Program Start Date, you should expect to receive it in the next two weeks.

I am a full-time online student studying from home...

Although you are already a full-time Dickinson student, our DSO's were not permitted to activate you in SEVIS as an F-1 visa student. Because you are a first-year in "initial status," activation can only occur when you have crossed U.S. borders and reported to campus in Carlisle.

If you have not yet received your deferred I-20 with a January Program Start Date, you should expect to receive it in the next two weeks.

I am a full-time online student studying from inside the U.S. (either on- or off-campus)

Your SEVIS record has been activated and you are considered an "active status" F-1 visa student. If you plan to travel outside of the U.S. before the next semester begins, please reach out to one of our DSO's to discuss your travel risks.

*****If any of you choose to change your plans after President Ensign releases the college decision for the Spring 2021 semester (early November), please know that the team here at CGSE, along with our colleagues across campus, will work closely with you to provide you with everything you need. Reach out to us at any time!**

Helpful Links:

Study in the States: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

I.C.E. COVID-19 Hub: <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>

U.S. travel restrictions: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

Dickinson's COVID-19 Dashboard:

https://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/1434/reopening_dashboard