

# COVID-19 Immigration Implications

## International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)

We recognize that the situation with COVID-19 may be stressful for members of our community, especially those with family and friends affected in other areas of the world. ISSS and the greater CSU community is here to support you. Also, as the virus spreads to more countries, we will need to continue to support one another, to learn from successful strategies in other countries, and to avoid making harmful assumptions about anyone. We need to stick together as a CSU Ram family.

This information is intended for Colorado State University international students and scholars. The information presented here is a general overview. Please discuss your individual circumstances with an advisor in ISSS prior to travel or in advance of any change in your study plans or employment.

### OVERVIEW

#### **What are the COVID-19 travel restrictions issued by the U.S. government?**

On Jan. 31, 2020, President Trump signed [Proclamation 9984](#) titled *Proclamation on Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Persons who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus* (also known as COVID-19).

On Feb. 29, 2020, President Trump signed an additional [Presidential Proclamation](#) titled *Proclamation on the Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Coronavirus* (COVID-19) to include all non U.S.citizens or permanent residents who have been physically present in Iran during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States.

#### **How does the travel restriction apply to U.S. citizens?**

Effective Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020, the following restrictions on U.S. citizens returning from travels in China were implemented:

- Any **U.S. citizen** returning to the United States who had been in **Hubei province** in the 14 days prior to their entry to the United States will be subject to up to 14 days of mandatory quarantine to ensure they have been properly screened and provided medical care as needed.
- Any **U.S. citizen** returning to the United States who had been **anywhere else in mainland China** in the 14 days prior to their entry to the United States will undergo "proactive entry health screening at a select number of ports of entry," and up to 14 days of "monitored self-quarantine" to ensure they've not contracted the virus and do not pose a public health risk.

Effective Monday, March 2, 2020, it should be assumed that these same restrictions will apply to U.S. citizens returning from travels to **Iran**.

#### **How do COVID-19 travel restrictions apply to foreign nationals?**

Effective Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020, [Proclamation 9984](#) suspended entry into the United States of **all non U.S. citizens or permanent residents** (immigrants, nonimmigrants, and other non-U.S. citizens) who

were physically present within the People's Republic of China, excluding the Special Autonomous Regions of Hong Kong and Macau, during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States. However, the travel restriction does **not** suspend entry to any person who is:

1. a lawful permanent resident of the United States;
2. a spouse of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident;
3. a parent or legal guardian of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, provided that the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident is unmarried and under the age of 21;
4. a sibling of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, provided that both are unmarried and under the age of 21;
5. a child, foster child, or ward of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident, or who is a prospective adoptee seeking to enter the United States pursuant to the IR-4 or IH-4 visa classifications;
6. a non U.S. citizen traveling at the invitation of the United States Government for a purpose related to containment or mitigation of the virus;
7. C (transit) or D (air or sea crewmember) nonimmigrants;
8. seeking entry into or transiting the United States pursuant to an A-1, A-2, C-2, C-3 (as a foreign government official or immediate family member of an official), G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1 through NATO-4, or NATO-6 visa;
9. any individual whose travel falls within the scope of section 11 of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement;
10. a non U.S. citizen whose entry would not pose a significant risk of introducing, transmitting, or spreading the virus, as determined by the CDC Director, or his designee;
11. a non U.S. citizen whose entry would further important United States law enforcement objectives, as determined by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or their respective designees based on a recommendation of the Attorney General or his designee; or
12. a non U.S. citizen whose entry would be in the national interest, as determined by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or their designees.

Even though the above categories of individuals are exempted from the travel suspension, they should expect to be screened and/or quarantined upon arrival.

Effective Monday, March 2, 2020, the [Presidential Proclamation](#) (relating to Iran travel) suspended entry into the United States, as immigrants or nonimmigrants, who were physically present within the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States. However, the travel restriction does **not** suspend entry to any non U.S. citizen who is listed under the above-numbered exclusions, in addition to:

1. members of the U.S. Armed Forces and spouses and children of members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

**If I am able to travel to the U.S. even if I have been in China or Iran in the last 14 days, must I enter at a specific airport?**

Yes, DHS has directed "all operators of aircraft to ensure that all flights carrying persons who have recently traveled from, or were otherwise present within, the People's Republic of China only land at one of the following airports":

1. John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York
2. Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Illinois
3. San Francisco International Airport (SFO), California
4. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), Washington

5. Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL), Hawaii
6. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), California
7. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Georgia
8. Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), Virginia
9. Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), New Jersey
10. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), Texas
11. Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW), Michigan

Effective Monday, March 2, 2020, [Department of Homeland Security guidance](#) expanded these arrival restrictions to individuals returning from travels to Iran.

### **What if I need to travel internationally while the restrictions are in place?**

In all circumstances, avoid travel to China and Iran at this time unless you are willing to comply with the restrictions above.

Additionally:

- Ensure you meet the exclusions from the travel restrictions listed above.
- Ensure you have all required documents for reentry to the U.S. (passport, valid visa, etc.).
- Carry clear travel history documentation with you that demonstrates compliance with the travel restriction upon entry to the U.S.
- Expect possible secondary inspection upon reentry to the U.S., as well as possible delays for health screenings in third countries, all requiring extra time and delaying travel.
- Check for travel restrictions to the country you are visiting as well as any countries through which you will transit.

If you have not been in China or Iran in the 14 days prior to your entry to the U.S., the travel restrictions outlined above do not apply to you. Note, though, that circumstances could change suddenly or dramatically between the date of your departure and the date of your return, so be prepared with contingency plans.

### **FAQs for CURRENT STUDENTS, SCHOLARS, FACULTY, AND ACADEMIC ADVISORS**

#### **I am currently in China or Iran and cannot return for classes due to the travel restrictions. What does that mean for me?**

Students should contact their faculty advisor and/or academic advisor to discuss whether any academic contingency plans are feasible while they are abroad. In some cases, it is possible to take classes online while abroad to avoid disruptions and delays. Another option may include obtaining a leave of absence approved by the academic program. Still another option may exist for students who have completed all coursework and are in the research stage of their program, in which case they may be able to enroll in research full-time while abroad (Principal Investigators are reminded to consider possible export control limitations on such research abroad). Once the proposed contingency plan is decided, students should contact ISSS immediately to discuss the immigration implications of this plan.

There are very limited options for students to keep their SEVIS status active while outside the U.S. during an academic term. Absent an option to maintain SEVIS status, ISSS is required by law to end the student's SEVIS status. When students are able to resume studies in the U.S., they must first obtain a

new immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) from ISSS issued under a new SEVIS program. The Department of Homeland Security has yet to make any exceptions for students who are stuck abroad because of the current travel restrictions.

**I am currently in China or Iran and this is my last semester before graduation. What does that mean for me?**

Aside from whether the contingency planning options described above are feasible for completing your program, the other main consequences may be your inability to return to the U.S. at all, as well as the loss of eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT) after the completion of your program. There is currently no regulatory relief for students caught in this situation. Discuss options with an ISSS advisor as soon as possible.

**My I-20/DS-2019 is expiring soon and I do not want to return to China or Iran at this time. What are my options?**

Available options depend on individual circumstances. If you will not complete your academic program by the end of your I-20/DS-2019 end date, you may be eligible for an extension. Other options may include transferring to another university's program, requesting a change of status with USCIS, or departing for a third country, if permissible. Discuss options with an ISSS Advisor well before your program's expiration date.

**I am completing my degree program this spring but will continue my studies in a new degree program at CSU or after transferring to another U.S. university in the fall. Must I leave the country?**

Typically, you are not required to leave the country between academic programs but please discuss your specific situation with an advisor in ISSS. Students should avoid travel to China or Iran if at all possible unless they are willing to accept the travel restrictions above. F-1 and J-1 degree-seeking students are generally permitted to remain in the U.S. during the summer break period, including the summer between completion of one program and the start of a new program. Doing so is not a violation of nonimmigrant status. As long as there is no international travel during this time, no new visa stamp is needed from the U.S. consulate in such case since you are already in the country. A valid visa stamp is only needed at the time of entry into the U.S., with very limited exception.

**I must travel to China or Iran and/or do not have the option to remain in the U.S. over the summer. What does that mean for me?**

You will likely be subject to the travel restrictions and may not be able to return in the fall as planned. If/when the travel restrictions are lifted, there could be difficulty obtaining a commercial flight to return to the U.S. Additionally, if you need a new visa from the U.S. consulate, there could be a backlog at consulates which could increase the time it takes to get a visa.

**What if my program has ended and I am currently in my grace period?**

Unfortunately, there is no regulatory relief available to students in this situation, and such individuals are expected to depart the U.S. by the end of the grace period. Discuss your limited options with an advisor in ISSS immediately, which may include quickly gaining admission to a new degree program at CSU or

another U.S. school and updating or transferring your I-20/DS-2019, requesting a change of status with USCIS, applying for post-completion training, if available, seeking admission to another country other than your home country, or returning to your home country.

**I am a current scholar at CSU (visiting professor, post-doctoral fellow, research associate) and am currently stuck in China or Iran? What should I do?**

In this situation, please contact your CSU supervisor to see if it is possible for you to continue your work remotely. This may be subject to export control regulations, the exact nature of your work, etc. Please keep ISSS informed about your situation.

**FAQs INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS**

**Will admissions continue while travel restrictions are in place?**

Yes, CSU will continue to admit qualified students. We are being flexible regarding delays in providing test results, transcripts, etc., on a case-by-case basis.

**Will ISSS continue issuing immigration documentation to newly admitted students?**

Yes, ISSS continues to issue I-20 (F-1) and DS-2019 (J-1) immigration documents to admitted students.

**Should students currently in the U.S. who plan to transfer and start a new program at CSU in the fall travel to China or Iran before the program start date?**

In all circumstances, such students should avoid travel to China or Iran at this time unless they are willing to comply with the restrictions above.

Students can find additional information, resources, and CSU communications regarding COVID-19 at:  
<https://safety.colostate.edu/coronavirus/>.