

COVID-19 Travel Update

2/26/2020: University of Michigan-related travel to South Korea is now [restricted](#) [1] and personal travel to South Korea is currently discouraged. If you do plan any international travel during the Spring Break, be sure to review the [Spring Break Travel Guidance for International Students in Light of the Coronavirus](#). Have a safe Spring Break!

2/14/2020: [Immigration Status and the Coronavirus](#) and [Spring Break Travel Guidance for International Students in Light of the Coronavirus](#)

Immigration Status and the Coronavirus

F-1 students and F-2 dependents

Currently, the guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding F-1 students pertains to preventing the spread of the virus (e.g., reduced course loads for ill F-1 students) or advising students who were in China and are now unable to (re)enter the U.S. We have received no specific information on options for graduating students who plan to return home to China at the end of the semester, but cannot find flights due to flight cancellations. We also have not received any guidance regarding those whose OPT will end within the next few months and similarly cannot find flights to depart the U.S. during their remaining grace period.

J-1 students, scholars and J-2 dependents

Please contact the International Center if you are a J-1 student or scholar from China and your program is ending prior to the end of the Winter Term. We may be able to extend your program. Your situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis, based on current guidance from the Department of State and in consultation with the Exchange Visitor Program, and with your U-M department (scholars). Those J-1 students or scholars sponsored by agencies outside of U-M (e.g., Fulbright), should consult the program sponsor who issued their Form DS-2019 for advice.

Scenarios and Considerations

- Grace Periods: As a reminder, [F-1 students have a 60-day grace period](#) [2] and [J-1s have a 30-day grace](#)

[period](#) [3], following the end of their programs, which enables them to remain in the U.S. legally during that time.

- **Flight Options:**
 - Chinese students and scholars who wish to travel back home may search for indirect routes (i.e. through another country). However, you may be required to have a visa to travel to or transit through many countries. Many countries are also currently imposing immigration restrictions, such as entry or transit bans and mandatory quarantines for travelers, in an effort to contain the Coronavirus. Purchasing refundable or changeable fares would be advisable because these alternative routes may not be available at the time of the planned travel.
 - Those with flights including stops in China may wish to consider and rebook on different routes. This may add on to the cost of already purchased, non-refundable fares. Contact your airline for options.
- **Practical Training:** In order to extend their time in the U.S., some students may wish to pursue any [Optional Practical Training](#) [4] (F-1) or [Academic Training](#) [5] (J-1) that is available to them and search for employment or volunteer positions within the U.S. Application deadlines need to be adhered to, making this an option that may require immediate action, depending on the student's situation. The current fee associated with the OPT application is \$410.
- **Change of Status:** Apply for a change of status to B-1/B-2 tourist visa (or another viable) status to remain in the U.S. The current fee associated with this application is \$370, which the individuals will bear.

As this is an issue that affects many F-1/F-2 and J-1/J-2 students, scholars, and dependents across the U.S., the IC anticipates there will be some discussion and advocacy in the weeks to come about students and scholars from China whose immigration status is ending soon. It is difficult to predict what will happen and what immigration-related accommodations might be made, but we are actively monitoring official sources and will post and/or send messages when we have definitive information.

This [webpage](#) [6] links to University resources related to the coronavirus (e.g., UHS, Public Affairs). The university's [FAQ](#) [7] is also [translated into Mandarin](#) [8] and will be updated as new information becomes available. In developing these messages, U-M relies on governmental, medical and public health officials as sources for information (not simply media reports) to share with our community. We will continually update resources as more information becomes available regarding immigration status, visas, and the coronavirus.

Spring Break Travel Guidance for International Students in Light of the Coronavirus

The International Center has received several inquiries from students regarding Spring Break plans outside of the U.S. in light of the coronavirus.

At the moment, the only restrictions for (re)entry to the U.S. pertains to those non-immigrants (including F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2) who have spent time in Mainland China recently. This [federal policy](#) [9] will be reviewed and potentially extended in 15-day intervals.

We cannot predict what will happen between now and Spring Break nor can we anticipate the travel related restrictions that may be imposed by another country's government.

Scenarios and Considerations

If you have already purchased a ticket for travel outside of the U.S. or booked a cruise:

- Carefully monitor the news and the [U-M resources](#) [7] to ensure no changes have been made that makes your return to the US riskier.
- Register your travel with the University of Michigan at [this website](#) [10] so we can contact you in the event of an emergency.
- Consider purchasing the U-M GeoBlue International Travel Health insurance for \$1.19 per day. Students may purchase this insurance [here](#) [11].
- Follow the [established guidance](#) [12] pertaining to travel from China.
- If you plan to take a cruise, consult with the cruise line to determine that you have all the documents needed to enter other countries and to return to the U.S.
- If you have concerns that the coronavirus might ruin your vacation, it may be best to cancel your plans.

If you have not purchased an airplane ticket or booked a cruise

- You may wish to purchase a fare that enables you to make changes or cancellations or that is refundable, if you choose to travel outside the U.S.
- Given the unpredictable travel challenges related to the coronavirus, you may wish to spend your vacation this year within the United States (including the U.S. Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico).
- Prior to booking any cruise, consult with the cruise line and make sure that you have the proper immigration documents and visas to enter another country and to return to the U.S.

Whether you travel outside of the U.S. for personal or academic reasons

- If you do leave the U.S. for Spring Break, please register your travel [here](#) [10]. If anything changes over break or we need to get into contact with you, the University will use this registry to contact you. Students traveling within the U.S., including to U.S. territories, may also register their travel.
- If you plan to travel outside the U.S., keep all documentation related to your travels (itinerary, boarding passes, etc.). Confirm your passport is stamped as you enter/depart from the U.S. and any other country you travel to.
- Consult the IC [travel webpage](#) [13] for additional considerations.

Details are still emerging and changes may occur. The University of Michigan is actively monitoring the situation and the International Center will post additional information as it becomes available.

2/5/2020: U-M recently posted answers to [frequently asked questions about the rapidly changing 2019 Novel Coronavirus situation](#) [7]. The FAQ is also available in [Mandarin](#) [8].

On Friday, January 31st, the U.S. government announced [new travel restrictions](#) [9] for foreign nationals who have been in China the past 14 days. These restrictions will be implemented at 5:00 PM EST on February 2, 2020. All foreign nationals who have been in China in the 14 days preceding their planned arrival will be denied entry after these restrictions take effect on February 2, 2020. It is not yet clear how long these restrictions will remain in place.

These restrictions include foreign nationals on non-immigrant visas, including F-1, F-2 and J-1, J-2 students, scholars, and dependents. If you plan to arrive in the United States after these restrictions take effect, please consult your airline about what options may be available to you. If your scheduled arrival will be delayed, please contact the International Center at icenter@umich.edu [14]. We will work with you and your host department on any necessary updates to your immigration documents.

If you are an active F-1 or J-1 international student or scholar who is currently in China, please complete this [Travel Registry form](#) [15].

The details are still emerging and changes may occur. The University of Michigan is actively monitoring the situation. The International Center will post additional information as it becomes available and the University will continue to communicate information and resources on the sites referenced on [this webpage](#) [6].

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/covid-19-travel-update>

Links

- [1] <https://global.umich.edu/travel-resources/warnings-restrictions/south-korea/>
- [2] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/important#grace>
- [3] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/important-information-about-j1-status#grace>
- [4] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/opt>
- [5] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/j1-students/academic-training>
- [6] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/uhs-addresses-coronavirus>
- [7] <https://publicaffairs.vpcomm.umich.edu/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>
- [8] <https://publicaffairs.vpcomm.umich.edu/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/%e9%97%ae%e7%a-%94-%e5%85%b3%e4%ba%8e2019%e6%96%b0%e5%9e%8b%e5%86%a0%e7%8a%b6%e7%97%85%e6%af%92/>
- [9] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/>
- [10] <https://global.umich.edu/travel-resources/register-your-travel/>
- [11] <https://weblogin.umich.edu/?cosign-www.uhs.umich.edu&https://www.uhs.umich.edu/secure/tai-success>
- [12] <https://global.umich.edu/travel-resources/warnings-restrictions/china/>
- [13] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-outside-us-reentry>
- [14] <mailto:icenter@umich.edu>
- [15] https://mcompass.umich.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Link_ID=2F8B304F-EB6F-70-1-B50285339FE7CF23