

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS for F-1 VISA INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## 1. F-1 IMMIGRATION STATUS:

### **Can I go back to my home country and continue taking classes online?**

You may go back to your home country during the spring semester. You can either attend classes and stay in active status or drop all your classes and your I-20 will be terminated. You MUST complete the I-20 TRAVEL REQUEST FORM: <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/TRAVEL-SIGNATURE-FORM> We will mail your signed I-20 to you if you intend to return to the U.S. and you have attended classes. As long as you are making normal progress towards your degree in your home country, you will be allowed back in the U.S.

### **Can I drop all my classes and stay in the United States?**

No. If you have had any classes convert to online, you must still attend those classes in order to stay in the United States. If all your classes were in-person and canceled, please contact ISP.

If you do not want to continue to attend your classes online and you want to return home, you will need to drop your classes using your LACCD Student Portal and submit F-1 Status Withdrawal Form:

<http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/F1-Status-Withdrawal-Form>.

Your I-20 will be terminated and will no longer be valid for reentry to the U.S. If you decide later that you want to return to LACC to finish your program, you will fill out a new application and send an updated bank statement to [iss@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:iss@lacitycollege.edu).

### **Do I need to get my I-20 signed to go back to my home country?**

No, you do not need to get a signature before you leave. We need you to complete the online travel signature form so that we know you are returning home and we will mail you a signed travel I-20 to your home country. You can find the Travel Request form here: <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/TRAVEL-SIGNATURE-FORM>

### **How do I maintain my status in my home country?**

If you return to your home country and want to remain an LACC F1 visa student, you must attend all scheduled classes that are now online and participate in those classes. You will remain in active status and the 5-month rule will not apply for being out of the United States.

### **Will the 5-month rule apply to being out of the country while maintaining status?**

No – you will be allowed to enter the United States after 5 months if you have continued to make progress towards your academic goal (attended classes).

### **I want to travel home and renew my visa in the next few months. Should I do that?**

We understand a difficulty of being in the U.S. on your own. However, if your visa is expiring prior to your return to the U.S. from your home country, we do not recommend traveling at this time. Many United States Embassies are closed right now. Once they reopen, they may be overwhelmed and may not prioritize F-1 visa

issuance. We recommend postponing your travel until winter break - you'll have full two months to travel home and renew your visa.

### **How can I apply for OPT?**

Please contact Marine Petrosyan at: [petrosm@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:petrosm@lacitycollege.edu) for instructions.

### **My I-20 will expire soon, how can I extend my I-20.**

You must complete the I-20 Extension Request Form: <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/I-20-EXTENSION-REQUEST-FORM> and email the request to Marine Petrosyan at [petrosm@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:petrosm@lacitycollege.edu).

### **How do I get permission to drop below 12 units?**

You will need to meet with the Academic Counselor to get an RCL recommendation (Reduce Course Load Authorization). You must complete the RCL form: [http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/RCL-Form\\_SP-2020.pdf](http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/RCL-Form_SP-2020.pdf) and submit to Ms. Keika Stevenson for recommendation.

### **Can I drop below 12 units and remain in status?**

You can drop below 12 units and remain in status only if you have RCL permission from the International Student Department.

### **What if you get exposed to COVID-19, and tested positive, are we allowed to drop our classes without losing our visa status?**

Yes, you can drop your classes without losing your status if you have a documented medical excuse.

## **2. ACADEMICS:**

### **If a class that I need to graduate this semester is now cancelled, what do I do?**

Students who are uncertain about their plans for graduation should contact Academic Counseling department. At the moment, Academic Counseling department is working on creating an online appointment scheduling system; while it is in the process, please email [iss@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:iss@lacitycollege.edu) and indicate **your name, ID number, type of appointment you would like to have (e.g. Phone, Zoom, Cranium Café), and the reason(s) for meeting with your counselor**. Our staff will reach out to you via phone or email for scheduling an appointment. For general questions about your academics (e.g. graduation requirements, transfer requirements, prerequisite clearance, etc.), please visit our [Academic Counseling website](#) for available services, such as Live Chat, or Online Counseling Request.

### **I have not heard from my professor**

Check both your LACCD email and Canvas. Please email the instructor directly to find your instructions to access your classes.

### **I don't know how to get on Canvas**

All LACCD students are advised to take steps now, before March 30, to click on the "Getting Started" link at <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-18585-getting-started-with-canvas-as-a-student> and to also review the online student guide for Canvas at <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701-canvas-student-guide-table-of-contents>.

Students should also visit the "Distance Learning" webpages at their home college for additional resources. There are also many useful YouTube videos available on this topic, including <https://www.youtube.com/user/CanvasLMS>.

If you need help with Canvas, or logging into the Student Portal, call the toll-free Student Help Line at (844) 695-2223, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **I am having trouble signing on to the student portal.**

If you need help with Canvas, or logging into the Student Portal, call the toll-free Student Help Line at (844) 695-2223, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **I was enrolled in an online course that started at the beginning of the semester, can I drop it and get a refund?**

No. If you drop a class that was originally being taught online, you will not get a refund. Also, if dropping the class causes you to fall below 12 units, you will be out of status and might have your I-20 terminated. The refund applies to classes that were face-to-face and has now moved to online due to the Coronavirus crisis.

### **I don't know how to contact ISP**

Please go to the Cranium Café from your Student Portal to chat with us online or email us at [iss@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:iss@lacitycollege.edu)

### **How can I make an appointment with the Academic Counselor Ms. Keika Stevenson?**

You need to email to: [iss@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:iss@lacitycollege.edu) to schedule an appointment or you can email George at: [agoiang@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:agoiang@lacitycollege.edu) and/or Agunik at: [sarksya@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:sarksya@lacitycollege.edu) to schedule an appointment.

### **Can I come to the campus to talk to you?**

No. There is no staff at the campus. Please chat with us through Zoom or email us at [iss@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:iss@lacitycollege.edu)

### **I ordered transcripts to be sent to a school. Will there be any delays?**

No. As of now, our processing time has not changed. All transcripts will be sent out in 7-10 business days for regular processing and 1-2 business days for rush.

### **How can I order transcripts?**

Transcripts can still be ordered in the following methods:

- If you know your student ID number:
  - Log on to the **student portal**.

- Select "Main Menu" from the left bar menu.
- In the "Transcripts & Enrollment Verifications" box, select "LA City students."
- Select "Los Angeles City College" from the dropdown menu.
- Select the "Submit" button.
- You are now on the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) website. Read the information and select the "Order or Track a Transcript" option and carefully follow the instructions for ordering transcripts.
- If you DO NOT know your student ID number
  - Visit the **NSC website**.
  - On the home page, select "Order or Track a Transcript" from the "Order-Track-Verify" menu on the top right.
  - Select "Los Angeles City College" from the dropdown menu.
  - Select the "Submit" button.

### **I would like to transfer to another school in Fall 2020. How can I do that?**

Please follow the usual procedure for transfer. Once a college or a university sends you an acceptance letter, fill out the TRANSFER REQUEST form, <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Resources/International-Students/documents/REQUEST-TO-TRANSFER-OUT-FORM>

### **How can I petition to graduate?**

Please visit the Academic Counseling website and submit [Graduation Petition request](#) online. You must answer all the questions and also attach any transcripts from institutions outside of LACCD that you are using to meet your graduation requirements. A counselor will evaluate your petition and staff will contact you about the status.

### **Is graduation still going to happen?**

Yes. So far, plans have not changed, and Commencement will be held on June 9.

If a decision is made regarding the cancellation of the graduation ceremony, students will be notified through multiple platforms (Student Townhall, email, and LACC social media).

## **3. REFUNDS:**

### **I want to drop my classes, what should I do?**

Go to the Student Portal and log in.

Click on the Manage Classes tile/icon

From the drop-down menu, click on the Drop Classes option

Select class or classes you wish to drop, confirm and submit.

If you still choose to drop your classes as a result of the Coronavirus, we will work with you to make sure your academic record is not impacted. This will include the use of excused withdrawals, which do not impact your GPA for transfer or degree purposes. There is no need to make a request for this action. The college will convert your withdrawal (W) to an excused withdrawal (EW) automatically. This will also trigger a refund to your student account, if applicable.

If I paid for my classes using cash, personal check or credit card and later need to withdraw from the class due to the coronavirus outbreak, can I receive a refund?

Yes. A refund will be automatically processed for all students that request an excused withdrawal on or after March 20, 2020.

**If my class is cancelled, would I be able to get a refund?**

Yes, you will be eligible for the full refund if the class is cancelled. Please see the link for **Excused Withdrawal (EW)**: <https://lacitycollege.edu/Students/Online-Assistance>

**How is the refund sent to the student?**

It's going to be automatic refund sent to the students, they don't need to fill out any refund form.

Students who paid their fees by credit card they will receive the refund to that credit card.

Students who paid their fees by cash, check refund will be issued to them by mail. Please contact Business Office at: <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Administrative-Services/Business-Office/Department-Home>

**Is there a tuition discount for classes converted online?**

No, there is no tuition discount for online classes.

**If there's any refunds for parking permits?**

The refund would be a partial refund for the students who are going to transfer to another university or graduate from LACC. However, if you are going to continue for next semester your Spring parking permit will be valid for Summer of 2020 or Fall 2020. You can contact Business Office at:

<http://www.lacitycollege.edu/Administrative-Services/Business-Office/Department-Home>

**How long does it take to get the refund from a drop class?**

Refund is done by weekly. You can contact Business Office staff: Susanna Abramian Supervisor ([abramis@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:abramis@lacitycollege.edu)), Leticia Rodriguez Torres ([rodrigli@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:rodrigli@lacitycollege.edu)), Varduhi Hamasyan ([hamasyv@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:hamasyv@lacitycollege.edu)), Ishkanoui Avanesian ([avanesi@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:avanesi@lacitycollege.edu)) and Vanessa Peralta ([peraltvm@lacitycollege.edu](mailto:peraltvm@lacitycollege.edu))

**4. MEDICAL INSURANCE:**

**Do I still have my health insurance? How can I find it?**

Yes, all students enrolled for Spring semester have medical insurance through Student Insurance and ID cards can be obtained by going to <https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/student-home.php?idField=1450>

**Is testing for COVID-19 covered under my Student Insurance plan?**

Yes, medically necessary, diagnostic testing for the coronavirus is covered under your plan at no charge to you. This means you will not be charged a copay or deductible.

### **Is treatment for COVID-19 (coronavirus) covered under my Student Insurance plan?**

Yes!

### **How do I know if I need to get tested?**

If you believe you may have been exposed to the coronavirus and think you need to be tested, please contact your doctor's office to discuss your symptoms and determine next steps. If you don't have a doctor, you can contact Student Insurance or your state or local health department for assistance.

### **Is there a specific place I must go for testing?**

We recommend that you connect with your local county health department to obtain information about where to be tested. If you need help finding your state health department, please contact Student Insurance and they would be happy to help!

### **Will I be covered if my test comes back as positive?**

Yes! It is covered under the same maximum benefit listed on your plan summary and plan brochure. In the event you need treatment, those services are covered according to policy guidelines. You may wish to seek treatment with an in-network provider as cost sharing may apply.

### **How do I contact Student Insurance?**

There are several ways you can contact them:

By Calling: (617) 769-1256 or (833) 818 – 7090

Email: [info@gallagherstudent.com](mailto:info@gallagherstudent.com)

Can I go to the Student Health Center to be tested for coronavirus?

No, the Student Health Center does not have coronavirus tests. If you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, severe illness), remain at home and call your doctor for instructions. If you don't have a doctor, you can contact Student Insurance for assistance.

## **5. OTHERS:**

### **Will the library, showers in kinesiology, or other buildings be open on March 30th?**

No, our campus is currently scheduled to open on May 4. That day is a soft date as we learn more about other COVID-19 cases in Southern California. The May 4th date may be extended as more cases are reported.

### **Are there any emergency scholarships for International students?**

Please contact the Foundation office for information at:

[http://www.laccfoundation.org/student\\_support\\_application/](http://www.laccfoundation.org/student_support_application/)

## **6. OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

**I don't have internet access at home, what can I do?**

Use a telephone to call or use a smart phone to access the following information per provider. The District cannot guarantee the current status of any of these offers. We have posted some information on our website too, at [www.laccd.edu/coronavirus](http://www.laccd.edu/coronavirus).

Internet Service Providers with Available Options:

Charter/Spectrum:

Information Link: <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>

How to Apply: Students/Faculty will need to call to apply 1-844-488-8395

Note: Wait times are high right now. 45min to 1.5 hours

Internet Essentials by Comcast:

Information Link: <https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19>

Apply by April 30, 2020.

You are not an existing Xfinity Internet customer and have not subscribed to Xfinity Internet in the last 90 days.

How to Apply: Visit <https://apply.internetessentials.com/>

Xfinity – Wi-Fi by Comcast

All Xfinity WiFi Public Hotspots are now open to everyone on the “xfinitywifi” SSID.

Public hotspots can be found in small/medium businesses and outdoors in commercial areas.

Non-Xfinity subscribers need to accept Terms and Conditions to access the network and repeat when requested to continue to receive free unlimited access. Please refer to the map below for available public hotspots.

How to find a hotspot:

Go to: <https://wifi.xfinity.com/>

Enter your Zip Code or City. A map will show the closest locations. Instructions on how to connect are provided under the “Ready to Connect?” Section under the map

## 7. HOTLINES:

Crisis Information Lines

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

Crisis Line for those abroad

<https://www.crisistextline.org/international>

Suicide Prevention Line

(800) 273-8255

Anxiety

<https://www.crisistextline.org/get-help/anxiety>

Depression

<https://www.crisistextline.org/get-help/depression>

Loneliness

<https://www.crisistextline.org/get-help/loneliness>

Locate all other help lines

<https://www.crisistextline.org/texting-in>