Guidance for Spring 2026 New International Students with Initial Status or Transfer Pending I-20 Issue Reason

International Student Services
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Are you currently in the U.S.?

NO

Is your F-1 visa valid?
*If you are Canadian or Bermudan, please follow the **YES** channel

NO

1. Apply for your visa prior to traveling to the U.S. Schedule the earliest available appointment and then request an expedite appointment.

2. Review global travel advisories.

Will you be on campus for the upcoming semester?

NO

If you cannot enter the U.S. by January 20, **CHOOSE ONE**. Your I-20 program start date must be updated to a later semester.

1. Explore online enrollment options

   • Submit the New F-1 Change of Information form for ISS to properly update your immigration document.

2. Explore changing your semester of admission and do not enroll for the upcoming semester. **You may have to reapply for admission.** If you take courses at another institution, you may also have to reapply. Please contact your unit below for readmission information.

   • Submit the New F-1 Change of Information form for ISS to properly update your immigration document.

Undergraduate students: Contact onwisconsin@admissions.wisc.edu

Graduate/Professional students: Contact your program coordinator

VISP/ Special students: Contact VISP@dcs.wisc.edu

YES

Before your I-20 start date and after you arrive in the U.S.:

1. Complete International Student Orientation (ISO) and ISS check-in in Terra Dotta.

2. Enroll full-time.

See the enrollment table.

We encourage you to review the Resources on Immigration Issues web page where you can find the most updated information on current policies, and resources offered through the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

YES

YES

Will you stay in the U.S. for the upcoming semester?

NO

CHOOSE ONE before January 20. Your I-20 start date must be updated to a future semester.

1. Explore online enrollment options

   • Submit the New F-1 Change of Information form for ISS to properly update your immigration document.

2. Explore changing your semester of admission and do not enroll for the semester. **You may have to reapply for admission.** If you take courses at another institution, you may also have to reapply. Please contact your unit below for readmission information.

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YES

Before your I-20 start date or after you arrive in the U.S.:

1. Complete International Student Orientation (ISO) and ISS check-in in Terra Dotta.
2. Enroll full-time for the upcoming semester.

See the enrollment table.

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT TABLE

Full-time enrollment or approved ISS Reduced Course Load (RCL) is required for your F-1 immigration status.

• Undergraduate students: minimum 12 credits (at least 9 credits must be "in-person")

• Graduate students: minimum 8 credits (at least 5 credits must be "in-person")

• Graduate TA/PA 33%: minimum 6 credits (at least 3 credits must be "in-person")

• Graduate TA/PA 50%: minimum 4 credits (at least 1 credit must be "in-person")

• Graduate RA 33%-50%: minimum 8 credits (at least 5 credits must be "in-person")

• Dissertator: minimum 3 credits (at least 3 credits must be "in-person")

Exploring Online Enrollment Options

UW–Madison has a limited number of online courses each semester. You may work with your academic dean's office to see if there are online courses appropriate for your degree program. However, online courses may not be an option.