

SEVP COVID-19 F-1 Guidance

Meredith College and the Office of International Programs (OIP) continue to monitor the latest developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our communities at home and abroad. The health, safety, and well-being of our students are of paramount importance to us. The below FAQ was developed to keep our new and continuing students informed about flexibilities to the F-1 regulations due to COVID-19.

****On April 18, 2022 SEVP [announced](#) a continuation of their COVID-19 flexibilities for the 2022/2023 academic year**** Please note that these flexibilities vary depending on an individual's status as a 'continuing' or 'initial' student. Please review the appropriate section below to determine the relevant requirements given your situation:

"NEW" F-1 STUDENTS

Who is considered a "new" F-1 student?

Students who gained F-1 status *after* SEVP made their original COVID-19 flexibilities on March 9th, 2020.

Can I start my studies at Meredith at this time?

New international students may enter the United States to begin their academic program, as long as their classes are not 100% online. This means that new international students must have **at least one in-person class in their schedules**. This class can be fully in-person or hybrid (mix of online and in-person instruction).

Can I take a fully online course load?

New F-1 students may not enter the United States to enroll in a fully online course load.

What if I come to Meredith and start the semester in person, but classes unexpectedly move to fully online during the semester?

SEVP's guidance states that F-1 students who are present and studying in the United States WILL be eligible to continue their studies fully online and remain in the United States should Meredith College have to shift to an entirely online format.

Can I take a fully online course load from outside the United States?

Technically yes - students do not need an I-20 or an Active SEVIS record to enroll in courses from outside the United States. HOWEVER. Meredith College is teaching the majority of classes in person, so it is unlikely that students will be able to find many courses to take online from abroad.

CONTINUING F-1 STUDENTS

Who is considered a “continuing” F-1 student?

Students who were in F-1 status at the time SEVP made their original COVID-19 flexibilities on March 9th, 2020 and have maintained F-1 status since that time (this includes SEVIS transfer and SEVIS change of level students).

Can I take a fully online course load at Meredith from inside the United States?

Yes. SEVP’s [COVID-19 flexibilities](#) allow continuing F-1 students to take a fully online course load from within the United States during the COVID-19 emergency (at this time, SEVP’s COVID flexibilities run through the 2022-2023 academic year).

Can I take a fully online course load at Meredith from outside the United States? What happens to my SEVIS record?

Technically yes. SEVP’s COVID flexibilities allow continuing F-1 students to enroll in a fully online course load from outside the United States. Your SEVIS record would remain active so long as you maintained full-time enrollment. HOWEVER. Meredith College is teaching the majority of classes in person, so it is unlikely that students will be able to find many courses to take online from abroad, much less a full course load, which is required to keep the SEVIS record active.

I am a continuing F-1 student, but I left the United States during COVID. My F-1 visa has since expired. Am I still eligible to renew my visa?

According to SEVP’s COVID-19 flexibilities, international students who were enrolled in a full course of study in the United States on March 9, 2020, and who decided to leave the country remain eligible for a visa since their guidance allows continuing F-1 students to enroll in a full online course of study from inside the United States or from abroad. However, please remember that whether or not you will be issued or denied a visa is based on the discretion of the U.S. Department of State.

What if I am outside of the United States for more than 5 months?

Continuing F-1 students may maintain their F-1 status and keep ‘active’ SEVIS records if they’re outside the United States for more than 5 months during the COVID-19 flexibility period, as long as they continue to enroll in a full time course load.