

Key Questions from CGE Information Session (June 25, 2021)

LATE ARRIVAL QUESTIONS

Q1: What about the FSU Graduate School Orientation? When is it and what if I miss it?

Q2: I am a graduate student. I cannot arrive until after the start of fall semester and my department offered me an assistantship. What should I do?

Q3: I received my I 20 and I got a visa interview slot, but I got it for August 25th, but my start date of my graduate program is on August 12th. What can be done?

Q4: I am a graduate student. Can I skip my department's orientation as long as I arrive before classes begin on August 23?

A: Following answers for all four of the above questions.

- You WILL NEED to communicate directly with your academic department if you cannot arrive by the first day of class on August 23 OR by the required academic orientation session. A late arrival may impact your ability to be appointed on an assistantship so make sure you have clarified everything with your academic department before planning to arrive for fall semester.
- Graduate students should talk to their departments about attendance at departmental orientation sessions for new students. These are separate from the CGE orientation and the Graduate School orientation.
- The Graduate School Orientation is available online <https://gradschool.fsu.edu/newcurrent-students/graduate-schools-new-graduate-student-orientation>
- If you will arrive after the program start date on your I-20, please contact Quinn O'Brien in the CGE at qobrien@fsu.edu so a revised I-20 can be sent to you.

Q5: I plan to arrive in the US at the end of July and visit friends in another city. What do I need to tell the CGE about this time in the US before arriving at FSU?

- A. You do not have to submit the CGE Arrival Confirmation form (in [NoleStart](#) under Newly Admitted Students/Required Forms) until you arrive in Tallahassee. Therefore, you may arrive up to 30 days prior to the program start date on your I-20 and visit other sites in the US before coming to FSU.

VISA PROCESS AND VISA APPOINTMENT QUESTIONS

Q1: Do I have to pay the SEVIS fee before I go for my visa appointment?

- A. You can make your visa appointment before you pay your SEVIS fee but you must pay the fee before the actual appointment. We recommend that you pay at least 3 days in advance of your appointment. The SEVIS fee is associated with your SEVIS number. In a normal SEVIS transfer, the SEVIS number stays the same so no new fee.

Q2: Do I have to pay another SEVIS fee if I am transferring to FSU from another university?

- A. No, if you are transferring your SEVIS record to FSU you do not pay a new SEVIS fee. Your SEVIS number remains the same.

There is a lot of information about the SEVIS fee on the U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement website: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq>

Q3: My visa appointment is for November and my request for an expedited appointment has gone unanswered. What should I do?

- A. You can try contacting the consulate again, and you can continue to look online for an earlier appointment date. We understand this is extremely frustrating but know that there is a high demand for visas and limited appointments available.

Q4: I already have my student visa. What if my passport expires in June 2022? How does that affect my I-20 and visa?

- A. Your passport must be valid for 6 months at the time you enter the U.S. You must be sure and extend your passport before it expires because it should always be valid while you're in the U.S. You can later use the visa in your expired passport and carry it with your new/extended passport.

Q5: Are electronic Bank statements enough for the visa interview or do we need an original stamped document from the bank?

- A. You can take copies of printed bank statements to the appointment, but the visa officer doesn't usually ask for them. Don't present any documents that the visa officer doesn't request. We recommend that you have paper copies of any documents you think you might need to show the visa officer. Do not rely on electronic documents on your phone.

Q6: The Embassy/Consulate in my country is not accepting requests for expedited visa appointments. Is there any possibility that FSU can send email to embassy to accept it?

- A. If the Embassy/Consulate has stated that they are not going to honor requests for expedited appointments, FSU does not have the authority to reverse the decision. If the Embassy/Consulate will consider expedite requests with supporting documents, the CGE or your department could write a letter confirming the dates of orientation or the beginning of classes.

TIPS FROM STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE VISA INTERVIEW

- Make sure you know about FSU and the mascot since I was asked that in the interview. “Seminoles” is the nickname used by Florida State University students and others associated with the university who call themselves “Noles” for short. The mascots are Osceola (representing the historical Seminole leader) and Renegade (an Appaloosa horse). Seminole is the name of a Native American tribe in Florida.
- Make sure you know about FSU and your academic department and reasons why you chose to attend this university.
- Make sure you know something about Tallahassee, the capital of Florida.

TRANSFERS:

Q1: What if my current school international advisor doesn't reply to my I-20 transfer inquiry? I emailed them 2 weeks ago and even contacted the principal a few days ago. Still haven't heard back from either. Is there any way that FSU CGE can officially request I-20 from my current school?

A. Email Quinn O'Brien, gobrien@fsu.edu and request his assistance.

Q2: I am transferring to FSU but the I-20 I received from FSU says 'transfer pending'. What more do I need to do.

A. When you arrive at FSU and submit the CGE Arrival Confirmation Form (in NoleStart under Newly Admitted Students/Required Forms) The CGE will “register” your SEVIS record and issue a new “Continued Attendance” I-20 with remarks showing that the transfer is complete. You must report to the CGE within 15 days of the start of classes.

Q3: My EAD card expires July 4th. My Driver's license expires too. I use it as my travel document within the US. Can I travel using my passport even though my ViSA is expired? inside the US, and I'm not sure whether I'll have my new I20 then since I am a transfer student.

A. Yes, you can use your passport to prove your identity, when necessary, when traveling in the U.S. You can use your valid passport and I-20 to apply for a Florida driver license or extend your Florida license if the CGE has “completed” your transfer.

Q4: I am a transfer student and I received an I-20 but it has not been signed. I left the United States to renew my visa, will that be a problem?

A. No, that is not a problem. An I-20 issued as “Transfer-Pending” does not need a DSO (CGE advisor) signature on page 2. You won't need a travel signature on page 2 until you are an enrolled student at FSU. You are correct that you need to renew your visa if you are outside the U.S. and your visa has expired.

Q5: I am a transfer student from Tallahassee Community College living in Tallahassee. Do I have to submit the arrival confirmation document?

- A. Yes, we need the Arrival Confirmation form from everyone. Part of the transfer and SEVIS registration process is making sure your address is in myFSU correctly. If you follow the instructions on the Arrival Confirmation form, we will have your address so we can "register" your SEVIS record and "complete" the SEVIS transfer.

CGE and FSU Orientations:

Q1: Will there be another orientation after August 12 (graduates) and August 17 (undergraduates) since my arrival is after orientation?

Q2: Do I have an option of attending the CGE in person orientation or the online one?

Q3: Will the CGE orientation sessions be recorded?

Answer to all of the above:

- A. The CGE orientation is highly recommended but not required. There will be online components of both the August 12 and August 17 orientations. You can participate remotely. Pre-arrival videos will provide most of the information we usually include in orientations. They will be posted in the next few weeks. We will hold in person orientations in September to give all of you an opportunity to meet your advisors and attend a Question/Answer session. This will also be a social opportunity for you to meet other new international students.

Q4: What if I do not arrive in time for the FSU Graduate Orientation?

- A. The FSU graduate school has an online orientation that graduate students can access now at <https://gradschool.fsu.edu/newcurrent-students/graduate-schools-new-graduate-student-orientation>

PLEASE NOTE: In addition to the CGE Orientation and the FSU Graduate Student Orientation, graduate students also attend orientation in their academic departments.

Q5. What about undergraduate orientations and registration?

- A. Undergraduate students (including undergraduate transfer students) must attend FSU Orientations offered through FSU New Student and Family Programs. This is when you enroll in classes. <https://dsst.fsu.edu/nsfp/orientation>

FSU HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH FORMS

Q1: Is it mandatory to buy the health insurance offered by FSU or can we also buy another insurance plan?

- A. You can buy another plan but it must include the coverage mandated by the State of Florida for international students. See the requirements here <https://studentinsurance.fsu.edu/international-students>. If you buy an outside insurance you will complete the insurance waiver form at <https://studentinsurance.fsu.edu/insurance-requirement> (click "I already have health insurance") to verify that you have required insurance meeting the state requirements.

Q2: When is proof of health insurance and the completed immunization form due to FSU?

- A. You should complete the FSU Immunization form required from all students and also show proof of health insurance which meets the state requirements (<https://studentinsurance.fsu.edu/international-students>) by the time you arrive in Tallahassee. You must have purchased insurance and submitted the immunization form before enrolling in classes.

FSU TUITION AND FEES

Q1: What is the deadline for paying FSU tuition and fees?

- A. These are due by the end of the second week of class. Information on how to pay is here: <https://studentbusiness.fsu.edu/how-pay>. Students with tuition paid by their government or an agency must complete the Third Party Agency Billing Agreement every semester by the fifth day of classes. <https://studentbusiness.fsu.edu/how-pay/third-party-billings>

COVID VACCINATION AND COVID TESTING QUESTIONS:

(See the CGE International Travel 7 Visa Updates for more details about vaccination and quarantine: <https://cge.fsu.edu/travel-update>)

Q1: If I have already received two doses of a WHO approved vaccine , do I still need to be Quarantined?

- A. If you are fully vaccinated upon arrival to FSU, it is recommended that you self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms but you do not have to quarantine. You should take a viral test 3-5 days after arriving. COVID tests are free for students and available at FSU's Tucker Center by appointment at <https://uhs.fsu.edu/coronavirus/testing/FSU>

Q2: Can I get vaccinated after arriving at FSU?

- A. If you are not fully vaccinated when you arrive to FSU, you are encouraged to self-quarantine for 7-10 days taking a COVID test after 3- 5 days. You can then sign up online for an appointment to receive your first of two COVID vaccinations at the FSU Tucker Center, <https://vaccine.fsu.edu/>.

Q3: If I receive only one dose of a two dose COVID vaccination before leaving my home country can I get the second dose after arriving at FSU?

- A. If the vaccine you receive in your home country is Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 (e.g., COMIRNATY, Tozinameran), or Moderna, you would have the option of getting the second vaccine upon arrival. FSU currently only carries the Pfizer vaccine at the FSU COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic and we do not have Moderna, but you should be able to obtain it in the community at a site that offers it. [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) will assist students in locating a vaccination site near them and is searchable/filterable by vaccine type.

Q4: If I receive one dose of a COVID vaccine before leaving my home country that is not available in the US, can I get a second dose of a different vaccine in the US?

- A. If the first dose of a COVID vaccine from your home country is not approved by the World Health Organization (WHO), then it is not recommended that you receive any COVID vaccines at FSU.

If you receive one dose of a WHO approved COVID-19 vaccine before arriving at FSU, then we would offer a complete FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine series, such as Pfizer, to you for revaccination. There is a minimum interval of 28 days between the dose of the WHO approved vaccine and the 1st dose of a Pfizer or Moderna Vaccine. In order to receive a complete FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine series, students will need to provide documentation of receipt of the WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccine (please see examples below) at the vaccine clinic appointment in order to verify the minimum 28-day interval is observed. If the student is unable to provide documentation with date of receipt of the WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccine, they will need to wait 28-days from their date of arrival in order to schedule the first dose of the FDA-authorized vaccine series.

CURRENT LIST OF WHO APPROVED COVID-19 Vaccines (in addition to Pfizer and Moderna):

- AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., Covishield, Vaxzevria)
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine
- Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine
- Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine

Q2: Is it ok for students from countries with travel restrictions to enter the USA without quarantining 14 days out of home country?

- A. Yes, it is ok. If you are a new F-1 student coming from Schengen area countries, the UK, Ireland, China, India, Brazil, South Africa, or Iran, you may enter the U.S. directly and do not need to quarantine for 14 days in a non-restricted country. However you may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date on your I-20. F-1 students have an automatic National Interest Exception. J-1 students coming to the U.S. from any of those countries must obtain a National Interest Exception from a U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Q3: Do I have to wear a mask in Tallahassee or at FSU?

- A. There is no requirement to wear a mask in Florida or at FSU. Most stores and businesses no longer require masks. You should be prepared to wear a mask if you go to a medical office or enter a business states that masks are required.

HOUSING IN TALLAHASSEE

Q1: I want to live on campus at FSU but I missed the application deadline. Can the CGE help me get on campus housing?

- A. On campus housing at FSU is filled to capacity and over 120 students with contracts were just told they would not be receiving a room assignment for fall. The CGE cannot help with getting you on campus since there are no rooms available. The majority of all FSU students and international students live off campus.

Q2: Will the CGE help me find off campus housing?

- A. We have a comprehensive resource page about off campus housing to help guide you locate housing that other international students have recommended. Please see <https://cge.fsu.edu/living-tallahassee/housing>.

Please note that there are two types of apartment leases: Group leases meaning you must find one or more roommates to sign the lease with you. Individual leases mean that you sign a lease for a private room and bath in an apartment with three or four bedrooms and the other rooms are filled with students who also sign individual leases. This is a good option if you do not know anyone with whom you can share a group lease and apartment.

Please pay attention to the location of the apartment complexes listed since some are within walking distance of FSU and others require using the bus system or a car.

Q3: If I live off campus does that mean I do not have to pay the housing fee?

- A. You will be responsible for paying your rent, utilities and food if you live off campus. FSU does not charge a housing fee as part of tuition/fees.