



ISAP May 2021 Newsletter

International Student Admissions and Programs (ISAP)

westga.edu/isap

Published monthly to provide reminders about immigration regulations, services, programs, and opportunities for involvement.

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CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Our hats are off to you! Your achievement of earning a degree in the United States from the University of West Georgia is a major accomplishment!! We recognize and honor all the ways you have sacrificed and overcome unique challenges to reach your goal, especially given the events of last year. We wish you all the best in your future whether you are returning home, pursuing OPT or staying in the US for another degree!

Here are your options if you are graduating May 2021:

- a. Depart the U.S. within your Grace period
 - F1 Students: 60 days after the end date on your I-20.
 - J1 Students: 30 days after the end date on your DS-2019.
- b. Apply for Work Authorization within your Grace period
 - F1 Students: OPT = Optional Practical Training*
- c. Apply for a Change of Level within your grace period.
- d. Apply for a Change of Status within your grace period.

Note: If the date on your I-20 goes beyond your graduation date, your I-20 will be shortened by ISAP within 2 weeks.

***WHAT IS OPT?**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an optional benefit of your F1 student visa that grants employment authorization up to 12 months anywhere in the US for a job or internship related to your degree. If you just graduated, the OPT application period closes June 30th. You cannot depart the U.S., then re-enter to apply for OPT. This authorization is an excellent opportunity to gain work

experience and expand on the knowledge of your degree. Details are on the [ISAP International Student Employment page](#).

STATUS EXTENSIONS, GRACE PERIODS, AND SUMMER ENROLLMENT

NEED AN I-20 EXTENSION?

Check the end date on your I-20. If you will not graduate by the end date, ISAP can extend it, but only before the expiration date. Afterwards, there is a \$410 government fee, and you may be detained upon re-entry if you have departed.

Graduating but not staying for OPT? You have an automatic 60-day grace period to stay in the U.S. Please see details at [Current Students Maintaining Status](#)

STAYING IN THE US OVER SUMMER?

Continuing students may enroll in classes full-time, part-time, or not at all. If you are enrolled, you may work on campus up to 40 hours per week.

RETURNING AFTER SUMMER?

Make sure to request a valid travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 prior to departure. Make sure your passport, visa and I-20 / DS-2019 are valid before re-entering the U.S.

TAX FILING SEASON 2021 (FOR YEAR 2020) | DEADLINE: May 17, 2021

Both Federal and State of Georgia tax filing deadlines are extended until May 17th, 2021. Everyone who was in the U.S. even 1 day in 2020 has at least 1 required form (form 8843 – takes 5 minutes to complete), regardless of income. ISAP offers a free Sprintax code to prepare your non-resident forms.

What do I do? Where's the tax info? [International Student Taxes](#)

Most Common Tax Question:

I'm not a US citizen so what if I don't file any tax forms?

- If the U.S. or Georgia owes you money, you won't get it.
- If you owe U.S. taxes and don't pay them, future visas could be denied and you could owe late fees.

- If you ever apply for a future U.S. visa and you can't document your tax forms, your visa could be denied.

Additional Information

- Quick reminder: **Form 1098-T (T=Tuition):** It's for citizens and permanent residents only, but all students receive the form. It's not for *nonresident tax returns*. However, the form may be useful for your personal records in case your home country's tax system asks you to document your foreign tuition expenses.
- **Regarding Form 1042-S** To get your 1042-S you need to email the Office of Student Accounts and Billing Services at studentaccounts@westga.edu
- **Need the Sprintax Code?** Please email rashikaw@westga.edu

HYBRID AND ONLINE ENROLLMENT – UPDATE

We have received guidance that the U.S. government is extending its current guidance on online learning for the 2021-2022 academic year. International students will be able to continue their flexibility to enroll in online classes and not be limited to just one online class per term.

Inside the U.S?

For Fall 2021, one on-campus class is required if you decided to be inside the U.S.

Outside the U.S?

We can maintain your status so long as you maintain full enrollment (12 credit hours for undergraduate. 9 credit hours for graduate). Also 1 on-campus class, please confirm with the professor that you can do the class remotely.

IMPORTANT PAYMENT DEADLINES

Please see the [Office of Student Accounts and Billing](#) (former Bursar Office) for details.

COVID VACCINE CARD AND VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

Vaccine Cards: Once you have received both doses of the covid-19 vaccine, you should protect your card. We suggest you get the card laminated from [UWG Pub & Print](#)

Be sure to make at least two copies, and keep the original somewhere safe, like your passport or social security card. It's not something you need to walk around with.

UWG Vaccine Event: UWG will host a vaccination event next week at the UWG Coliseum for students to receive the [Pfizer-BioNTech](#).

All UWG students may request an appointment to receive the vaccine on Friday, May 7. Dose quantities are limited, and appointments must be requested no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 6. Please use [this link](#) to request an appointment.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



UWG works with StudyUSA to help international students find and apply to UWG. Study USA is offering a **\$1000 scholarship** based on a short survey. If selected, your comments may be used on their website as well. Here's the >> [survey to enter the scholarship](#) **We encourage you to Go For IT!**

The survey:

- Has no essay requirement
- Is open to all currently enrolled international students
- The money can be used however you wish (taxes apply as it would be considered income)
- Winner to be announced in December 2021

TRAVEL SIGNATURE REMINDER FOR YOUR I-20 OR DS-2019

If you plan to travel abroad after this semester, don't forget to request an updated travel signature by ISAP if your last one is more than 6 months old.

Also be sure to view the [coronavirus travel guidelines](#) on the CDC website as you could potentially be unable to return to the U.S.



Please review our [travel information](#) page also before booking any international travel

CONNECT WITH ISAP



- **Follow ISAP on IG. Click the << Logo**
- **International Student Admissions & Programs (ISAP) @ UWG**
1st Floor, Mandeville Hall | Front Campus Drive
- **Email Us :** global@westga.edu Include your 917 and full name
- **Call Us:** 678-839-4780
- **Chat Live with Us at:** www.westga.edu/isap