

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Viterbi Faculty
From: Erik A. Johnson, Vice Dean for Academic Programs
Date: September 3, 2024
Subject: F-1 Students' Physical Attendance in Classes



As we start this new academic year, it is important to remind us all of USC's in-person requirements for F-1 international students: US immigration regulations require physical in-person class attendance for students on F-1 visas during the Fall and Spring semesters (and Summer if it is their first semester).

USC's Office of International Services (OIS) has informed the Viterbi School that the federal government's US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has begun auditing the physical location of our F-1 international students, resulting in students receiving Requests for Evidence (RFE) that, in some cases, uncovered cases of non-compliance that jeopardize these students' current and future immigration status. In addition, OIS has noted that several countries will not recognize foreign degrees if students have taken coursework remotely during their time at the university.

To ensure that students are in compliance with F-1 in-person regulations, Viterbi has been advised by OIS that students, during the Fall and Spring semesters (and during Summer if that is the students' first term on an initial I-20), may not:

1. participate in internships away from the USC area (defined as Los Angeles County, Ventura County and Orange County);
2. take online DEN@Viterbi courses; nor
3. be granted special online accommodations by faculty to participate remotely in on-campus course sections.

As during past years, **students may reach out to you for additional flexibility or remote learning requests. Please refrain from making such accommodations as they may jeopardize the immigration status of these students** (*e.g.*, they may then be denied post-graduation Occupational Practical Training [OPT], the OPT STEM extension, or further visa or green-card applications). Students who need exam or attendance accommodations related to accessibility and illness should go through the university's Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) office to receive approval for such accommodations.

When students reach out to you for guidance, please direct them to the VASE Academic Services and Programs team (<https://viterbigrad.usc.edu/academic-advisement/#academicAdvisors>) who can help the students navigate their situation.

