



International Admissions  
& Student Services

Dear International Student,

International Admissions and Student Services (IASS) would like to thank you for your understanding and flexibility during this ever-changing time. IASS continues to review the **COVID-19** conditions and its impact on our students lives. We have included important information below that will help answer some questions you many have.

**As of 3-18-2020 5:00 p.m.**

**OFFICE OPERATIONS**

Given the guidance from UT Systems, to help mitigate the impact of the outbreak on our campus community, all business, **school transactions, and communication will be conducted via telephone, website, and email preferably** to ensure social distancing, as recommended by the CDC.

**Both advisors at the Edinburg and Brownsville Campus will be able to meet with students via Skype, Zoom, or over the phone.** If you need an endorsement or a new I-20, **before coming on to campus please contact us first so we can arrange the appropriate service.** Students can continue to send any documents or questions to [international@utrgv.edu](mailto:international@utrgv.edu)

**ONLINE CLASSES**

The Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is committed to remain flexible in allowing schools to make temporary procedural adaptations to the learning instruction. **Therefore, all international students are allowed to be fully enrolled in online classes. Students have the choice to continue their online studies in the U.S. or outside the country without affecting their student immigration status.** This is only in effect during this time of emergency and we will continue to provide more updates as this situation evolves.

**GRADUATION**

The University of Texas System has directed all System schools to **postpone Spring Commencement ceremonies until further notice.** Please note that this postponement **will not** affect a student's ability to graduate this semester. **Students may still graduate this semester and receive their diploma upon certification of graduation requirements.**

**CAMPUS RESIDENCE**

**The UTRGV student residences are to remain open on both campuses.** Please be aware that SEVP is allowing students to travel outside the U.S. and access their online classes. You are not required to remain in the U.S. as they are being understanding of the COVID-19 situation.

For more information on UTRGV student residence please contact: [home@utrgv.edu](mailto:home@utrgv.edu)

University Center-UC 305 (Edinburg)  
Phone: 956-665-3439

Casa Bella (Brownsville)  
956-882-7191 - Brownsville

**FREE STUDENT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS:**

Individual Consultation  
Individual Counseling Session  
Mental Health Screenings

Referrals to other health, social, and academic services  
Suicide Prevention Support  
Therapy Assistance Online (TAO)

For more information, please contact: Counseling Center Email: [counseling@utrgv.edu](mailto:counseling@utrgv.edu)  
Brownsville - BSTUN 2.10 956-882-3897 - Edinburg - EUCTR 109 956-665-2574

### **STUDENT PANTRY**

The Student Food Pantry's mission is to assist students in need at UTRGV by providing food supplements to those who have been impacted by financial problems/conditions and subsequently are experiencing difficulty meeting their basic need of adequate nutrition. If you need this service, please contact: Food Pantry Student Support - [foodpantry@utrgv.edu](mailto:foodpantry@utrgv.edu)

Edinburg - University Center 114  
956-665-3663

Brownsville - Cavalry Hall 101 and 102  
956-882-7126

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

If you are in need of food, a car ride, and or support, the following community organizations are offering their generous assistance to our international student population.

**First Baptist Church in Brownsville**  
(956) 542-5334- Ask for Pastor Steve Dorman  
<https://www.fcbrownsville.com/>

**UTRGV Baptist Student Ministry**  
(956) 383-7491  
<https://www.facebook.com/bsm.utrgv/>

### **CONSULATE AND VISA SERVICES**

As of March 17, 2020 the travel.state.gov states that **US embassies and consulates may temporarily modify or suspend consular service as a result of the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19.** For more information visit the embassy or consulate website to confirm operating status and find information about appointment rescheduling and/or emergency services. **To find embassy or consulate websites, go to <https://www.usembassy.gov/>**

**Visa application delay or cancelation in the three countries below remains same as of today.**

- **Visa Services at U.S. Consular Operations in Mexico Suspended Starting March 18, 2020.** "Visa Services. Routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa services will be suspended starting March 18, 2020, and until further notice. This includes both visa interviews at the embassy and consulates as well as processing at the Centros de Atención a Solicitantes (CAS). Applicants with appointments will receive cancellation notices by e-mail. We will continue to accept nonimmigrant visa applications on a very limited basis for emergency travel only. Applicants may request an emergency nonimmigrant visa appointment via <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-MX/niv>. For case-specific inquiries for nonimmigrant visas, please contact us here: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/es/visas-es/contactenos-form/>. For immigrant visa inquiries, please visit our website: [https://ais.usvisa-info.com/es-mx/iv/information/contact\\_us](https://ais.usvisa-info.com/es-mx/iv/information/contact_us)."
- **United Kingdom. "Visa Appointments Update. As of March 17, 2020, the United States Embassy in London is cancelling routine nonimmigrant visa appointments and reducing immigrant visa appointments,** and no visa appointments will take place at the Consulate in Belfast. We will resume routine visa services as soon as possible but are unable to provide a specific date at this time. If you have scheduled a visa interview appointment, the Visa Appointment Service will contact you if your appointment is being postponed. The MRV fee is valid and may be used for a visa application in the country where it was purchased within one year of the date of payment."
- **India. Cancellation of routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments in India starting March 16, 2020.** "U.S. Mission India posts, in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, are cancelling immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments from March 16, 2020, onward. Your visa appointment stands as cancelled. Once Mission India resumes regular consular operations, appointments will be made available and you will

be able to reschedule. Please see [www.ustraveldocs.com/in](http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in) and [in.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/](http://in.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/) for further information."

- **Reduction of consular services in Italy effective March 11, 2020.** "Due to reduced staffing that went into effect March 11, only emergency American Citizen Services and emergency visa services are available at the U.S. Embassy in Rome and Consulates General Milan, Naples, and Florence."
- **China. Temporary U.S. consular office closures in China effective February 3, 2020. On February 1, 2020,** the U.S. Embassy in China announced: "Mission China will be closed to the public from February 3-7 in accordance with Chinese government guidance. Emergency American citizen services will be available." On February 8, 2020, the U.S. Embassy posted this message: Mission China Regular Visa Services Temporarily Suspended. "As of February 10, 2020, regular visa services at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulates General in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenyang are suspended. Due to the ongoing situation relating to the novel coronavirus, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates have very limited staffing and may be unable to respond to requests regarding regular visa services." On March 5, 2020, NAFSA confirmed with the Department of State that the February 8, 2020 Mission China announcement remains in effect.

### **U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

On March 17, 2020, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced the temporary closure of its offices to the public, effective March 18th through at least April 1st. The closure affects local USCIS field offices, asylum offices, and Application Support Centers.

Even though USCIS has suspended all in-person services, staff will continue to perform duties that do not involve contact with the public. **Given all of this, IASS will continue to process OPT requests unless guidance may be different in the near future.**

If you are experiencing any symptoms that resemble Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) **please seek necessary medical treatment or preventive services.** Such **treatment or preventive services will not negatively affect you as part of a future Public Charge** analysis. On March 14, 2020, USCIS placed a Coronavirus alert on its [public charge page](#).

### **TRAVEL**

Please be aware that SEVP is allowing you to travel outside the U.S. and access your classes. Students are not required to remain in the U.S. as they are being understanding of the COVID-19 situation. Keep in mind that if you leave the country on an expired visa, you will need a new one visa stamp in order to return to the U.S. and continue with your studies. If you need a travel endorsement, please call us. Mexican students are exempt from this under the [Automatic Visa Revalidation](#) as long as they come back to the U.S. 30 before their departure date.

Important emails are constantly being sent about travel. Please refer to this link for more information: <https://www.utrgv.edu/emergencypreparedness/resources/covid-19/updates/2020-03-13/index.htm>  
**Please note that this form, is not required, if you travel to Mexico.**

### **PREPARATIONS AND TRAVEL**

As a reminder, F-1 students should keep the following items in a safe, secure place so that they are easily accessible in the event of an emergency:

- Passport, Visa, I-94
- Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status."
- DSO Contact Information:
  - Jessica Alvarado; [jessica.alvarado01@utrgv.edu](mailto:jessica.alvarado01@utrgv.edu) 956.665.3029
  - Blanca Leyva; [blanca.leyva01@utrgv.edu](mailto:blanca.leyva01@utrgv.edu) 956.882.7983

- Contact information for SEVIS Help Desk – (800) 892-4829
- Social Security card, if applicable.
- Financial records (such as Bank or Credit Card information).
- Some available cash.
- Travel-related documents like boarding passes and plane tickets, if applicable.

### **IMMIGRATION-RELATED EMERGENCY**

If you have an immigration related emergency, outside of IASS business hours, such as trouble at a port of entry, immediate danger of being deported from the United States, arrest, or detention by a federal officer, please call the UTRGV Police Department at (956) 882-7777 and explain your situation. You will be connected to the appropriate International Admissions & Student Services staff member to assist you.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

**University Police**  
 All Campuses Emergencies: 911  
 (956) 882-7777 (directory)  
 (956) 882-4911 (emergency)

**SEVP Response Center**  
 (703) 603-3400

**Office of Emergency Preparedness**  
 All campuses  
 (956) 665-2658

### **IMPORTANT LINKS**

[Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)  
[Current Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)  
[Notices of Arrival Restrictions Due to Coronavirus Management](#)

[COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)  
[USCIS Response to the 2019 Coronavirus](#)  
[utrgv.edu/coronavirus](http://utrgv.edu/coronavirus)

### **DO NOT CALL 911 FOR IMMIGRATION-RELATED EMERGENCIES!**

Examples of Immigration-Related Issues and questions that are not emergencies:

I need a travel signature	My visa is delayed
I lost my I-20	I am a new student in need of I-20
I received an I-515 when I arrived at the Port of entry into the U.S.	I sent an email and I want to know if it was received
My passport was lost/stolen	I want my documents checked before I travel

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY EMERGENCIES**

If you have a personal injury, urgent and unexpected hospitalization PLEASE call 911.

Examples of health & safety emergencies:

Personal injury	Automobile accident
Urgent and unexpected hospitalization	Robbery
Sexual assault	Missing persons

### **UTRGV HEALTH SERVICES**

The main goal at Health Services, is to meet the students' health care needs, so that they can focus and achieve their academic goals. Office visits are free of charge and they provide the same types of services as a family doctor and much more. If you are experience an illness or a symptom related to COVID-19, please contact them from Mon – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the locations below or you can also contact the **24-Hour Nurse Advice Line (855) 810-4457** or at [healthservices@utrgv.edu](mailto:healthservices@utrgv.edu) they also offer online consultations.

**Health Services Clinic Edinburg**

613 North Sugar Road  
Edinburg, Texas 78539  
Phone: (956) 665-2511

**Health Services Clinic Brownsville**

Cortez Hall, Suite 237  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
Phone: (956) 882-3896

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

For information on your health insurance plan, please go to: <https://utrgv.myahpcare.com/>.  
For any further assistance, you may contact us from 8am-5pm, Monday to Friday at (956)665-2922 or at (956)882-7092 or via email at [international@utrgv.edu](mailto:international@utrgv.edu)

We are committed to doing everything possible to support our international students during this time of uncertainty and challenging circumstances. Please keep in mind that this information may change as this situation evolves quickly.

Your health and well-being is our priority.

Sincerely,



**Samantha Lopez MBA, PDSO, ARO**

Director, International Admissions and Student Services

Global Engagement

[Samantha.lopez@utrgv.edu](mailto:Samantha.lopez@utrgv.edu)