



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Office of International Affairs

November 18, 2020

Dear Student:

I understand many of you feel like you are stranded in a foreign country during one of the worst pandemics in history. I know the frustration of being unable to go home for an extended period, and understand the excitement of the opportunity to travel over winter break to visit friends and family. However, I must advise you against traveling outside of the U.S. at this time because of the rapidly changing COVID landscape. If you must travel internationally, I advise you to take the following actions and to consider carefully the following scenarios.

- Inform your department/program (major advisor, graduate program director) of your intention to travel.
- Complete all your course responsibilities/job duties, if applicable, before you depart.
- Register for spring 2021 classes prior to departure.
- Consult with your international student counselor to assess your immigration risks regarding travel and regarding the required immigration documentation for your return.
- Keep abreast of COVID-related travel guidance, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.
- Be informed that if you are unable to return to the U.S.:
 - You are still required to be enrolled in the spring to maintain your academic standing with the university and the F-1 immigration status;
 - At this point, we believe that the temporary rules that applied to you in the fall as F-1 students (regarding online course work) will remain the same for the spring. We cannot confirm this at this point and will notify you if any official guidance from U.S. government is published that impacts you as an F-1 student. Assuming the status quo, you will be required to maintain full-time online enrollment in the spring to retain your F-1 immigration status. There are a few exceptions to this requirement; please consult with your international student counselor for additional information.
 - If serving as a TA, RA, or GPTI, you cannot work or receive payment while outside the U.S.

Regardless of where you end up spending your winter break, I hope you enjoy a wonderful holiday season. May your holiday be filled with lots of joy, tranquility, and love!

With good wishes,

Sukant Misra, Ph. D.

Vice Provost for International Affairs