**Q & A following the Immigration Webinar (May 1, 2020)**

**International Graduate Student Work Contracts and Employment Related Questions**

Q: I thought an I-9 was required in order for us to process an assistantship. Is there a process in place with HR to move beyond the I-9 verification process?

A: If the student is not here in the states an I-9 is not required.

Q: Who is the contact person in the Graduate School to discuss GA options with new international students?

A: Melissa Del Rio

Q: What arrangements are being made to pay international students a stipend if they are stuck overseas?

A: This very much depends on the specific circumstances—please reach out to the graduate school.

Q: For new students starting in the Fall 2020 semester that enroll full time, how do they get paid on their assistantship (do they need a U.S. bank account?).

A: same as above

Q: Students from Iran. Will they be able to TA online?

A: This is complicated issue. It will depend on what platforms are being used and what the subject matter of the courses are.

**Visa, Immigration, Travel Restrictions**

Q: Received this message from incoming graduate and don't know how to reply and looking to you for possible answers; "Because COVID-19 is becoming more and more serious recently, I'm somewhat concerned about the open of fall semester. Now there is no visa appointment available before the middle of August in China and visa interviews in May are all canceled. I'm not sure about whether this situation will continue and whether I can get my visa before the start of the semester. Also I'm worried about if travel ban still exists at that time. The worst situation is that I cannot arrive at MSU before the start of fall semester. So I'm writing to ask if the department has any plans about the arrangement of fall semester for international students. I need some information from the department to guide my future plans."

A: The answer to this question depends first on the program. Is the student able to start courses remotely? If so and the student is unable to arrive by the start of classes, beginning remotely may be advised. The alternative would be to defer admission to spring semester and begin then. In either scenario, it will be important to communicate with OISS so the student’s I20 or DS2019 can be updated as needed.

Q: Is it certain that F1-Visa graduate students will be able to enter USA when returning from their home country?

A: Currently the US has bans on entry directly from China, Iran and 28 European countries. We have received reports of people traveling to a third country, spending 14+ days there, and then successfully entering the US.

**Course Work Questions (online, face-to-face, remote options)**

Q: Can we count synchronous zoom courses as "in person"?

A: We distinguish between online courses which are typically asynchronous and courses that are taught in real-time/synchronously. If students are required to be on Zoom for class meetings at specified times throughout the semester this would technically be an “in person course. Online classes measure participation in other ways besides attendance.

Q: Can I ask for a clarification regarding online? If a PhD student is registered only for research credits or reading courses and is meeting via zoom with faculty. Is that "online"?

A: OISS would look at the course designation. We regularly have students enrolled FT in research credits and conducting that research abroad. It’s important to connect with OISS to discuss this situation in advance.

Q: Do these scenarios mean that all Grad courses should have online versions?

A: No. For some classes there is no need for this, and the scenarios don’t necessarily imply all courses need to have an on-line version.

Q: Do we know if D2L and other of MSU’s courseware and websites are accessible in China?

A: D2L and MediaSpace are generally accessible in China. Google products are not.

Q: For current, international post-comp students who are only enrolled in doctoral lab-research credits, have there been talks about preventing lab research through the fall which would put these credits in jeopardy?

A: This question is a bit unclear. We use credit designation as research—they do not specify that lab work is being conducted.

**Admitted Student and Various Arrival Scenarios**

Q: All scenarios are for fully accepted student? What about provisional?

A: They apply the same in anticipation of and assuming that they provide the regular documentation for regular admission.

Q: We have several Fulbright students each year. Right now, IIE seems to think the students will come here. Will Fulbright allow students to start remotely?

A: We do not know at this time and this might also be subject to change.

Q: Given that online or late arrival impact on CPT/OPT is based upon the student's individual situation, should we advise them to reach out to OISS if they have specific questions on their case?

A: Yes, please. We want to make sure students are thinking about how decisions made now could affect eligibility for future immigration benefits.

Q: If a student (who is teaching in the Fall) is abroad, should they plan to return to the US or should they postpone any plans until the situation is more clear?

A: I would recommend talking with an advisor in OISS as there are several factors to consider.

Q: For international students who cannot arrive in fall, what's the minimum number of credits they need to register to be able to work as a TA?

A: As of right now they would enroll for 6 credits for master’s degree students and 3 credits for doctoral students.

Q: If international students cannot arrive in fall but choose to enroll, will graduate school offer online orientation in fall?

A: We encourage everyone to register and attend the GTA orientation in August, regardless of whether they get here on time or not. Materials will be available on D2L and #iteachmsu, but we also want to foster connection and community building before they are here.

**Questions About Language Requirements and Support**

Q: will there be a cost for students to take the summer English courses you just mentioned?

A: We are currently working to establish funding and fees for the summer ACES program. I hope to be able to provide cost information and more details about the program in the upcoming week.

Q: Usually international students admitted English-language provisional are tested when they arrive: what if they will take the online courses in their country for fall. Will they wait to be tested when they arrive in the spring? Will there be an online ELT test or online ELT?

A: This question refers to the MSU English Language Test (MSUELT). The testing that would normally happen upon arrival would still take place, but in the form of an online MSUELT with remote, live proctoring. The ELC will send an email with the essential information to students who need take the test. An online version of the MSU English Language Test is available.

Q: International New Students that do not arrive to MSU and plan to take courses on line will they be able to take 451 and 452 courses on line from their own country

A: Typically, students are only eligible to take AAE 451 or 452 if they have an eligible MSU Speaking Test score of 40 or higher and have the support of their program, so new students would still need to take the MSU Speaking Test, which will be offered in an online format. Please direct further questions about testing to Dr. Daniel Reed at testing@elc.msu.edu. I’ll also add that students who take the MSU Speaking Test and have a qualifying score of 40 or higher have the option of initiating a course request in the MSU Speaking Test System online at <https://login.msu.edu/?App=ELC%2DSPEAK> . Once the students initiate a course request, they will receive an email from me explaining the process moving forward. Normally, I schedule advising/placement meetings where I meet in person with each student to determine whether AAE 451 or 452 better addresses the student’s skills and needs. Depending on when students initiate that request and the situation at that time, I am likely to schedule those sessions virtually. Whether or not AAE 451 and 452 are offered in person or online will depend a great deal on the situation at the time, so unfortunately, I can’t answer that now. I can only say that if there is significant demand for an online version, I will do my best to provide that if possible.

You can help by encouraging students to make a course request as soon as they think they would like to take a course so we can plan accordingly. Students often wait until the beginning of fall even when they have test scores available in the Spring, so this year in particular, it will be helpful if they make their request earlier and then we can determine where they will be in the Fall, what the university decision is on opening campus, and what the demand is for F2F or online ITA support courses.

Q: Just to clarify, the SPEAK test dates for May are fully booked but if need be, one can be scheduled?

A: Yes. Contact Dan Reed (reeddan@msu.edu) if there is an urgent need to have a speaking test before the next regularly scheduled test date.

Answers were submitted by:

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