



International Graduate Student Travel Disruption FAQ

This is a companion FAQ to the Guidance for International Graduate Students document which contains information about graduate degree completion, registration and tuition waivers, and graduate student employment. This document focuses on considerations for remote and hybrid instruction in graduate programs.

Please reach out to Joy Williamson-Lott, dean of the Graduate School, at graddean@uw.edu before making any changes outlined below.

Q. Is there an expectation that a graduate program will change its delivery modes and options just to meet current issues?

No. Permanent changes to programs should be made only if there is a clear pedagogical rationale. If the change is short-term, this change in delivery mode needs to be made very clear to entering students. Also, the program should be explicit about when the short-term change in delivery mode will end and how previous in-person requirements will be fulfilled during the short-term shift to remote.

Q. Can a program offer remote options just for international students experiencing travel disruptions?

No. A program must make options for attendance available for all students in the program.

Q. My graduate program has several international students that may experience disruptions. Can I offer remote instruction or hybrid instruction?

Yes. But any changes to delivery options must be made clear, including whether the change is permanent or temporary, and that all options are available to all students in the program.

Please note the considerations in questions below before moving any courses or programs to remote/hybrid instruction.

Q. Are there accreditation issues if we choose to make a program fully online?

Yes. If a program moves to more than 50% online, our accreditor Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) must be notified. UW is already approved for distance education, and this notification to NWCCU is relatively simple (submit request to Phil Reid, Vice Provost for Academic & Student Affairs at pjreid@uw.edu who will communicate with NWCCU), but necessary for programs that are more than 50% online.

Q. What about international students already in the United States? Can they also take remote classes if they are available?

An international student already in the United States can take one online course and maintain their student visa status. *This should be a key consideration before making a program fully remote.*

Q. Who at UW needs to be notified if our existing graduate program moves to remote or hybrid delivery?

See accreditation above for if the degree program will offered > 50% remote. In addition, distance learning (DL) designation for each course being offered 100% remotely. DL designation is applied for through the Office of the University Registrar:

<https://registrar.washington.edu/curriculum/guides/distance-learning/>. Also, let Phil Reid (pjreid@uw.edu) know of any courses seeking DL designation.

Q. We do not know how long some disruptions may last; how do we plan for this challenge?

As you make decisions, the unknown is the most difficult issue to navigate. However, when there is uncertainty over the duration of a visa or travel disruption, it is critical to consider the possibility that a new entering student may not be able to get into the United States for any portion of their degree, and the implications for having only part of a program available through remote or distance options should be considered in terms of whether students will have a path to complete.

One possibility is to set a duration (minimum of one year is encouraged but quarter-by-quarter is strongly discouraged) on how long such options will be offered, if they are not permanent, and clearly communicate that students are expected to be in person at the end of the designated period.

Q. Most of the suggestions are for master's degree programs. What should doctoral programs consider if students face disruptions getting to UW before the start of the term?

Doctoral programs are all different but due to program length and need for lab / research spaces are more challenged. See the Guidance for International Graduate Students document for information about remote dissertations and graduate degree completion.

If an international doctoral student was planning to work in a position that included tuition (e.g. a TAsip) and cannot work in that capacity without being in-person, they would need to pay their own tuition if they are enrolled in remote courses.

Q. Can my program defer enrollment for all admitted international doctoral students who cannot enter the US by this fall quarter?

Yes. However, there is no clarity on when they will be able to get visas, and deferring enrollment for a significant number of students may impact the program's ability to offer space to prospective students in the next admissions cycle.

Q. If a student can travel at a later date, but now prefers to study remotely, can we require that the student pursue their studies in-person?

Yes. Again, clarity is key and so making sure there is “truth in advertising”: informing students that they will need to attend in person if / when that option becomes available is crucial.

Q. My program would like to consider remote and hybrid options as soon as Autumn 2025, and we need technical support. Who can we contact?

Contact the Time Schedule Office (times@uw.edu) to determine if the current room scheduled for the course has the appropriate technology (for example, lecture capture) to support remote or hybrid instruction. If the room does not have the appropriate technology, the Time Schedule Office, Academic Technologies, and Health Sciences Classroom Services will work with your unit to explore other options.

Q. We are struggling with visa issues from specific countries, who at UW can we contact?

International Student Services (ISS) is monitoring student visa acquisition. We are aware of certain countries where visa processing is currently slow (for example, Japan) and will be providing updates as things progress. However, if you have a specific concern, you can contact ISS through their website at <https://iss.washington.edu/email/>.

Q. We do not understand all the graduate policy issues related to remote and hybrid instruction. Who should I contact?

Reach out to Dr. Jeremy Davis, the Graduate School's director of academic affairs and policy, at jerdavis@uw.edu.

Q. We have lab, studio, or other requirements that cannot be moved online. What options does our program have if students are disrupted or delayed?

If those requirements happen in the first year of the program and the program has not altered those requirements for all students, then the program can defer enrollment for impacted students.