Dear Students:

We invite all international students, first-year and continuing, to come to campus for the fall semester, since the university has made arrangements for in-person teaching and appropriate physical distancing in residential life. We know that if you are currently outside of the United States, you may face challenges with travel and entry. In this letter we respond to some of these challenges and to questions you have submitted.

We are not able to address every question yet, but we have resolved some issues with colleagues across the University and hope that this will help you with your planning. During our webinars this week, on Wednesday for incoming students and on Thursday for continuing students, we can answer further questions and let you know how various groups are working toward solutions.

With all good wishes,

Dean Merritt

Travel

Because of the pandemic, US Citizenship & Immigration Services allowed schools to keep F-1 records active for students who departed the US in March, so the 5-month rule does not apply and will not affect students’ ability to return to campus.

We understand that students who are non US-citizens may be limited in their ability to travel directly from their home to UR if they are traveling from a country subject to a 14-day restriction on entry to the United States (currently China, the European Schengen countries, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Iran). The University will refund international students up to $1,500 for hotel and meal expenses if they are required to spend a 14-day residence in another country through which they can travel to the United States. The University will also provide a travel support letter upon request, which will provide additional documentation of your status as an active Richmond student while you are in transit. Students who are unable to get a timely appointment for a visa or who have trouble booking a flight and thus must arrive after the start of the Fall semester will, as is customary, be provided with support to help them keep their courses until up to two weeks after the start of the term. Some courses may need to be changed if the work cannot be made up.
a. First Year international students who are unable to arrive will also have the option of beginning their enrollment in January 2021.
b. Continuing international students currently outside the US will be informed by next week of any additional options that might be made available to them.

Housing
Because we recognize that travel home during the winter break period may create new challenges for students who live abroad, international students will be offered housing, either on-campus or off, during the winter break if they are in good academic standing and if return to their home country or if reentry to the United States is not possible.

Tuition
UR tuition will remain the same for all students, whether a student is in residence or learning remotely.

Full Remote Semester
Students who are high risk for COVID-19, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, may request an accommodation by completing the University's request for disability accommodations. A full remote start is not an option for new students. In the instance that a continuing international student is unable to travel, after good faith efforts to secure a visa and arrange for air travel, a committee with representation from the College Deans offices, International Education, and the Provost’s office would review that student’s application (for which an on-line form will be made available). While the University will make every effort to ensure that students are able to continue their academic progress, even if it has to occur via remote instruction, it is not possible to offer all courses in a full-remote semester. This may require a schedule change, as it is unlikely that all courses for which the student is registered would be offered remotely. Please do not ask faculty members about a full-remote semester; instead, send any questions to us at the International in box (international@richmond.edu).