

DHS Rescinds Policy Change on Temporary COVID-19 Exemptions for Certain International Students

July 15, 2020

After facing a number of lawsuits filed by some U.S. universities and states, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has agreed to rescind the policy change announced [July 6, 2020](#) that rolled back some of the temporary COVID-19 pandemic exemptions for international students in F-1 and M-1 status. This exemption enables students to maintain their lawful status even when their universities shifted suddenly to an online-only model. United States District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs announced the government's decision at an online hearing on July 14, 2020, to resolve a motion for preliminary injunction in a lawsuit filed by a number of colleges challenging the policy change. This decision to rescind the policy change means the temporary exemptions continue to apply, and F-1 and M-1 international students can maintain their legal status even while attending online-only classes. More information about the impact of COVID-19 on the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is available at <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#), which were updated July 15, 2020.

As the pandemic situation is fluid, DHS policy guidance regarding the SEVP may change. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you updated. If you have any questions about the program or other business immigration questions, please contact [Geetha Adinata](#), gadinata@fordharrison.com, [Charlie Roach](#), croach@fordharrison.com, or [Loren Locke](#), llocke@fordharrison.com, in FordHarrison's [Business Immigration](#) practice group. You may also contact the FordHarrison attorney with whom you usually work.

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Our Coronavirus Response

FordHarrison is closely monitoring COVID-19 developments including associated federal and state legislation and

reopening guidance. The firm has implemented continuity plans to allow our lawyers and staff to work remotely in a technologically secure environment when necessary, ensuring continuity of our operations and uninterrupted service to our clients. We are following all CDC guidelines and state and local laws as applicable. We are committed to ensuring the health and welfare of our clients, employees, and communities while continuing to provide our clients with the highest quality service. Please see our dedicated [Coronavirus Taskforce](#) and [Coronavirus – CARES Act](#) pages for the latest FH Legal Alerts and webinars on COVID-19, the new American workplace, workplace-related provisions of the CARES Act, as well as links to governmental and industry-specific resources for employers to obtain additional information and guidance. For more information or to be connected with a Coronavirus Taskforce or CARES Act attorney, please contact clientservice@fordharrison.com.