

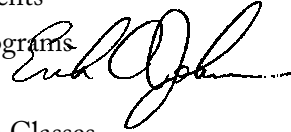
M E M O R A N D U M

To: Viterbi Faculty and Viterbi International Students

From: Erik A. Johnson, Vice Dean for Academic Programs

Date: October 6, 2025

Subject: International Students' Physical Attendance in Classes



In this new academic year, it is important to remind us all of USC's in-person requirements for international students (*e.g.*, F-1, J-1, etc.): US immigration regulations require physical in-person class attendance for students on visas during the Fall and Spring semesters (and Summer if it is their first semester).

USC's Office of International Services (OIS) has informed the Viterbi School that the federal government's US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has begun auditing the physical location of our international students, resulting in students receiving Requests for Evidence (RFE) that, in some cases, uncovered cases of non-compliance that jeopardize these students' current and future immigration status. In addition, OIS has noted that several countries will not recognize foreign degrees if students have taken coursework remotely during their time at the university — just recently, one of our graduates reached out because the ministry of education in that home country is refusing to recognize the degree because the student was remote for most of a semester.

To ensure that students are in compliance with in-person visa regulations and their home countries' rules, Viterbi has been advised by OIS that students, during the Fall and Spring semesters (and during Summer if that is the students' first term on an initial I-20), may not:

1. participate in internships away from the USC area (defined as Los Angeles County, Ventura County, and Orange County);
2. take online DEN@Viterbi courses; nor
3. be granted special online accommodations by faculty to participate remotely in on-campus course sections.

Viterbi Faculty: As during past years, students may reach out to you for additional flexibility or remote learning requests. Please do not make such accommodations as they may jeopardize the immigration status of these students (*e.g.*, they may then be denied post-graduation Occupational Practical Training [OPT], the OPT STEM extension, or further visa or green-card applications) and the recognition of the students' degrees in their home countries. Students who need exam or attendance accommodations related to accessibility and illness should go through the university's Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) to receive approval for such accommodations.

Viterbi International Students: If you need guidance, please reach out to the VASE Academic Services and Programs team (<https://viterbigrad.usc.edu/academic-advisement/>), who can help navigate individual situations.

