



Fall 2023 Questions & Answers for International Students

Contra Costa College (CCC), Diablo Valley College (DVC) and Los Medanos College (LMC) are planning for a hybrid format for fall 2023. Courses will be predominantly only online but, compared with spring 2023, there will be a significant increase in the number of in-person courses (includes hybrid = combination of online & in-person instruction).

- CCC will offer a balanced selection of online, in-person and hybrid courses.
- DVC will offer a balanced selection of online, in-person, and hybrid courses. However, not all courses will have an online option. This includes all Math courses and Counseling 140 – Student Success for International Students (In-person only for Fall 2023).
- LMC will offer a balanced selection of online, in-person and hybrid courses.

Fall 2023 online course restriction update from U.S. Immigration

On May 11, 2023, the [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\) terminated its Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) guidance](#) to coincide with the end of the COVID-19 National Emergency and Public Health Emergency. Beginning Fall 2023, all Active F-1 international students must be enrolled in at least nine (9) fully in-person or in-person/partially online courses (hybrid) as part of their 12-unit minimum, full-time course load to enter and stay in the U.S. This is the same rule that was in effect prior to March 2020, when guidance changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have already enrolled in your Fall 2023 classes, you may need to revise your schedule if you do not meet this requirement.

Please review the FAQ's below regarding this update:

1. **How many in-person classes am I required to take if I have an active I-20?** Starting this Fall 2023 semester (and moving forward), international students on an Active I-20 are required to enroll in at least 9 units in person.
2. **After enrolling in 9 units in-person, may I take more online classes if I choose?** Yes, once you have reached 12 units (with at least 9 in person), you may enroll in more online classes if you'd like.
3. **If this is my final semester, can my final class be taken online?** No, you will need to be in at least 1 in person class if authorized for final semester Reduced Course Load (RCL).
4. **Do Hybrid classes count as "In-Person"?** Yes, hybrid courses, or any classes with at least one in person meeting requirement, will count as in-person.
5. **What is the definition of an online class?** Online classes are defined as courses that are 100% online, no physical attendance is required for class meetings, exams, labs, etc.
6. **How many online classes am I permitted to take?** You are limited to no more than one online class or 3 units which can count toward your full time (12 unit) requirement. You are permitted to take more online classes once this requirement has been met.
7. **Am I allowed to take online classes from my home country if I am a current international student?** Yes, however your current I-20 will not remain in active status. If you choose to re-enter the U.S. later, you will need a new I-20.



8. **If Summer 2023 is my first semester, how many units have to be in-person?** Summer 2023, first semester students must have at least 3 units in person. The rest can be taken online.
9. **If I am finishing my program this summer, can I take my final classes online?** No, you will need to be in at least 1 in person class if Summer 2023 is your final term.
10. **If I am taking Summer classes, and it is not my first or final semester, may I take my classes online?** Yes, continuing students may take online classes in the Summer and are not required to take any in-person.

I-20s and F-1 Visas

1. **Will CCC, DVC and LMC issue I-20s for fall 2023?** Yes, for students who plan to study in person at CCC, DVC or LMC.
2. **Can I study online in my home country if I do not want to or am unable to travel to the U.S for fall 2023?** Yes. Students admitted for fall 2023 who are outside of the U.S. have the option of beginning their program of study online from their country of residence. Students intending to do so do not need a student visa. Please communicate with the International Student Office at CCC/ DVC/LMC about your situation.
3. **Do I need to show financial support evidence to be admitted for fall 2023 even though I will be enrolling in online courses from my home country?** No. You only need to provide financial support evidence if you plan to study in person at CCC, DVC or LMC. Financial support evidence is required to receive an I-20, which you need to apply for an F-1 visa. Please contact your college's International Student Office if you have questions or concerns.
4. **I have been admitted for fall 2023. Do I need to apply for an F-1 visa for online courses completed outside of the U.S.?** No. You only need to apply for an F-1 visa if you plan to study in the U.S.
5. **I have already received an initial I-20. Do I need an updated I-20 to arrive for fall 2023?** Your I-20 must have a program start date for the fall 2023 term (August 2023). If your I-20 program start date is different, you will need an updated I-20. Please email your college's International Student Office to request an updated I-20. Please remember you are not permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before your program start date.
6. **I have already paid the SEVIS fee. Do I need to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee again if my I-20 program start dates are updated for fall 2023?** No. You will not need to pay the fee again if your I-20 was updated with a new program start date. (However, if you received a new I-20 with a different SEVIS ID for fall 2023, then you will need to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee again)

Deferring Enrollment

1. **If I was admitted for spring 2023 and took courses online from my country, yet I am still unable to travel to the U.S. for fall 2023, am I allowed to continue taking courses online and defer my in-person enrollment until spring 2024?** Yes.
2. **If I've been admitted and received an I-20 for fall 2023, may I defer to spring 2024?** Yes, an updated I-20 will be issued with a new program start date. Please email your college's international student office to request a Deferring Enrollment Form and updated I-20. If you must defer for more than one semester, please contact your International Student Office for details about deferral requirements.



- 3. If I've been issued an F-1 visa for fall 2023, yet defer to spring 2024, do I need a new visa?** You do not need a new visa if your current visa is valid past the date of your (future) entry into the U.S. Please check the visa expiration date on your visa. However, you will need an updated I-20 with a new program start date. Please email your college's international student office to request an updated I-20.
- 4. If I was admitted for fall 2023 but would like to defer enrollment to spring 2024, do I need to prepare updated financial support documentation?** If you have already been issued an I-20 for fall 2023 yet have not obtained a visa, it is strongly recommended that you prepare updated financial support documentation for the visa appointment.
- 5. May I defer enrollment for more than one (1) semester?** Yes, however, you must request a *Deferring Enrollment Form* and:
 - 1) Submit a new application for admission.
 - 2) Pay another application fee.
 - 3) Provide updated financial support evidence (e.g., bank statement).
 - 4) Provide updated English language proficiency documentation (if your test score is more than two years old from the start date of your program of study).

Travel to the U.S.

- 1. Will I be able to travel to the U.S. for fall 2023?** Travel to the U.S is dependent upon your ability to obtain an F-1 visa. Please [click here](#) to view visa appointment wait times in your country/region. It is also recommended that you confirm this information with your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy.
- 2. Should I take a printed I-20 in carry-on luggage on flight(s) to the U.S.?** Yes.
- 3. Are there any special entry requirements to the U.S.?** As of May 12, 2023, noncitizen nonimmigrant air passengers no longer need to show proof of being fully vaccinated with an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to board a flight to the United States.

College Requirements: Covid-19 & Health Insurance

- 1. Are vaccinations required to study at CCC, DVC and LMC?** No, effective January 2, 2023, the Covid-19 vaccinations are *not required* for students taking in-person classes or who need to visit any campus facility. You can read more [here](#).
- 2. Is health insurance mandatory for international students?** If you are inside the United States, health insurance is mandatory for all F-1 students. You will be automatically enrolled into the mandatory health insurance for international students.
- 3. If I stay in my home country, do I need to pay for health insurance?** No.
- 4. How much is health insurance?** The cost of health insurance is \$704.60 for the fall 2023 semester. Coverage goes until January 2, 2024. Students must pay this before classes begin on August 21, 2023.
- 5. If I arrive in the U.S. for fall 2023, when will my health insurance coverage begin?** Health insurance coverage begins August 10, 2023.
- 6. Does the mandatory health insurance cover Covid-19 vaccinations?** No, however, the vaccinations do not cost anything. Students need to show a photo I.D. and proof of international student health insurance to schedule a vaccine appointment.



7. **Is there any safety information I should be aware of before reporting to campus?** Yes, please review the [Student Safety Checklist](#) for our colleges.


Accommodation/Housing

1. **Will accommodation be easy to find in August?** No, accommodation may be limited. Students are encouraged to secure housing as soon as possible.
2. **Is there any Covid-19 related requirement for Diablo Valley Homestay?** Yes, all homestay students must be vaccinated and send [Diablo Valley Homestay](#) by email (info@diablovalleyhomestay.com) a copy of their proof of vaccination. Note that the placement fee is \$450 and the monthly homestay rate is \$1,200.

Courses and Support

1. **Will online courses be asynchronous (time zone does not matter)?** Mostly, though each course section will have its own schedule. Students should carefully check the scheduling notes for each course section to determine if a given section of a course includes synchronous instruction. Here is the [course schedule search](#) for each college.
2. **How will students know which online courses have set class meetings when looking at course descriptions?**
 - [Asynchronous](#) courses (no set class meetings) will have "ONLINE" included in the meeting days/times column, and **no days or times will be listed**. Also, the comments section will not include references to any required orientations or synchronous class sessions.
 - [Synchronous](#) courses (online courses that have set class meetings on specific days using Zoom software and on California/Pacific Standard Time) will list the days and times of instruction OR there will be specific synchronous meeting sessions listed in the comments section.
3. **What are operating system requirements for taking online courses?** Students can use any operating system (PC, Mac, Android, iOS) for taking online courses.
4. **What are other technical requirements for taking online courses?** It is recommended that students have access to a desktop or laptop with audio and video capability and reliable Internet access. Students may use mobile phones, though they will be expected to do extensive typing.
5. **What video software will online courses use?** All courses will use [Zoom](#). Students should contact course instructors to ask if any social media such as YouTube will be used that may not be accessible in their regions.
6. **How will students access online courses?** All online courses will be delivered through the online management system. Below are helpful online learning links for students at each college:
 - [CCC](#)
 - [DVC](#)
 - [LMC](#)
7. **Do online courses have the same units (credits) as in-person courses?** Yes.
8. **Are the units for online courses accepted by 4-year universities and colleges?** Yes.



9. **Do I need to purchase textbooks for online courses?** Yes, most online courses require the purchase of textbooks. Textbooks can be purchased online from the college's bookstore or through vendors such as Amazon, etc. Some courses require the purchase of an online 'course pack,' which includes access to reading, exercises and quiz materials. Students can purchase online textbooks or course packs using a credit card. However, many courses use open online resources and do not require purchase of course materials. Those courses are designated as Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and can be identified with this logo:  Below are links to the bookstore at each college:

- [CCC Bookstore](#)
- [DVC Book Center](#)
- [LMC Bookstore](#)

10. **How do I get help over the summer (e.g., pre-arrival workshops, Canvas page, etc.)?** Please contact your college's International Student Office. You may also wish to visit your college's Counseling Center website for helpful information:

- [CCC Counseling Center](#)
- [DVC Counseling Center](#)
- [LMC Counseling Center](#)

11. **How do I register for courses?** Registration can be done online through [InSite](#) from your home country. Priority registration dates and times are listed in [InSite](#) under the Registration menu. Students may register for courses until midnight on the first day of classes: August 21, 2023. The last day to add a full-term class online is September 4, 2023.

12. **Am I required to enroll in a full course of study (12 units) if I am outside the U.S.?** The answer depends on your I-20 status as follows:

- **Continuing students with an active I-20:** Yes. To maintain your F-1 immigration status, you are required to enroll in a minimum of 12 units.
- **Students outside the U.S with an initial I-20:** No. You are not required to maintain 12 units if you plan to study outside the U.S for fall 2023..

We strongly encourage full-time enrollment due to the temporary provisions of U.S. immigration policy guidance during COVID-19. For additional questions, please contact the international student office at your college.

13. **What is the cost of online courses?** \$410 per unit.

14. **By when do I have to pay the tuition?** Students should pay the tuition for their courses as soon as possible after the drop/add deadline on September 4, 2023. However, if they need to pay in installments or wait to pay, they will not be charged late payment fees. Students should note that, if they have a balance on their account, a registration hold will be placed on their account. This hold will block them from being able to register for the following semester. Once the tuition has been paid, this hold will be automatically removed from their account.

15. **Will I be allowed to attend the first few classes before deciding whether to continue in or drop a course?** Yes, you may attend online courses for several classes. You are allowed to drop an online course at no charge as long as you do so by the drop deadline listed on your course schedule. The deadline to drop a full-term course for the fall 2023 semester is September 4, 2023. If you do not drop by the drop deadline, you will be responsible for paying for the class even if you do not attend. Please refer to your college's Academic Calendar:



- [CCC](#)
- [*DVC](#)
- [LMC](#)

*Short-term class add/drop dates, refund dates and pass/no-pass dates are calculated individually by class based on the specific number of meeting days; therefore, these dates are not included in this calendar. Add/drop and refund dates are printed on the class roster. Check with the instructor. You may also go to Insite, "Registration" "My Class Schedule" for drop and refund dates. The dates are listed under the "Last Date to Drop" column.

16. **Will students be able to receive online tutoring?** Yes, free online tutoring is available to all students through any Canvas course.
17. **How much time per week can students expect to spend outside of class time for an online course?** Expect to spend 6 to 9 hours per week (on and offline) for a 3-unit course.
18. **What other online learning expectations should students be aware of?** Students should be prepared to actively participate in online courses through frequent interactions with instructors and classmates. This includes contributing to online discussions. Students should carefully review course syllabi.

Orientation

1. **Will CCC, DVC and LMC offer an online orientation for fall 2023?** Yes.
 - CCC's in-person Orientation will be August 15, 2023 in Fireside Hall.
 - DVC's in-person Orientation will be August 10, 2023 in the Cafeteria.
 - LMC's hybrid Orientation will be August 10, 2023 from 10:00am - 1:00pm in the Student Union (2nd Floor Conference Room).
2. **If I have already attended a new student orientation, do I need to attend another one if I arrive in the U.S. for fall 2023?** Yes, students at all colleges who are arriving in the U.S. will be required to attend orientation.

Student Life

1. **May I join a student club if I spend my first semester studying online from my home country?** Yes, you may still join a student club(s) as some have online meetings. The colleges have a variety of clubs that have been active in the remote/online learning environment. Please inquire with the club(s) you are interested in for more information. Below are links to Student Life at each college:
 - [CCC](#)
 - [DVC](#)
 - [LMC](#)