

Traveling as an F-1 Student

Travel Outside the U.S.

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S., please remember to do the following before you leave:

1. Determine if you will need a visa for countries other than your own.

- Contact the nearest consulate or embassy of each country that you wish to visit.
- This process may take several months, so inquire early.
- Embassies in the U.S. can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/>

2. Obtain a travel endorsement (signature) from International Programs Office.

- Bring your I-20 to the **International Programs Office** in FOB316 at least 5 days before your departure.
- If you have maintained your lawful status, are not academically deficient or do not have an outstanding bill at the end of the semester, you can receive a travel endorsement signature that should allow you to re-enter the U.S.
- Travel endorsements are valid for one year, but we recommend that you have a travel endorsement valid within 6 months.

3. Check your passport validity.

- Your passport should be valid at least 6 months beyond the date you plan to re-enter the U.S.
- If you need to renew your passport, plan to renew it well before you leave the U.S. or before you return to the U.S.
- Also, check to see that you have your I-94 card (stapled to your passport or I-20). You will be required to surrender your I-94 if you leave North America.

4. Check your visa validity.

- To re-enter the U.S. you must have a valid visa, unless you are traveling to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands of the Caribbean for less than 30 days (excluding Cuba), whereby you can re-enter the U.S. through "automatic revalidation" (see below).
- If your visa has expired or will expire while you are outside of the U.S. or if you have a single entry visa, you will need to obtain a new visa while you are outside of the U.S.

- It is impossible to obtain a visa in the U.S. *It is currently not advisable to apply for a U.S. visa in Canada or Mexico. If you choose to do so and your visa is DENIED, you will not be eligible to re-enter the U.S. as part of the "automatic extension of visa validity".*

Travel to Canada or Mexico.

To facilitate entry into Canada or Mexico as a visitor, you must carry all the documents listed above except for valid F-1 visa stamp for some students, and the I-94 departure card.

In addition, a visitor's visa may be required depending on your country of citizenship. F-1 students or their dependents that are planning a trip to Canada or Mexico should contact the respective consulate offices to determine whether a visitor's visa to the country is needed prior to your trip.

Mexican Consulate: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/nuevayork/>

Canada: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/visa.asp>

Automatic Extension of Validity of Visa (Automatic Revalidation).

If you travel to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent islands of the Caribbean, other than Cuba, for 30 days or less, you may be eligible to re-enter the U.S. without a valid U.S. visa stamp in your passport.

This benefit also applies to individuals who have changed non-immigrant status in the U.S., whose visa is in the category in which they entered the U.S. (the visa is considered "converted" as well as "extended").

This procedure is not available to nationals of Iraq, Cuba, Sudan, Iran, Libya, Syria and North Korea.

Note: If you choose to apply for a visa renewal while visiting a neighboring country and are denied, you will not be eligible for the automatic revalidation benefit, but you will need to apply again from your home country.

Required Documents for Re-Entry

In order to re-enter the U.S. after a temporary absence (not exceeding 5 months) you must carry the following documents:

- Valid Passport
- Valid F-1 visa stamp-except for short trip to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands
- Valid I-20 with travel endorsement signature from International Programs Office. An F-1 student who is out of status must have a new "initial attendance" I-20
- Evidence of adequate finances

- Business card of International Programs Office Staff Member
- Copy of your transcript and current course schedule (optional but recommended)
- SUNY Canton student ID card (optional but recommended)
- F-1 students on OPT must have an EAD card if approved, or Receipt notice that OPT application is pending. *Travel after OPT is approved without a job offer or job to return to is considered risky. Speak to International Programs Office before making any travel plans.*

Travel Within the U.S.

Whether you are traveling within the State of New York or elsewhere in the U.S., be sure to carry proof of your identity and immigration status at all times. This includes:

- 1) a valid passport
- 2) a valid I-20
- 3) the I-94 departure card.

Note: We generally do not recommend carrying your passport and other original documents on a daily basis; however, if you are traveling outside of the immediate Canton, NY area you should carry your original documents, not photocopies. Unfortunately, a state driver's license or state ID is not an acceptable form for federal identification purposes.

Adapted from Washington State University's "Travel Guidelines for F-1 Students."