

Travel Information-FAQs for F-1 & J-1 Students/Dependents

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I am planning to travel outside the United States. What documents do I need to reenter the United States after my trip?

1. A valid SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019.
2. A passport that is valid for 6 months from the date that you plan to reenter the United States.
3. A valid United States entry visa with unused entries--- except for travel to Canada and Mexico (see below). If you do not have a valid visa, you will have to obtain a new visa in order to reenter the United States.
4. A valid signature from the International Student Advisor on page 3 of your SEVIS I-20 or on your DS-2019. The signature must be less than 12 months old at the time you plan to reenter the United States.

I am planning to travel to Canada or Mexico. What documents do I need to reenter the United States?

1. A valid SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019.
2. A passport that is valid for 6 months from the date that you plan to reenter the United States.
3. A valid signature from the International Student Advisor on page 3 of your SEVIS I-20 or on your DS-2019. The signature must be less than 12 months old at the time you plan to reenter the United States.
4. If you stay in Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days, you may reenter the United States with an expired entry visa under a special provision called “automatic revalidation”. In order to qualify for this benefit, do not surrender your I-94 Card (usually the white card stapled in your passport) to immigration or airline officials when entering Canada or Mexico. If they ask for your I-94 Card, explain that you are staying for 30 days or less and will need it to reenter the United States. When traveling by air, make a copy of your I-94 card to give to the airline official and keep the original. **You are not eligible for automatic revalidation if:**
 - a. **You are a citizen of a country that the Department of State (DOS) has determined to be a sponsor of terrorism.** The list of countries is updated periodically in a report from the DOS titled “Patterns of Global Terrorism” and can be found at the following website:
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls>. As of April 30, 2008, the list included Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Syria.
 - b. **You apply for a visa while you are in Canada or Mexico.** You will not be allowed to reenter the United States if your visa is denied.
5. You may need an entry visa to enter Canada or Mexico. Please consult with the Mexican or Canadian Consulate before your trip.

Canadian Consulate General-Los Angeles

550 South Hope Street, 9th Floor. Los Angeles, CA 90071

http://geo.international.gc.ca/can-am/los_angeles/menu-en.asp

1-213-346-2700

Mexican Consulate General-Los Angeles

2401 W. Sixth St. Los Angeles, CA 90057

<http://www.sre.gob.mx/losangeles/>

1-213-351-6800

I am planning to travel outside the United States and am currently in an immigration authorized period of Optional Practical Training (OPT)? Can I travel outside the United States safely and return? What documents do I need to reenter the United States?

The current practice is to allow students on OPT to return to the United States after a **short** trip overseas with the documentation listed below. Please remember that the immigration officer at the port of entry makes the final decision regarding your reentry to the United States.

1. A passport that is valid for 6 months from the date that you plan to reenter the United States.

2. A valid United States entry visa with unused entries. If you do not have a valid visa with unused entries, it will be extremely difficult to obtain a new visa and return to the United States. If your visa is expired, we recommend that you remain in the United States for the duration of your OPT.
3. A letter from your employer explaining that you are taking a short vacation and are expected to return to work.
4. A valid signature from the International Student Advisor on page 3 of your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. The signature must be less than 5 months old at the time you plan to reenter the United States.
5. Your OPT card

My entry visa is expired or will expire soon. Do I need to renew it?

You only need to renew the visa stamp in your passport if you are traveling outside of the United States. As long as you maintain your F-1/J-1 student status (see [Maintaining F-1/J-1 student status](#)) and are remaining in the United States, it is not necessary to renew your visa.

How do I apply for a new entry visa?

Please take the following items with you if you are traveling and will need to apply for a new visa in order to reenter the United States. Information about visa applications and fees is available at www.travel.state.gov.

1. Any items the United States Embassy/Consulate requests. We recommend reviewing the website of the Embassy/Consulate at which you plan to apply.
2. Official transcripts from University of California, Riverside.
3. A good standing letter that verifies current full time enrollment. This letter can be obtained from your academic department.
4. Financial documentation, such as an official bank letter from your sponsor, or an original letter from your funding department, verifying the amount specified on your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. If your funding has changed significantly, you will need to request an updated SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 from the IEC before you return home to apply for a new visa. See the “SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 Request Form” available in our office.
5. A valid signature from the International Student Advisor on your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. The signature must be less than 12 months old at the time you plan to reenter the United States.

Can I apply to renew my visa in Canada or Mexico?

It is possible to renew your visa in Canada or Mexico. However, if your visa is denied for any reason, you will not be allowed to reenter the United States. Citizens of certain foreign countries are not eligible to apply for a visa in Canada or Mexico. Visa appointments can be scheduled at the following website: www.travel.state.gov Please note that the Mexican government considers applying for a visa in Mexico as “official business”. This means that an entry visa for Mexico will probably be required. Please contact the Mexican Consulate for more information.

Mexican Consulate General-Los Angeles
2401 W. Sixth St. Los Angeles, CA 90057
<http://www.sre.gob.mx/losangeles/> 1-213-351-6800

How long will it take to get a new visa?

The time that it takes to get a new visa varies. Overseas consulates and embassies are required to give in person interviews to the majority of visa applicants by law. There are also security clearances that must take place for each visa applicant. Therefore, it could take 6 to 8 weeks from the time of your interview for the visa to be processed. In some circumstances, it may take longer. We recommend consulting with the embassy/consulate where you plan to apply for a visa well in advance. Whenever possible, schedule an appointment before you leave the United States.

If you are in a field that could be considered “technologically” sensitive, or have ever been arrested in the United States, **please consult with an advisor in the International Education Center before making any travel plans.**

My passport will expire or has expired. How do I renew it?

You can renew your passport in the United States at the embassy/consulate of your home country. An official listing of consular offices in the United States can be found at <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco>.