

# TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

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In order to return to the United States after a temporary absence, F-1 students must present specific documents to the immigration inspector at the port of entry:

- A valid passport \* (valid 6 months into the future)
- A valid F-1 entry visa stamped in the passport (certain exceptions apply)
- A SEVIS form with a travel signature on page 3 from an IS Advisor within the last year (for continuing students) or for students on post completion OPT, within six months
- Original financial documentation
- A copy of the academic transcript
- If on post-completion OPT, an EAD and letter from the current employer

To obtain a travel signature, bring the original I-20 form to the OISS submit it along with the Travel Endorsement Request Form. Requests for travel signatures should be submitted one week prior to departure.

\*Please note: Some students will need to renew their passports during the course of their studies of post-completion training period. If the visa is still valid at this time, there is no need to apply for a visa renewal. Students in this circumstance should travel with both passports: the expired passport containing the valid U.S. visa, and the valid passport, which does not contain a visa stamp.

If the F-1 entry visa stamp in your passport has expired and you plan to travel outside the United States, you must return to a U.S. consulate or embassy abroad to obtain a new F-1 visa. F-1 visas may never be renewed inside the United States. Students should generally allow 2 to 8 weeks for processing. Students on post-completion OPT should be aware that it can be difficult to renew an F-1 visa during OPT. Consulates interview 100% of visa applications, so it is advisable to contact the consulate prior to finalizing travel plans.

Some students will also be subject to Security Advisory opinions because of their countries of national origin, citizenship, fields of study, or at the discretion of the Consular Officer. Security Advisory Opinions commonly take one month, but may require as long as 4-6 months in rare cases.

Please note that students from a variety of countries may be subject to Special Registration upon their return to the United States.

## **Entry/Exit Border Procedures**

During entry procedures, students should be patient and answer all questions clearly. Omission or misrepresentation of information can result in denial of entry. If you encounter any serious difficulty please call OISS at (707) 965-7362 between 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 am – 12 noon on Fridays, or the Pacific Union College Department of Public Safety after hours or on Weekends, they will contact an OISS staff member to assist you.

### **Travel to Canada, Mexico & Neighboring Islands**

Travel to Canada, Mexico and neighboring islands (except Cuba) is handled somewhat differently than travel to other countries. Upon departure from the United States, students and scholars are not required to surrender their I-94 card. International visitors should keep their I-94 card in a safe place during their stay abroad.

There is a special provision called automatic visa revalidation which allows those whose U.S. entry visa has briefly expired to briefly visit Canada, Mexico, Saint Pierre, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, the Windward and leeward Islands, Trinidad, Martinique, and their British, French and Netherlands territories or possessions in or bordering the Caribbean Sea (except Cuba) and return to the United States without applying for a new visa at a U.S. Consulate. The following rules apply to automatic visa revalidation:

- The time outside the United States must not exceed 30 days and be spent only in Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands.
- You must not be a citizen of a country that the Department of State has determined to be a sponsor of terrorism. Currently this includes Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Syria.
- You must have a valid Form I-20 and a valid travel signature on the I-20 Form.
- You must have a valid passport (valid six months into the future).
- You must have maintained status while in the United States and intend to resume that status when you return to the United States.
- You must present your valid I-94 card.

Many students and scholars will need tourist visas to enter Canada, Mexico and neighboring islands. Contact the embassy of the country to which you intend to travel and check on entry visa requirements before making travel arrangements. You will also need a valid travel signature from your IS Advisor before applying for the visa to enter these countries. If you have problems obtaining an entry visa, contact your IS Advisor.

NOTE: Federal regulations prohibit those who have applied for a visa at one of the U.S. consulates in Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands and whose visa application was denied, from returning to the United States. Those whose visa applications are denied must return to their home country and apply for a new visa at the U.S. Consulate there prior to returning to the United States. For information on how to make an appointment for a visa interview in Canada or Mexico, [click here](#).