

TRAVEL OUTSIDE AND RE-ENTRY TO THE U. S.

NOTE: Since immigration procedures may change, if you are planning any travel outside of the United States, go to the following website: www.ice.gov/sevis and click on the frequently asked questions.

Travel to Other Countries

Other countries may require a visa and/or immunizations. Before your departure, contact the nearest consulate or embassy of the country(ies) you plan to visit; contact information is either in the San Francisco phone directory or on the internet. Some consulates are located out of the area, so **plan ahead**. Be sure you have the appropriate travel documents and signature BEFORE you leave the US. **YOU CANNOT GET A US ENTRY VISA INSIDE THE US.**

Documents Needed to Re-enter the U. S.

1. Valid Passport

It is recommended that your passport be valid for at least six months after the date you plan to re-enter the U.S.

2. Valid Visa Document

Your I-20 must be either new (all pages) or your most current document must be “Properly endorsed,” meaning signed on page 3 by the Designated School Official or CISS within one year of your re-entry date. (We recommend that you have it signed within 6 months of your re-entry date.)

3. Valid U. S. Entry Visa in your passport

The visa stamp in your passport should be valid through the date of your return to the U.S. If you have a new passport with a valid U.S. entry visa in your old, expired passport, you do not need to get a new visa stamp in your new passport as long as you carry both passports.

To renew your visa - Plan ahead, as this may take longer than in the past. Check the U.S. Department of State’s website at www.travel.state.gov for the visa procedures at the U.S. consulate or embassy where you plan to apply for the visa. You will need to present your passport, visa documents and recent evidence of financial support to apply for the visa, along with other items they may request. **You Cannot Get a U.S. Entry Visa Inside the U.S.**

4. Evidence of Financial Support

We strongly recommend F-1 non-immigrants carry proof of financial support reflected on the visa documents.

5. Additional Information for Students

We recommend traveling with proof of the current semester's registration. F-1 students who will need to renew their visa to re-enter the U.S. should have a current semester endorsement on their I-20.

F-1 Students on OPT (Optional Practical Training): will need to also note the following:

- ❑ I-20 must be endorsed within **six months** of planned re-entry date.
- ❑ If you will need to renew your F-1 visa, see the Admissions Office before departure, as you may encounter problems at the U.S. consulate.
- ❑ You should carry the Employment Authorization Document (EAD). See the Admissions Office if you do not have it.

Obtaining Visas - Expect Delays – Following September 11, 2001, many U.S. embassies and consulates have changed their visa application methods. All visa applicants are experiencing more careful review. **Anyone applying for a visa should expect the process to take more time than previously experienced.** Be sure you have the appropriate travel document and signatures before you leave the U.S.

If you are a new or a continuing international student or exchange visitor/scholar, we recommend that you check the website of the U.S. consulate where you will apply for the visa regarding what forms, fees, and other documentation will be needed. The website should give information regarding that consulate's particular application process. Most U.S. embassy and consulate websites can be found at www.travel.state.gov. Where the website does not include specific visa processing information, we suggest you, or someone in your home country, contact the consulate by phone in advance of your visit.

DS-157 – A New Form – Effective immediately, **all male nonimmigrant visa applicants** between the ages of 16 and 45, regardless of nationality, must complete and submit Form DS-157 in addition to the Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-156) when applying for a U.S. visa. Visa Officers also have the right to require a DS-157 form any applicant for any visa classification. This supplemental form is available from the State Department website.

Areas of Sensitive Technology – When a consular officer determines that a visa applicant may be involved in research or other work in an area of “sensitive technology”, a security advisory opinion may be required before the visa can be issued. A Department of State advisory opinion may add a minimum of three weeks to the visa application process.

Applying During Travel To a Third Country – If traveling to a country other than your home country for visits (consultation, conferences, vacations, etc.); please note that some U.S. consulates will not issue visas to third country nations (TCN's). Check carefully for this information at the consulate's website. See below for important information on travel to Canada/Mexico.

Travels Inside the U.S. – We **STRONGLY** recommend that students and scholars carry a valid passport, I-94, a properly endorsed I-20 and proof of current registration or program. Non-registered students or visitors should obtain verification of their current good standing with their institution.

Travel or Obtaining Visas in Canada/Mexico/Adjacent Islands - Under current U.S. regulations, the process known as "automatic revalidation" allows F-1 status holders to travel to Canada, Mexico, and one of the islands adjacent to the U.S. listed below, and re-enter the U.S. with an expired U.S. visa stamp in their valid passport if: (1) the visit is less than 30 days in length; and (2) the returnee has a valid I-94 card and an I-20 with travel endorsement (signature on the back of the form) obtained in the previous six months. Those in F status also benefit from "automatic revalidation" from the adjacent islands listed below.

ISLANDS ADJACENT TO THE U.S. INCLUDED IN THESE REGULATIONS

Saint Pierre, Miquelon, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, the Windward and Leeward Islands, Trinidad, Martinique, and other British, French and Netherlands territories or possessions in or bordering on the Caribbean Sea.

Effective April 1, 2002 there are NEW REGULATIONS, with severe consequences:

1. Individuals from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba are no longer eligible for automatic revalidation. Every admission/readmission to the U.S. requires a valid F or J entry visa stamp in the passport and an I-20/IAP-66 endorsed sometime in the past six months.

2. All persons who travel to Canada, Mexico, or one of the above-listed islands adjacent to the U.S., and who apply for a U.S. visa during the visit are not eligible for re-entry to the U.S. under the "automatic revalidation rule." Re-entry to the U.S. for visa applicants will be possible only if the appropriate entry visa stamp is approved. Unsuccessful visa applicants will be unable to return directly to the U.S. Instead, they will be required to return to their home country from Canada, Mexico, or one of the above-listed islands adjacent to the U.S. to obtain a new visa before entering the U.S.

If you are NOT from one of the above-listed countries, and do not apply for a U.S. entry visa in Canada, Mexico, or one of the above-listed islands adjacent to the U.S., the current "automatic revalidation" benefit still applies. See the SISS handout on Travel to Canada/Mexico for information.

ADVISORY -- Anyone contemplating a trip to Canada, Mexico, or one of the islands adjacent to the U.S. listed above for the purpose of applying for a new visa should discuss their plans with an adviser in the Admissions Office BEFORE scheduling a visa appointment.

TRAVEL TO CANADA OR MEXICO

If Visiting Canada or Mexico For Less Than 30 Days – The process known as “automatic revalidation” allows F visa status holders under certain circumstances to travel to Canada and Mexico and re-enter the U.S. with an expired U.S. visa stamp in their valid passport. Those in F or J status also benefit from “automatic revalidation” from adjacent islands generally in or bordering the Caribbean with the exception of Cuba.) Automatic revalidation is possible if:

The visit is less than 30 days in length and you have the following:

- A passport valid for at least six months from date of re-entry
- The I-94 form (white card in passport with D/S or expiration date beyond your date of return). If you are flying to Canada or Mexico **make sure the airline does not take your I-94.**
- Valid visa/travel documents:
- **For F-1 status** - You must enter the U.S. with either new visa document (I-20), or with your most current document **Properly Endorsed** on the back within the past ten months (or within six months of F-1 students on OPT) by the Admissions Office. Note: The Admissions Office may ask you to leave your visa document overnight for the travel endorsement. In addition, it is **strongly** advised to carry recent evidence of financial support for the total duration of your stay in the U.S.; students may also want to carry a copy of current semester enrollment documents. **F-1 students on OPT** should carry their Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Travel Alert: there are two important exceptions to the above, which can have severe consequences:

- 1) Individuals from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Northern Korea and Cuba are not eligible for automatic revalidation. **Every** admission/readmission to the U.S. requires a valid F entry visa stamp in the passport and an I-20 endorsed sometime in the past six months.
- 2) All persons who travel to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands from the U.S. and **who apply for a U.S. visa during the visit** are not eligible for re-entry to the U.S. under the “automatic revalidation rule.” Re-entry to the U.S. for visa applicants will be possible only if the appropriate entry visa stamp is approved. **Unsuccessful visa applicants will be unable to return directly to the U.S.** This means you would be required to return to your home country from Canada/Mexico to obtain a new visa before you can enter the U.S.

Entry Into Canada – A **tourist visa** from the Canadian Consulate if required for citizens of certain countries. To find out if you need a tourist visa and for visa application instructions, you can contact the website for Canadian citizenship and immigration at:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/offices/missions.html>

The nearest Canadian Consulates are in Los Angeles and Seattle.

Entry Into Mexico - Mexican **tourist cards** or **visas** are required of **all** persons visiting Mexico. There are obtained at the Mexican Consulate. To find out which documents are required and the hours they are open, contact the Mexican Consulate in San Francisco at (415)354-1700. For those traveling more than three days and farther than 16 miles inside Mexico, there will be an additional visitor tax assessed.

Note: In the following cases, consult with the CISS before departure:

- If you are planning to renew or change the U.S. entry visa at a U.S. Embassy in Canada or Mexico.
- If your I-20 visa document has expired or will expire within 30 days of your return date to the U.S.
- If you will be out of the U.S. for more than five months
- If you have ever applied for U.S. Permanent Residence/immigrant status/"green card"

