Frequently Asked Questions

TRAVEL

What documents do I need in order to reenter the U.S. from a trip abroad?

International Students in F-1 and J-1 visa status must ensure that they have adequate documentation in order to re-enter the U.S. and continue studies. According to U.S. law, a student in F-1 or J-1 visa status may be readmitted to the U.S. after an absence of five months or less, provided that s/he has maintained lawful full-time F-1 or J-1 status during his/her stay in the U.S.

Documents Required
In order to apply for re-entry into the U.S. after travel abroad, an international student must present the following documents to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer upon returning to a U.S. airport or other Port of Entry:

- Valid Passport
- Valid U.S. Entry Visa Stamp in Passport
- Valid SEVIS I-20 (F-1 / F-2) or Valid SEVIS DS-2019 (J-1 / J-2)
- Valid travel signature from your Designated School Official (DSO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) on your SEVIS I-20 (F-1 / F-2) or SEVIS DS-2019 (J-1 / J-2). You may request a travel signature by completing and submitting a Document Request Form to the OISS.
- I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt
- A letter from the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) verifying your lawful F-1 / F-2 or J-1 / J-2 visa status. You may request a letter verifying your lawful status by completing and submitting a Document Request Form to the OISS.

The OISS also recommends that you take with you the following documents: an official transcript (a historical record of your course work and grades) which may be requested online from Student Records; a DePaul University student identification card; and proof of adequate financial support for your educational and living expenses. For more information regarding travel abroad and re-entry to the U.S. please attend one of our regularly scheduled Travel Advising group sessions.

Important note: Please remember to submit a copy of your new I-94 card to the OISS each time you reenter the United States from travel abroad.

My student visa has expired and I need to travel outside of the U.S. How do I apply for a new student visa to be used for my reentry into the U.S.?

To apply for a student visa you will need to make an appointment with a U.S. Embassy or Consulate located in your home country. Due to recent changes to visa processing and special clearances needed for some applicants, you are strongly encouraged to make your visa application appointment as early as possible. You will need to bring the following documents with you to apply for your student visa:
• A SEVIS Form 1-20 (F-1) or a SEVIS Form DS-2019 (J-1) issued by DePaul University. Make sure that you provide all pages of the forms and check to see that the form is signed by you and the appropriate school official in the appropriate places.

• Proof of Adequate Financial Support - bank documents showing you or your sponsor has the financial ability to cover your educational and living expenses during the period of your studies.

• I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt

• Form DS-156 and Form DS-158 - both forms must be completed and signed by you. Some applicants will also be required to complete DS-157. These forms are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates.

• Passport - valid for at least six months after your intended date of entry into the United States.

• Photograph - one photograph taken according to the Guidelines for Producing High Quality Photographs for U.S. Travel Documents.

• Processing Fee - you must present proof of payment of all applicable fees by presenting a receipt. For applicable fees contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest you.

For more detailed information regarding the visa application process, please visit http://oiss.depaul.edu/PreArrival/ApplyVisa/index.asp.

I have already completed my degree and am still waiting for my EAD (OPT) card. Can I travel outside of the country while I wait for my EAD card?

According to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website Travel FAQ, students on post-completion OPT who travel outside the U.S. after their completion date and after their EAD card has been issued must present documentation showing that they either (1) have a job offer that they are returning to start or (2) they are returning from a temporary absence to continue employment.

I would like to visit Canada. Do I need to apply for a Canadian entry permit to travel to Canada?

Please visit the following Canadian website to find out if you will need to apply for a “temporary resident visa” to visit Canada, as well as to learn more about the application procedures themselves: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp

I would like to travel to Canada or Mexico. Do I need a valid F-1/J-1 visa to reenter the U.S. following my stay in Canada/Mexico?

For a trip less than 30 days in duration you may be eligible for Automatic Visa Validation (AVR). This will allow you to re-enter the U.S. without having to apply for a new U.S. visa stamp if your current one is expired (or if you changed status to F-1 or J-1 within the U.S.). This does not apply to citizens of certain countries, to those who do not have a U.S. visa stamp, and to holders of U.S. visas that have been cancelled. For further information regarding this and other travel-related questions, please call the OISS to schedule an appointment with an advisor.

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