



## OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies

University of Pittsburgh

### Important Travel Information

#### Travel Document Checklist

- Valid passport.** Most foreign nationals must have a passport valid six months beyond their period of intended stay in the United States.
- Valid visa stamp** in passport (with exceptions for Canadians and Automatic Revalidation cases outlined below).
- I-94 Admission Information** (can be found at [www.cpb.gov/i94](http://www.cpb.gov/i94))
- Additional evidence of legal status** (Form I-20, Form DS-2019, I-797 approval notice, etc.). Your I-20 or DS-2019 must have a travel signature that is less than 1 year old at the time of re-entry (applicable to dependents' documents). For individuals on post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Academic Training (AT), we advise renewing the travel signature every six months.
- F-1 students on **OPT** should also carry their **EAD card** and **job offer letter**.
- Financial Documents.** You must provide proof of liquid assets that cover the academic tuition (if applicable) and living expenses corresponding to your status.
- (Optional) Evidence of continued activities required for visa status (evidence of continued employment, enrollment verification from the Office of the Registrar (<http://www.registrar.pitt.edu/>)).

#### General Travel Information and Recommendations

- You may need a visa to enter the country to which you are travelling. Please be sure to check with that country's Embassy or Consulate in the U.S.
- You may only use your visa documents to re-enter the U.S. if you are entering for the purpose outlined on the visa documents. For instance, if you have completed your academic degree, you cannot enter the U.S. using an I-20 that specifies that you are studying. If you are no longer working for the University of Pittsburgh, you cannot enter the U.S. using an I-797 approval notice that specifies that you are working for the University of Pittsburgh.
- For individuals in F-1/F-2 or J-1/J-2 visa status, your Form I-20 and F-1 visa or Form DS-2019 and J-1 visa will no longer be valid if you depart the U.S. **for a period of five months or more** if you are not continuing with your research and/or will be enrolled while abroad. **Please notify OIS of such a prolonged absence so we may provide the best advice for future re-entry to the U.S.**

#### Upon Return to the U.S.

- Check your I-94 Admission information at [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). Report any errors to OIS.
- Upload copies of new immigration documents (passport, visa stamp) into your My OIS record.

#### Travel to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands for Less Than 30 Days

In some cases, you may be eligible to return to the U.S. from abroad with an *expired visa stamp* using a program called "Automatic Revalidation." **Always check with OIS to determine if you qualify for this program.** You may qualify if you:

- Are travelling only to Canada or Mexico;
- Will return to the U.S. no more than 30 days after departing;
- Have a valid (unexpired) Form I-94;
- Are not travelling to your home country;
- Have not applied for a new U.S. visa while abroad; *and*
- Are not a citizen of Cuba, Iran, Sudan, or Syria.

If you are in F-1/F-2 or J-1/J-2 status you may also use Automatic Revalidation for travel to some of Caribbean islands other than Cuba. You can find a list of the adjacent islands and more information here: [https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1218/~/automatic-revalidation-for-certain-temporary-visitors](https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/1218/~/automatic-revalidation-for-certain-temporary-visitors)

### **Travel via Cruise Ship**

If you will take a cruise, please be sure to print out your I-94 and travel history before departure. If, upon return, you find that you have trouble retrieving your new I-94 information, you will need that previous I-94 information to correct your record.

### **Travel to Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and certain other U.S. territories**

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are part of the United States. As such, you will not need a visa to return to the U.S. from these locations. However, students and scholars should always carry a passport, I-20/DS-2019, and I-94 during such travel. Please verify that your travel does not involve transit through or short stays in other countries, since full documentation (including a visa) for return to the U.S. may be necessary.

### **Applying for a U.S. Visa Stamp**

Visa application requirements and wait times can vary from one country to the next. Check the web site of the U.S. Embassy in the country to which you will travel for specific information and requirements and to schedule an interview. Allow enough time abroad for visa processing. You can find the consular web site at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Review these ten points on what you should remember when applying to renew your visa: [www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8643](http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8643)

### **Travel Advisories**

Be sure to check if there are any travel advisories posted for the countries to which you are travelling. Both the U.S. Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention have information on their websites about areas in the world that may present high-risk situations for travelers (i.e. severe weather, medical, political, etc.). You may also want to check with resources in your home country about travel advisories.

- **U.S. Department of State**  
*Alerts & Warnings* - <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>  
*List of Foreign Embassies in the U.S.* - <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm>
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention**  
*Travel Information* - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

### **Administrative Processing**

Please be aware that our office has recently seen an increase in the amount of visa applications that undergo administrative processing. Administrative processing means that the U.S. Department of State is conducting additional security checks on your application. While administrative processing is not avoidable, additional documentation may help. OIS recommends having a copy of your PI, supervisor, or PhD advisor's CV, as well as a letter from them explaining the nature of your research. Administrative processing is inconvenient, and can cause delays in your re-entry to the U.S. Unfortunately, OIS is not able to intervene in administrative processing, or visa stamp application process.



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## Visa Renewal Document Checklist

Please note that you should review the U.S. consulate's website for your home country for the required forms needed, fees, and other requirements. Also, review these ten points on what you should remember when applying to renew your visa: [www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8643](http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8643)

### F-1 Student/ J-1 Students & Dependents

- All I-20(s) or DS-2019(s)
- Passport
- Official Transcripts
- SEVIS Fee Receipt
- Documentation of finances, which corresponds to what is listed on your most recent I-20/DS-2019
- Documents showing your "non-immigrant intent" (i.e. documents which help to prove your ties to your home country and verify that you have no intentions of immigrating to the U.S.)
- Graduate Students** - CV/resume, complete list of publications, professional/research references
- Graduate Students** - Letter from your advisor explaining your academic research
- OPT Participants** - photocopy of your EAD and job offer letter

### J-1 Scholars & Dependents

- All DS-2019s
- Passport
- Letter of invitation
- Documentation of finances, which corresponds to what is listed on your most recent DS-2019
- SEVIS Fee Receipt
- CV/resume, complete list of publications, professional/research references

### H-1B or O-1 status (and Dependents)

- Most recent H-1B or O-1 approval notice
- Passport
- Copy of the I-129 petition
- Original Degree Certificates/ Certification of Evaluation (if necessary)
- Original letter from your department confirming your continued employment
- Pay Stubs from last 3 paychecks
- H-1B visa holders** - Copy of the Labor Condition Application (LAC)
- H-1B visa holders** - CV/resume, complete list of publications, professional/research references

### More information about visa renewals

- Processing times can vary from country to country
- Check the U.S. State Department's website for the latest visa wait times and important news about visa processing - <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/wait-times.html/>
- Some applications will be subject to security clearances which in rare cases can cause delays
- OIS cannot influence processing times for clearance checks

**DISCLAIMER:** Please be advised that while OIS strives to ensure that the information contained in all of our communications is accurate and up-to-date, the office cannot assume responsibility for any errors or misinformation. It is ultimately your responsibility to maintain your legal nonimmigrant status at all times and to comply fully with University policies/procedures. This handout is not intended to take the place of person-to-person consultation. You are strongly advised to contact a qualified staff member in OIS if you have specific questions prior to taking action based on any information contained herein. You may also want to access the OIS website ([www.ois.pitt.edu](http://www.ois.pitt.edu)). Rev. 4/3/18