

Travel Advisory for International Students

Travel inside the United States

When traveling within the United States, we strongly recommend that students carry a valid passport, I-94 card (the white card in your passport), I-20 or DS-2019 that has been recently signed for travel and proof of current registration (you can download a copy of your registration from SISWEB). Non-registered students should obtain verification of their current academic standing from their department.

Travel outside the United States

When traveling to a country other than your home country, inquire as to whether you are required to possess a visa and/or immunizations to enter the country of destination. Before your departure, contact the nearest consulate or embassy of the country(ies) you plan to visit. For further information see <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>.

SISS recommends you travel with:

- **Valid passport.** Passport must be valid at least six months into the future at all times, especially upon entry or re-entry to the U.S.
- **Valid U.S. F-1 or J-1 visa.** The visa stamp in your passport must be valid on the date of return to the U.S. (It does not, however, need to remain valid during your stay in the U.S.) If you have an expired passport with a valid U.S. entry visa, you do not need a new visa stamp in your new passport so long as you carry both passports when you enter the U.S. Canadian citizens do not need a U.S. visa. Canadian landed immigrants, however, must obtain U.S. entry visas. Please read the information below regarding U.S. visa renewal.
- **SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 travel signature.** The I-20/DS-2019 must be signed within six months of your intended re-entry date by your International Student Advisor. Your I-20/DS-2019 states that the travel signature is valid for 1 year but in practice it is only valid for 6 months. If UC Davis issued your immigration document, bring your I-20/DS-2019 to SISS for a travel signature at least one week prior to your departure. Those with a DS-2019 document issued by another program sponsor (e.g. IIE, Fulbright, LASPAU) must contact that sponsor two to three weeks before departure to obtain the necessary travel signature.
- **Proof of your current registration.** You can download a copy of your registration from SISWEB or request an official transcript from the Registrar's Office. Non-registered students should obtain verification of their current academic standing from their department.
- **Students on OPT** should also bring the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card and a letter from their current or anticipated employer. Students on OPT should see their SISS Advisor for more details.

Visa Renewal

- Check the U.S. Department of State website at <http://usembassy.state.gov> for standard visa procedures at each U.S. consulate/embassy. Please note that you *cannot* obtain an F-1 or J-1 U.S. student visa inside the United States.
- To check the time it takes to obtain a visa interview appointment and have the visa stamp processed see http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html
Most visa applicants are now required to appear for a personal interview. Students studying in some fields may be subject to additional "security checks" which are typically processed within 14 days, but can take longer in some cases. More information about security checks can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/a_zindex/a_zindex_4353.html

Visa Interview Information

SISS suggests bringing the following documents to your visa interview. In addition, please visit the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to which you will apply for any additional documents that they recommend bringing to your visa interview:

- **Education Verifications** which can be requested from the Registrar's Office, Room 12 in Mrak Hall or please visit their website at <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/records/verifications.cfm>
- **Official Transcript** which can be requested from the Registrar's Office, Room 12 in Mrak Hall or please visit their website at <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/html/transcripts.html>. Non-registered students should obtain verification of their current academic standing from their department.
- **Travel Signature** on I-20 form (for F-1 students/F-2 dependents) or DS-2019 form (for J-1 students/J-2 dependents) signed within six months of your intended re-entry date by the school official or agency that issued the I-20/DS-2019. If UC Davis issued your I-20/DS-2019, please bring it to SISS for a travel signature at least one week prior to departure. Those with a DS-2019 issued by another program sponsor (e.g. IIE, Fulbright, LASPAU) will need to contact that sponsor two to three weeks before departure to obtain the necessary travel signature.
- **Financial Documentation** that serves as proof of financial support and resources reflected on your immigration documents (your I-20 or DS-2019). This can be in the form of bank statement, departmental funding letter, or government issued financial document.
- **Students on OPT** should bring the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card and an employment verification letter from their current or anticipated employer. Schedule an appointment with your International Student Advisor if you do not have these items.
- **Graduate students** should consider bringing a brief description of their research or any recent research (chapter from your dissertation).
- **Be prepared to discuss ties to your home country** (non-immigrant intent) and your long term plans after your graduation. Some examples of ties can be a job, a house, a family, a bank account. "Ties" are the various aspects of your life that bind you to your country of residence: your possessions, employment, social and family relationships. Please see http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html for further information regarding visa denials.

When to meet with an advisor

In the following cases, consult with an SISS advisor at least two weeks before departure if:

- You need to renew/apply for a new visa.
- You will be out of the U.S. for more than five months.
- You will be on an approved PELP or In-Absentia.
- You will be on OPT, 17 Month STEM Extension or Academic Training
- You are planning to travel to Mexico or Canada to renew or change your U.S. entry visa.
- Your I-20 or DS-2019 has expired or will expire within 30 days of your expected return to the U.S.
- You have ever applied for U.S. legal permanent resident status (green card). SISS recommends you consult with an immigration attorney; please see SISS for a comprehensive list of local immigration attorneys.

Questions?

Please contact Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS) at 752-0864 if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment to meet with your International Student Advisor. We are always happy to help!