



Important Travel Information

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.
- In addition to your originals, keep **copies** of all documents issued to you (Form I-20, Form DS-2019, Form I-797, Form I-94, passport, visa, etc.) It's also a good idea to keep copies of your plane tickets or other documentation showing the dates of your entries to and exits from the U.S.
- Each time you enter the U.S., check the front and back of your I-94 card to see if you have been selected for the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), also known as "Special Registration." If you have been selected, you will see a stamp with the letters NSEERS and/or an FIN (fingerprint identification) Number. Ask your Immigration Specialist in OIS if you're not sure. Additional information about NSEERS requirements can be found at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm>
- Upon your re-entry to the United States, you and your dependents must provide the Office of International Services with updated copies of your I-94 Arrival/Departure Records, passports (if applicable), visas (if applicable), and Forms I-20 or Forms DS-2019 (if applicable). Your failure to keep OIS up-to-date regarding your or your dependents' re-entry may prevent OIS staff from being able to serve you most effectively/efficiently.
- 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.

Travel Checklist

- Valid passport (expiring **at least six months after the date of your return to the U.S.**)
- Valid visa (with exceptions for Canadians and Automatic Revalidation cases outlined below),
- I-94 card
- Additional evidence of legal status (Form I-20, Form DS-2019, I-797 approval notice, etc.).
- (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/>, etc.)
- If applying for a new visa, any materials required for the visa application as outlined below.
- Individuals in F-1 or J-1 visa status should review "**Information Specific to Individuals in F-1, F-2, J-1, or J-2 Visa Status**" on the next page of this document.
-

When Applying for a U.S. Visa Stamp

- Visa application requirements 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. You can find the consular web site at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

- Some U.S. Embassies and Consulates have long wait times for a visa interview. Check whether you'll need to interview and schedule the interview well in advance. Most U.S. Embassies and Consulates allow you to schedule your interview online.
- Allow enough time abroad for visa processing. Keep in mind that your visa process may be delayed if documents are missing or if the consular officer has additional questions. Some visa applications are flagged for security clearance that can take weeks or (in extreme cases) months to resolve. There are never any guarantees when applying for a visa.
- If your visa application is flagged for a security clearance, notify OIS and your academic department at Pitt. However, be aware that in all but the most extreme cases, there is nothing that anyone can do to speed along the security clearance process.
- You may need to schedule a visa interview at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. Check the web site of the U.S. Embassy in the country to which you will travel for more information and specific requirements, which can vary from one country to the next.

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 your Immigration Specialist in OIS to determine if you qualify for this program.** You may qualify if you:

- Are travelling only to Canada or Mexico
- If you are in F-1 or J-1 status, or you are an F-2 or J-2 dependent who will be accompanied by your F-1 or J-1 primary status holder, you may also use Automatic Revalidation for travel to the Caribbean islands other than Cuba.
- You will return to the U.S. no more than 30 days after departing.
- The country to which you are travelling is not your home country
- You have not applied for a new U.S. visa while abroad
- You are not a citizen of Cuba, Iran, Sudan, or Syria

Information Specific to Individuals in F-1, F-2, J-1, or J-2 Visa Status

- Your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 must have a travel endorsement (found on the third page of an I-20 or the lower right-hand corner of the DS-2019) that is no more than a year old at the time of your re-entry to the U.S. For individuals on post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Academic Training (AT), we advise renewing the travel endorsement every six months.
- A new travel must be obtained for F-1 students on Optional Practical Training (OPT), and J-1 students on Academic Training (AT) after application approval.
- For individuals in F-1 or J-1 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. Please notify OIS of such a prolonged absence so we may provide the best advice for future re-entry to the U.S.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this handout may change without notice. 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 at <http://www.ois.pitt.edu>. Finally, please be aware that links and/or references to other Internet sites or information sources do not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the views contained therein. OIS does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of information obtained from such links or sources.