Visits Abroad and Re-entry to the United States

All international students in possession of an F or J visa, who wish to leave the United States temporarily and return to the University of Hartford to continue studies, must secure the necessary documents to permit entry to another country and re-entry into the United States.

**Entry into another country from the United States**

Students who are in F or J status and wish to visit their home country of citizenship or permanent residence, or, who wish to travel to a third country (one in which they are not a citizen or permanent resident), should be in possession of the following documents:

- A valid passport.
- Form I-94.
- Evidence of return transportation to the U.S.
- Sufficient funds for the duration of their stay outside the U.S., particularly if they are traveling to a third country.
- An original I-20 or DSP-2019 form, properly endorsed by the International Center for travel.
- Depending upon the country that is to be visited, students may be required to obtain an entry visa. Visas may be obtained through consular offices located in New York City, Boston, or Washington, D.C. Addresses and phone numbers are available from the International Center.
- Evidence of full-time student status in the form of a Transcript (this may be obtained on-line from the Registrar's Office Student Administrative Service Center)

**Re-entry to the United States**

Students in F-1 or J-1 status should be prepared to present the following documents to a U.S. port of entry officer (U.S. Customs) upon their re-entry into the United States following a temporary absence:

- A valid passport and visa (unless exempt from passport or visa requirements).
- A properly endorsed I-20 or DSP-2019 form.
- Financial support documentation.
- Evidence of full-time student status in the form of a Transcript

**What if my visa is expired?**

You can stay in the United States on an expired F-1 or J-1 visa as long as you maintain your student status. However, if you are returning home or traveling to a country where automatic revalidation does not apply, you must have a valid visa to return to the United States.

Ensure that you have all the documentation you need for your visa application and allow sufficient time for processing a new visa. The documentation you may need for a new visa includes, but is not limited to the following:

- A Form I-20 or DSP 2019 endorsed for travel and signed by the International Student Advisor
- Original evidence showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses
- Evidence showing your intention to return to your home country upon program completion, including evidence of compelling social and economic ties to your home country
If you have applied for or had optional practical training (OPT) approved, carry your Employment Authorization Document (EAD), if you have one, as well as a letter from your employer either verifying your employment or offering employment.

**Applying for your U.S. visa**

The Department of State (DOS) recommends that you apply for a visa in your home country. For more information about visa applications visit the DOS website at [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

You can apply in a third country for a visa, but you will not be able to return to the United States until DOS issues your visa. In some cases, this could take several weeks or more if DOS requires a background check. If DOS denies your visa, you will not be able to return to the United States. Be sure to check the DOS website for specific information pertaining to each embassy or consulate.

If you have an expired visa and a terminated SEVIS record, we strongly advise that you do not travel outside the United States until your SEVIS record shows that you are in “active status.” If you do travel, you will not be able to renew your visa or return to the United States unless you are issued a new I-20 or DSP 2019 form and apply and receive a new U.S. visa.

**Travelling to Mexico, Canada or adjacent Islands**

In most cases, you can usually revalidate an expired visa automatically when returning from a visit of less than thirty days to Canada, Mexico, or one of the islands adjacent to the United States (other than Cuba) provided that you have a valid Form I-20 or DSP 2019 and a valid unexpired I-94. This process is known as automatic visa revalidation.

However, if you meet any one of following criteria, you will not be able to automatically revalidate your visa.

- You applied for a new visa and DOS has not yet issued it to you
- You applied for a new visa and DOS denied the application
- You have a terminated SEVIS record indicating that you are “out of status”
- You have been out of the United States for more than thirty days

**Travelling without your I-20 or DSP 2019 form**

If you are currently outside the United States and are not in possession of your I-20 form or DSP 2019 (you need it to reenter the U.S.), the International Center may be able to send you a new form if time permits. If there is not sufficient time to send you a new form, you may attempt to enter the U.S. without it. This may create an additional delay for you, as students in F-1 and J-1 status are expected to have appropriate documents when entering the United States; a valid passport, a valid I-20 or DSP 2019 form with a recent signature from the International Center and a valid visa.

Students traveling without their I-20 or DSP 2019 form will most likely receive an I-515 form from U.S. Customs (at their discretion), which grants a temporary 30-day admission to the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status. If you are granted an I-515, you must come to International Center immediately upon your arrival to campus. You must obtain a new I-20 or DSP 2019 form from the Center and submit a series of documents to the U.S. Government within the 30 day limit or you will be “out-of-status.” Being “out-of-status” will have serious consequences on your immigration status and you may not be allowed to continue your studies with us.
If you are travelling without a I-20 or DSP 2019 form, a Customs Officer may suggest you enter the U.S. in business/tourist status (B-1/B-2 visa), instead of granting the I-515. Under NO circumstances should you enter the U.S. in this status. B-1/B-2 status does not allow enrollment in courses or employment. If you enter in this status and attend class, you will be in violation of Immigration regulations. Changing from B-1/B-2 status back to F-1 status is a time-consuming and expensive process that may take up to three or more months to complete with no guarantee that the request will be approved.

**Visa Revalidation**

Re-entering the U.S. with a valid I-94 Form & Expired Visa is Limited.

**What Is Automatic Revalidation?**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have the authority and the responsibility over the admission of travelers to the U.S. Under the automatic revalidation provision of immigration law, certain temporary visitors holding expired nonimmigrant visas (such as the F-1 or J-1 visa) who seek to return to the U.S. may be admitted at a U.S. port of entry by CBP, if they meet certain requirements, including, but not limited to the following:

- Nonimmigrants who departed the U.S. for brief travel to Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent island (for F and J nonimmigrant’s) for thirty days or less;
- Nonimmigrants with a valid (unexpired) admission stamp or paper Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, endorsed by DHS.

**Students and Exchange Visitors** should review additional important information about travel outside the U.S. and reentry procedures on the DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website.

Automatic revalidation is not the same as applying for a new visa. If you apply for a new nonimmigrant visa, you cannot take advantage of automatic revalidation.

**Who Must Reapply for and Be Reissued a Visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate?**

This webpage explains which travelers must reapply and be reissued visas when their existing visas have expired, even if they are in possession of a valid admission stamp or paper Form I-94, in order to gain admission to reenter the U.S.

Many nonimmigrant’s will need to reapply and be reissued visas to reenter the U.S. when their existing visas have expired, even if they are in possession of a valid admission stamp or paper Form I-94, because automatic revalidation applies to limited categories of travelers. Refer to the [Automatic Revalidation page](#) on the CBP website. The following temporary visitors whose nonimmigrant visas have expired, but who have a valid admission stamp or paper Form I-94, must reapply for and be issued nonimmigrant visas prior to their reentry to the U.S., if one or more of the following situations exists (this is not a complete listing):

The nonimmigrant traveler with an expired nonimmigrant visa (but valid admission stamp or paper I-94 Form):

- Applied for a new visa which has not yet been issued;
- Applied for a new visa and was denied;
- Has been outside of the United States for more than thirty days;
- Has traveled to a country other than Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent island which is not included in the automatic revalidation provisions
Note:

International students should not leave the United States for travel abroad without first discussing their travel plans with a staff member from the International Center. This should be done at least two weeks before departure. If a student leaves the U.S. without a current or properly endorsed I-20 or DSP-2019 form, he or she may be denied re-entry into the United States.