



Travel in F-1 and J-1 Visa Status

If you plan to travel outside the U.S., you will need these documents to re-enter the U.S.:

- valid passport
- valid F-1 or J-1 visa
- I-20 or DS-2019 with a current travel signature (i.e., must have been signed within the last 12 months)
- Students on OPT must also carry their EAD card, and the I-20 must be signed for travel every 6 months.

Getting a Travel Signature

Make sure you have your I-20 or DS-2019 signed for travel in advance of your departure from the U.S.. Please do not wait until the last minute to obtain the travel signature.

Note: Students on OPT must have their I-20 signed every 6 months.

If you have a problem at the U.S. border during regular office hours, call the Center for International Education at (540) 654-1870. Outside of regular office hours, contact the UMW Police at (540) 654-1025, and they will contact a CIE staff member.

Automatic Visa Re-Validation

Returning from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands You usually must have a valid visa to return to the U.S. from abroad. However, there is a special provision called Automatic Visa Revalidation that applies to some travel. If you are in F-1 or J-1 status and your visa is expired, you may still return to the U.S. from a trip to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands even with an expired visa, if you meet all of these conditions:

- your passport is valid
- you have a valid I-20 or DS-2019 with a valid travel signature (if you are on OPT, the signature must be signed within the last six months)
- you have your EAD card (F-1 students who have graduated and have applied for OPT)
- you have an expired F-1 or J-1 visa
- you only go to Canada, Mexico, and/or the Caribbean islands (except Cuba) and do not stay outside the U.S. for more than 30 days
- you do not apply for a new U.S. visa while abroad (otherwise you have to wait for it to be approved and use it to reenter)
- you keep your I-94 card or record (print this at the Customs & Border Protection website) when you depart the U.S. (i.e., don't give it up)
- you are not a citizen of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, or Cuba