General Travel Guidelines for all Nonimmigrants

When traveling outside the United States, non-immigrants must have in their possession the following documentation to ensure their ability to re-enter the U.S. and resume their activities:

- Passport valid at least six months beyond re-entry date
- Valid U.S. visa in the appropriate classification, e.g., F-1, J-1, H-1B, etc.
- Valid immigration document for the status being sought
  
  For F-1 visa holders: Form I-20 with travel endorsement from GLOBAL SERVICES
  For J-1 visa holders: Form DS-2019 with travel endorsement from GLOBAL SERVICES
  For H-1B visa holders: Form I-797 Approval Notice

For more information about how to get a travel signature/endorsement read our hand out titled:

Obtaining a Travel Signature for F-1 & J-1 Registered Students

Additional Information for Nonimmigrants:


Additional Travel Document Recommendations

While not specifically required by regulations, the following additional documents are very strongly recommended when traveling abroad, and since September 11, 2001, are in most cases necessary to have:

- **For J-1 Professors, Research Scholars, and Visiting Research Students (NON-registered students):**
  - A recently dated copy of the appointment letter (proof of current employment or courtesy appointment with the university)
  - Recent pay stubs or, if not employed by Rutgers, a recently-dated document showing proof of current funding source and amount
  - All previously-issued DS-2019 or IAP-66 forms

- **For F-1 AND J-1 Registered Students:**
  - Your complete transcript (be sure your name is printed on it)
  - Current proof of funding
  - All previously-issued I-20 or DS-2019 forms
  - If on OPT or Academic Training (AT), your OPT or AT authorization and a letter from your employer confirming the dates and terms of your employment
  - If needing to apply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa before returning to the U.S., a recently-updated I-20 or DS-2019 issued to you within the 6 months prior to your application for a new visa

- **For H-1B Employees:**
  - A recently dated letter from your department confirming that you still hold the position named in the H-1B petition filed by Rutgers
  - Recent pay stubs (the most recent 3 pay stubs is enough)
  - If needing to apply for a new H-1B visa before returning to the U.S., you will want to have copies of certain documents from your GLOBAL SERVICES file (a copy of your LCA and a copy of your I-129 form); be sure to request these from GLOBAL SERVICES at least one week prior to leaving the U.S.

I-94 and CBP Admission Stamp

- **Upon re-entry to the U.S. by air or sea, visitors will receive an electronic I-94 admission record that will indicate their date of entry and be notated with their immigration status and expiration of stay. This record is maintained in Customs and Border Protection systems and can be accessed at www.cbp.gov/I94. Travelers will also receive a CBP admission stamp in their passport that also indicates immigration status and expiration of stay.**
Upon re-entry to the U.S. by land, visitors will receive a paper I-94 card that will indicate their date of entry and be notated with their immigration status and expiration of stay.

- **F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders:** The CBP admission stamp will be notated "F-1 D/S" or "J-1 D/S" to reflect you have authorization to remain in the U.S for "Duration of Status." If the stamp indicates anything other than "F-1 D/S" or "J-1 D/S," visitors should ask the officer to re-process their documents. If they fail to recognize the problem while at the port-of-entry, visitors should immediately contact their international adviser upon return to campus.

- **H-1 B Visa Holders:** The stamp will be noted with "H-1B" and a specific end date. The end date is usually the same as the end date requested by Rutgers in the H-1B petition it filed on behalf of the beneficiary, but in some cases it is an earlier date, either because the beneficiary’s passport expires earlier or because the port-of-entry officer made an error. If you are given a stamp with an end date that is earlier than the end date on your H-1B approval notice (Form I-797), notify Global Services immediately.

### Validity of Visa

A visa does not determine how long you may remain in the United States; it only determines when you may enter or reenter the U.S. To enter or reenter the U.S. in a specific nonimmigrant status such as J-1 or F-1, you must have in your passport a valid visa in that specific visa classification (unless you are a citizen of Canada). For information on the one exception to this requirement, see "Automatic Visa Revalidation" below.

Because U.S. visas are needed only to enter the U.S., it is not necessary or possible to apply for a new visa from inside the U.S. As long as your visa is valid at the time of entry, you may remain in the U.S. until your I-94 expires as long as you are complying with regulations that apply to your specific nonimmigrant status. However, if you leave the U.S. for a short trip abroad and your visa has already expired or will expire while you are outside the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa at a U.S. abroad in order to be able to return to the U.S. in your previous nonimmigrant status. See Visa Application Information for up-to-date information and advisories.

### Travel to Canada, Mexico and Certain Adjacent Caribbean Islands

Depending upon their country of citizenship, non-immigrants in the U.S. who want to travel to Canada or Mexico for a brief visit may be required to obtain a Canadian or Mexican visitor's visa in order to enter one or both of those countries. Check the website of the Canadian consulate in New York or the website of the Mexican consulate for information on requirements for entry to those countries.

### Automatic Visa Revalidation

There is one exception to the requirement that non-immigrants in the U.S. must have a valid U.S. visa upon reentry to the U.S.: Under certain limited circumstances, visitors with expired U.S. visas who travel solely to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands in the Caribbean (excluding Cuba) for less than 30 days may be allowed to return to the U.S. via “automatic visa revalidation” in the same nonimmigrant status in which they departed, and may resume their previously-approved activities without having to apply for a new visa. Automatic revalidation is unavailable to citizens of Cuba, Sudan, Iran, & Syria, however.

**Note:** If a visitor chooses to apply for a visa while visiting Canada or Mexico and is denied the visa, he/she will not be eligible for the automatic visa revalidation benefit and will need to return directly to his/her home country in order to apply for a visa.

CBP will verify the I-94 electronically to re-validate an expired visa if the traveler meets the conditions of automatic revalidation. If entry occurred prior to automation, a paper I-94 form must be presented in order to comply with validation requirements and these individuals must be certain upon leaving the U.S. **NOT** to relinquish their paper I-94 form.

### US-VISIT Program

The [US-VISIT program](https://www.us-visit.gov) is now operational at most major U.S. airports and seaports, and is used to track foreign visitors through the use of biometrics. When a visitor enters the U.S., immigration officials will review the visitor’s documents and the visitor will be photographed and fingerprinted.