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ISSI form 954: Travel instruction for F-1 student and J-1 exchange visitor visa holders

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TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS FOR F-1 STUDENT AND J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA HOLDERS

These instructions are to help ensure that you have an enjoyable travel experience and that you are able to return to the U.S. in valid student/exchange visitor status. Please be reminded that it is **your** responsibility to keep your immigration documents up to date and to request guidance from the ISSI if needed.



CHECKLIST FOR DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR TRAVEL ABROAD

Before you travel outside the U.S., be sure that you have the following documents:

- **I-20 (for F-1 students) or DS-2019 (for J-1 students)**
Be certain that your I-20 or DS-2019 form is properly endorsed by an International Student Advisor. The ISSI advisor's signature is placed on page 3 of the -20 or on the lower right hand corner of page 1 of the DS-2019. The signature is valid for one year, except for return from visits of less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands (except for Cuba) or for when you are engaged in Optional Practical Training (F-1) or Academic Training (J-1). In these cases your I-20 or DS-2019 must bear a signature that will be less than six months old upon your date of re-entry to the U.S.
- **Original copies of previous I-20's or DS-2019's**
You should carry all the original copies of I-20's or DS-2019's issued for you during your stay in the U.S.
- **Valid passport**
- **Valid F-1 or J-1 visa stamp**
Be certain that your visa stamp in your passport for re-entry to the U.S. will still be valid on your date of re-entry to the U.S. Your visa may allow *multiple* entries or only a *single* or limited number of entries. If you have a visa that only allows a single entry, remember that you have already used this entry when you came to the U.S., so you will need to obtain a new visa for your return to the U.S. If you obtained a new passport while in the U.S., the passport does not contain a visa stamp. In this case, you should carry **both** the new passport and the old passport which bears your U.S. entry visa stamp. If your embassy or consulate does not return your old passport when they issue a new passport, then you will need to obtain a new F-1 or J-1 visa while you are abroad.
- **Additional information for students authorized for Optional Practical Training (OPT)**
If you are currently engaged in OPT, you will need a signature on page 3 of your I-20 that will be less than six months old on the date of your re-entry to the U.S., a valid F-1 visa, your employment authorization card, and proof of employment to re-enter the U.S.

CHECKLIST FOR VISA RENEWAL

If you are going to travel abroad and have an expired U.S. visa stamp in your passport, you will need to apply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa stamp at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas, most likely in your home country. It is not required that you apply for a new visa in your home country, however; in some situations, it is more likely that a visa will be approved in your home country as opposed to a third country. It is advisable to contact the U.S. embassy or consulate where you intend to apply for your visa for procedures and approximate processing time for



issuance of a new visa prior to traveling. Additionally, it is recommended that you check any information available online regarding visa processing time before you travel (<http://www.usembassy.gov/>). Furthermore, it is important to realize that each student's visa renewal process may be different, depending on non-immigrant status, country of citizenship and residence, and history as an international student in the U.S.

CHECKLIST FOR VISA RENEWAL (CONTINUED)

- **Valid I-20 or DS-2019 with a valid signature from an ISSI advisor** – a signature is valid for 12 months from the signing date, unless you are traveling to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean islands (except Cuba), in which case a the signature should be less than six months old at the time of re-entry to the U.S.
- **Valid passport**
- **Enrollment Verification Form** – you may request this at the Registrar's Office, 120 Hayden Hall
- **Official Transcript** – you may request a transcript at Registrar's Office, 120 Hayden Hall. Instructions for obtaining an official transcript are available at http://www.northeastern.edu/registrar/trans_request.html.
- **Proof of funding** - you must present recent proof of sufficient funds to support yourself and dependents, if any, for at least one academic year.
- **Previous I-20's/DS-2019's** – carry I-20's or DS-2019's for all programs that you have attended at Northeastern University and from any other schools that you have attended in the U.S. prior to attending Northeastern.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR VISA RENEWAL IS DENIED

- 1) Ask the visa officer the reason for denial.
- 2) Ask the visa officer/office how soon you may be able to make another visa renewal application.
- 3) Ask the visa officer if Northeastern University can do anything to help your denial case.

AUTOMATIC REVALIDATION OF THE VISA AND TRAVEL TO CANADA, MEXICO, AND THE CARIBBEAN (CONTIGUOUS TERRITORIES AND ADJACENT ISLANDS)

As an F-1 or J-1 student you and any F-2 (or J-2) dependents may return to the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands except for Cuba even if you have an expired F-1 or J-1 visa stamp in your passport if your visit has not been more than 30 days, if you have maintained F-1 or J-1 status while in the U.S., if you have a valid Form I-20 (or DS-2019) with a signature from the ISSI on page 3 (or in the bottom right hand corner of the DS-2019) that will be less than six months old on the date of your return to the U.S., if you have valid passport, if you present an unexpired I-94, and if you have not applied for a new visa in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean islands during your visit. Please note that if you decide to apply for a new visa stamp during your visit to these countries and if your visa is not granted, you will not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. from these contiguous territories and adjacent islands. You will need to travel to another country to try to obtain your new visa and then return to the U.S. from that country, which may very likely be your home country. Additionally, nationals of Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Cuba are not eligible to re-enter the U.S. under the provisions of automatic revalidation. Nationals of these countries who travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean islands and who have an expired visa stamp will need to obtain a new visa in order to return to the U.S.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING VACATION/HOLIDAY TRAVEL

I noticed that my passport has already expired. What should I do?

First, please contact your embassy or consulate for instructions on applying for passport renewal. If your country does not have an embassy or consulate in Boston, there is probably one located in New York or Washington, D.C. The renewal procedure may take a few weeks or a few months, depending on the policies of your government. Also, your consular office may require you to provide information such as proof of your enrollment at Northeastern (you may obtain an Enrollment Verification Form or official transcript from the Registrar as described previously).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING VACATION/HOLIDAY TRAVEL (CONTINUED)

My passport was stolen! What should I do?

First you need to contact the local police and ask them to file a police report. If the passport was stolen on campus, be sure to contact Northeastern University Police Department (NUPD). This is important because some consular offices may require a copy of the police report when they issue a replacement passport.

It seems that I lost my I-20 or DS-2019. How can I get a replacement?

Please come to the ISSI, 405 Ell Hall and request a replacement for lost I-20 or DS-2019. You will be asked to complete the *ISSI Form 122 (SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 Request Form)*. It takes at least **5 business days** to process a request for a replacement form. This form is available on the ISSI website, <http://www.northeastern.edu/issi/pdfs/122-I20DS2019-42409.pdf>, as well as at the ISSI.

What should I do if my visa stamp has already expired? Can I travel and re-enter as a tourist?

If you are currently hold an F-1 student visa or J-1 exchange visitor visa full-time study, ***DO NOT*** re-enter the U.S. on the B-1/B-2 Visitor visa or Visa Waiver program. If you need to travel and your visa has already expired, please read the previous section on applying for a new visa.

I am traveling home with my spouse and children. What type of documents do we need to carry?

Each of your dependents must carry an I-20 or DS-2019. If you are currently in the U.S. with your family, be sure to apply for an I-20 or DS-2019 or new travel signature, if needed, for yourself as well as for each of your dependents. To bring obtain an I-20 or DS-2019 to bring your family from your country as F-2/J-2 dependents for the first time, please complete ISSI Form 122 and submit it to the ISSI with proof of funding for both your own expenses and those of your dependents. Annual estimated costs for dependents may vary depending on your degree program. Check the ISSI website at <http://www.northeastern.edu/issi/immigration/forms.html> to view the DCF form for your program for detailed information on the amount of funding needed for dependents.