

## Departing & Reentering the United States

If you plan to leave the United States for a temporary absence of five months or less, and will be returning for the continuation of your studies, you will need the items listed below to reenter the U.S. (Students who have graduated and will be returning for OPT employment should see the Special Notes on the back of this handout.):

1. **A "Certification of Enrollment,"** which shows all past and present enrollment at Regent and full-time or part-time status for each semester you were enrolled. (This can be requested from the Registrar's Office in Room 235, Student Center and takes approximately 3-5 days to process.)
2. **Financial Documentation** showing proof that you have the funds to support your studies in the U.S. as shown on your I-20 or DS-2019. (This might be a personal bank statement, a letter from your sponsor, a letter from your academic department if you are receiving a scholarship, etc.)
3. **A Valid Passport** (one that valid for at least 6 months into the future).
4. **A Valid F-1 or J-1 Visa** (A valid visa is not required for Canadian students.) The visa is the stamp in your passport which has your photo on it. Be sure to check the expiration date and the number of entries you were granted on your visa. If the number of entries will be used up, or if your visa will expire before the date you will reenter the U.S., you will need to apply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa for your reentry back into the U.S. If you had a change to F-1 or J-1 status approved in the U.S., you will also need to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa to match your new F-1 or J-1 status in order to reenter the U.S. after any departures. The U.S. Department of State recommends that you apply for the visa from your home country and not as a third-country national in another country. Due to significant changes regarding visa applications in Canada and Mexico, all students must consult with the OISS before planning to go there for a visa application as a third-country national. If you must apply for a new visa, please be sure to read the important information on this page of the OISS website: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/visas.cfm>
5. **For F-1 Students: All of your I-20s with page "3" of the most recent one signed by the OISS within the past 12 months for reentry purposes.** Check the bottom part of page 3 (not page 1) of your most recent I-20. If there is no travel signature there, you must request a signature from the ISO. If you have a travel signature on page 3 already, but that signature will be more than 12 months old before your return to the U.S., you must request a new travel signature from the OISS to be able to reenter the U.S. (For example, students who had their I-20 signed for travel in December 2008 will not need another travel signature until December 2009.)

**For J-1 Students: All of your DS-2019s with page "1" of the most recent DS-2019 signed by the OISS within the past 12 months for reentry purposes.** Check the "Travel Authorization" section in the bottom right corner of your DS-2019. If there is no signature there, you must request a travel signature. If there is a signature, and it will be more than 12 months old before your return to the U.S., you must request a new travel signature from the OISS. (J-1 students with non-Regent issued DS-2019s will need a travel signature from the agency/organization that issued the DS-2019.)

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## **Special Notes:**

### **► Students Who are Planning to Visit Other Countries**

You must contact the embassy of the country you are planning to visit--at least 2-3 months in advance--to see if you will need a visa, even if you are just going to Canada or Mexico. Contact information for different embassies in the U.S. can be found on this page of the OISS website: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/links.cfm>

**► Automatic Visa Revalidation Benefit and Travel to Canada, Mexico, or Adjacent Islands (Other Than Cuba) for Less Than 30 Days**--If you are planning a trip to any of the countries listed above for less than 30 days, you may not require a new F-1/J-1 visa to reenter the U.S. if all of the following conditions apply:

1. Your I-94 is clearly marked for "D/S" (Duration of Status).
2. You make it clear to the Immigration Border Patrol Officer before leaving the U.S. that you will return in less than 30 days. You must NOT surrender your I-94 card upon your departure because you will need it to reenter the U.S. without a new/valid F-1/J-1 visa.
3. You travel with your current/valid passport & I-20/DS-2019 with the required travel signature (not more than 12 months old for currently enrolled students).
4. You do NOT apply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa while in Mexico, Canada or the Adjacent Islands. (If you apply for a new visa there, you must reenter on your newly approved visa. If that visa application is delayed, you will need to wait in that country until the application is processed. If that application is denied, you will not be able to return to the U.S.)

**Special Note:** Because all airline personnel are not familiar with immigration regulations and the Automatic Visa Revalidation benefit, it is strongly recommended that you carry a copy of the benefit with you when you travel. Otherwise, the airline personnel may not allow you to enter the plane without a valid F-1 visa. Information regarding this benefit can be found on this page of the ICE website (see section 2.E): [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq\\_f2.htm#\\_Toc81222014](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222014) You can also ask for the supervisor of the airline to confirm the benefit with the immigration officers at the airport. The regulation regarding this benefit can be found at 8C.F.R. 214.1(b)(3). A list of the Adjacent Islands can be found under section 2.F of the same website.

**State Sponsors of Terrorism:** Aliens who are citizens of countries on the U.S. State Department's list of State Sponsors of Terrorism are NOT eligible for the Automatic Visa Revalidation benefit for trips to Canada, Mexico, or Adjacent Islands for less than 30 days and will need a valid F-1 or J-1 visa to reenter the U.S., even after a short trip. (See the State Department website for details at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

**► Special Registration Students**--Please be reminded that you must depart the U.S. through authorized ports only. Failure to do so could result in a denial at the U.S. Port of Entry upon your attempted return to the U.S. and future immigration problems as well.

**► Those Who Graduated and are Engaged in Post-Completion OPT Employment**--To reenter the U.S. after a temporary departure, please be reminded that you will need: a valid passport, a valid F-1 visa, a valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD), a letter from your employer stating the dates of your employment and salary, and all of your I-20s with page "3" of the most recent one signed for travel purposes within the past 6 months. Regulations state that you are permitted to return to the U.S. to "resume employment". **For OPT Students with Dependents:** Since the OPT dates (and extension of your F-1 status) do not appear on the dependent SEVIS I-20s, your dependent(s) will need a copy of your most recent I-20 to take with them if they will be leaving and reentering the U.S. during your OPT period. They will also need a copy of your valid/unexpired EAD and the letter from your employer.