

Travel Instructions for International Students in F or J Status

The following information is intended to provide guidance on travel within and outside the United States. If you have specific questions, please e-mail the Office of International Students & Scholars at oiss@uno.edu or make an appointment to speak with an advisor in International Center room 125.

What should I do if I'm traveling within the U.S. (via car, bus, train, or air)?

- ✓ Take your passport, I-20 form or DS-2019 form and form I-94.¹
- ✓ We also suggest that you take your student/staff identification card and/or driver's license or state ID card, as well as a copy of your class schedule for the next semester.

What should I do if I'm traveling outside the U.S. and my visa is valid?

- ✓ Register for classes for the next available term.
- ✓ Visit the OISS at least 2 weeks in advance so that we may inspect your immigration documents and endorse your I-20 or DS-2019. Please note if you do not allow enough time for OISS to process an endorsement, we may have to mail your documents to you.
- ✓ Take updated financial documentation or at least a copy of financial documents used to obtain admission to UNO.
- ✓ Take your unofficial transcript (available to print from your webstar account).
- ✓ Take a copy of your class schedule.

What should I do if I'm traveling outside the U.S. and I need to renew my visa?

- ✓ Register for classes for the next available term.
- ✓ Visit the OISS at least 2 weeks in advance so that we may inspect your immigration documents and endorse your I-20 form or DS-2019. Please note if you do not allow enough time for OISS to process an endorsement, we may have to mail your documents to you.
- ✓ Prior to your trip, visit the U.S. Embassy or Consular website where you will obtain the visa for the latest information on local processing procedures and application forms, <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.
- ✓ Also, check the U.S. State Department's website to find waiting periods for visas at U.S. consulates and embassies world-wide: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/wait-times.html/>.
- ✓ Take updated financial documentation including a copy of your latest contract if you are a GA and a copy of your award letter if you receive a scholarship from UNO.
- ✓ Take your unofficial transcript (available to print from your webstar account).
- ✓ Take a copy of your class schedule.

Please note that students who will need to apply for a new visa while abroad during the winter break or in late summer may not have sufficient time to obtain their visa and return to UNO for the beginning of the new semester.

- Appointments are now required for virtually all non-immigrant visa applications.
- Holiday periods can be very busy times at U.S. embassies and consulates and there may be reduced office hours.
- More and more visa applicants are subject to security clearances, regardless of gender, field of study or country of nationality.

¹ The Immigration and Nationality Act (Section 264e) requires you to keep your immigration documents with you at all times. Since you are temporary residents, we do not believe it is necessary (at this time) to keep the originals on you while residing in the New Orleans area. **Do** keep a **copy** of your documents in your wallet.

If visa delays will prevent you from returning to the United States in time to resume your studies, you may want to reschedule your trip for another time.

My visa has expired. Can I still re-enter the U.S. using automatic visa revalidation if I have traveled to Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days?

The answer to this question depends on a number of factors. We advise you to consult with OISS staff to discuss any travel plans to Canada, Mexico or any other country.

If I am in F-1 status on Optional Practical Training, what documents are needed to return to the U.S.?

If you have been granted Optional Practical Training (OPT), in order to re-enter the U.S. you need the following:

- ✓ Valid visa
- ✓ Valid passport
- ✓ I-20 form signed on page 2 within the last 6 months
- ✓ Employment Authorization Document (EAD card–OPT work permit)
- ✓ A letter from your employer certifying participation in OPT