

Travel Instructions

1) Make sure page 3 of your I-20 (for F-1 students) or page 1 bottom of your DS-2019 (for J-1 students) was signed by an ISO staff member or other DSO/RO. PLEASE NOTE: On your date of return, this signature needs to have occurred within the last one (1) year, so double-check your dates before you leave. Don't let the signature expire while you are away! (For students on OPT, your I-20 needs to have a signature within the last six (6) months).

2) Inform the ISO when and why you will be traveling and review the documents required for re-entry to the U.S. with an ISO staff member. Normal travel between semesters or on academic breaks does not require a travel letter. If you must travel for special circumstances while the academic semester is underway, you might want to request a travel letter from the ISO, which will explain to the U.S. Border Patrol why you are not attending class.

3) Inform instructors, professors, and employers of your travel plans if your plans will overlap with coursework or employment obligations. If you are missing class or a work day, it is your responsibility to make sure your instructor, professor, or boss is informed. Failure to make special arrangements before you leave could result in failing a class, losing a grade, or losing your job.

4) Check to see that your passport will not expire in the six (6) months following your planned date of return. While in the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least six (6) months into the future. If it is not, make immediate arrangements for renewing your passport.

5) Check your visa stamp expiration date and number of entries allowed. (Canadians do not require a visa to enter the U.S.) If your visa stamp indicates a single entry allowed, you will need to obtain a new visa while you are away. If your visa stamp is about to expire or will expire before you plan to reenter the U.S., you will need to get a new visa stamp. For students who have changed visa status to F or J while residing in the U.S., you must get a new visa stamp reflecting your new visa status before you will be allowed to reenter. Do not try to reenter the U.S. using a B-1/B-2 or other non-student visa! You will not be allowed to study. PLEASE NOTE: While it is possible to obtain a visa at a consulate in a country other than your home country, there is risk of denial and delay. The ISO strongly advises applying for U.S. entry visas from your home country.

6) Register for classes for the next semester and print out a copy of your schedule to take with you. If you travel during the academic semester, bring your current semester's schedule. If you will be returning after a break for your final semester, be sure to discuss your course load with the ISO. F-1 students may need a Reduced Course Load authorization on their I-20 if their course registration shows less than a full-time schedule.

7) Make sure your tuition bill and fees are paid before you leave or make arrangements to pay them. If you return late for the next semester and have not paid your bills, you will lose your

registration, your class schedule, and may even fall out-of-status. You will be charged late fees to re-register and your classes might not be available anymore!

8) Make sure your health insurance policy covers your travels and your coverage is valid for any country you visit.

9) If you are visiting a country other than your home country, check with that country's Embassy or Consulate to determine what will be required of you in order to enter that country.

10) Lastly, when you leave the U.S., **you must surrender your I-94 card**. If the Border Officials do not take it, please email the ISO for instructions on where to mail it from outside the U.S. You will receive a new I-94 card upon your reentry. **PLEASE bring this new I-94 card to the ISO once you return to campus. We will place a copy in your student file. (This is no longer requested once you are in a period of OPT employment.)**

Special Circumstances:

1) **NSEERS and Special Entry/Exit Registration Requirements:** The U.S. Department of State requires visitors from certain countries to complete a special registration process before entering and exiting the U.S. Though the security list is not published, typically students from the following countries must complete special registration:

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Syria

You will know if you must complete special registration, because when you enter, U.S. Immigration Officials will ask to do an interview with you, take your fingerprints, and then issue you an FIN number (fingerprint identification number) in your passport, on your I-94 card, or on your I-20. They will give you a handout of information on the Special Registration. Whenever you leave the U.S., you must leave through a port of departure that is on the list provided and you must meet for an interview with U.S. Immigration Officials the day you leave.

2) If you are in an approved **post-completion OPT period**, it is recommended that you have the following with you upon return:

Verification of Employment Letter (i.e. job offer with job title, salary, start date, etc.)

Valid EAD card (Employment Authorization Document)

I-20 with OPT authorization and signature within last six (6) months on page 3

Note: The I-20 that you are issued at the time of your application states "OPT Requested" and it remains valid throughout the OPT period of employment. You may, however, request from the ISO an updated I-20 which will indicate that your OPT is "Approved." This is suggested when you find that your travel signature is older than 6 months.

F-2 Dependents of an F-1 on OPT should carry with them their most recent I-20, a copy of the F-1's most recent I-20, and a copy of the F-1's EAD card.

3) If you have a **pending OPT application at the USCIS** and your I-20 program end date has passed, the ISO recommends that you **do not travel until it has been approved, you have your EAD card, and you have a job offer letter**. If you find it necessary to travel while your application is pending, you must at least be able to show an I-797 Receipt Notice along with your other valid immigration documentation.

4) If you have **applied for a "Change of Status"** and it has not yet been approved, you should not leave the country. If you leave the country you will have "abandoned" your change of status and your request will no longer be processed.

5) If you have **applied for "Reinstatement"**, you may not travel outside the USA.

6) If you are a **transfer student**, be sure to have the first I-20/DS-2019 from your old school with you, which has the original entry stamp on it. When you transfer from school to school your SEVIS file and SEVIS ID number transfers with you. Thus, even though your visa stamp will have the name of the old school on it, your visa stamp is still valid because it will have the same SEVIS ID on it that is on your current I-20/DS-2019 from Gannon University. Some U.S. Border Officials are confused by the visa stamp with the old school name or about whether you should have a new SEVIS ID. By having your old school's I-20/DS-2019 with the original entry stamp with you, you can easily show and explain to the Border Official that you are simply a transfer student and you are entering the U.S. in valid status.

***** Keep all your documents on you, in a neat, easy to reach folder or envelope, so you can present your documents with ease when going through customs and border inspection.*****

If you have any trouble at the border, do not hesitate to call the ISO at (814) 871-7030 or (814) 871- 5356. If the ISO is closed, call Gannon Security at (814) 871-7000.

Have a safe trip!