

## **TRAVEL AND RE-ENTRY INTO THE US**

Basic travel documents - You should make photocopies of your travel documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place:

- The passport pages that have your passport number, picture, & personal info
- The passport page with the visa stamp on it,
- Both sides of your I-94 Form (arrival/departure record), and
- All pages of your I-20 (or DS-2019)

### **Re-entering the US after a temporary absence**

To be re-admitted to the US after an absence of less than 5 months, the following documents are necessary:

- ***F-1 or F-2 visa holders***: valid passport, valid F-1 or F-2 visa, current I-20 which has been **signed** on page 3 within the past year by an advisor at GGU LAW (ISS), and proof of financial support.
- ***J-1 or J-2 visa holders***: valid passport, valid J-1 or J-2 visa, and current DS-2019 which has been **signed** within the past year by the J visa sponsor, and proof of financial support. (If GGU School of Law issued your DS-2019, then bring your document to GGU LAW (ISS) for the travel signature.)

### **Renewing your visa**

Before your trip, you should visit GGU LAW (ISS) with your documents to be sure you have everything you will need to re-enter the US. If your visa is expired, see the section below on "**Renewing your visa**".

WARNING: F-1 students who are out of the U.S. for 5 consecutive months or more may become ineligible for off-campus employment authorization until one academic year has passed after their re-entry.

### **Items necessary for F-1/J-1 student visa application at the US Embassy/Consulate:**

- F-1 or F-2: valid I-20, \*recently endorsed on page 3, proof of financial support, valid passport, current passport-type photos, copies of transcripts or letter from advisor stating that the F-1 visa holder is making good progress towards the degree.
- J-1 or J-2: valid DS-2019 \*recently endorsed on page 1, proof of financial support, valid passport, current passport-type photos, copies of transcripts or letter from advisor stating that the J-1 visa holder is making good progress towards the degree.

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**The staff at GGU LAW (ISS) will endorse your I-20 or DS-2019 for travel. To request the travel signature bring the document to Room 3303. You can pick up the signed document the following business day. Note: it is a common misconception that your documents must be signed every time you travel. Your documents are valid for one year from the date they were signed with the exception of students who have completed their studies and are working under Practical training. In this case, the signature is only valid for (6) six months.**

**Obtaining a visa in Canada or Mexico**

Students who wish to apply for a nonimmigrant visa at one of the US Consulates on the Mexican border (Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez or Matamoros) or in Canada (Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary or Vancouver) must make an appointment by phone before traveling to the post.

The State Department has implemented a “900” number for “Third Country Nationals (TCNs)” to make appointments to apply for a nonimmigrant visa: 1-900-443-3131 (if in the US) or 1-900-415-2778 (if in Canada). Unfortunately, it may be difficult to get through to the number, and one is only able to make an appointment during a five days period between the 15th and 20th day.

A visa appointment reservation system through a “888” number has been also established for appointments with the US Consulate in Canada and Mexico. The number, 1-888-840-0032 requires a credit card will to complete the call charges of about \$1.50 (Canadian) per minute.

Once you have an appointment, you may or may not obtain the visa, although we have observed a reasonable success rate. Applicants can also book appointments via the internet at <http://www.nvars.com>.

HOWEVER, the staff of GGU LAW (ISS) does NOT encourage students to apply for their visa in a neighboring country, but rather suggests that you apply for the F or J visa in your home country.

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### **Traveling to Canada**

Citizens from certain countries who wish to visit Canada are required to obtain a visitor's visa (tourist visa) from the Canadian Consulate General in Los Angeles: Immigration Section, Canadian Consulate General, 550 S. Hope St., 9th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071, telephone (213) 346-2700, fax (213) 620-8827. Office hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Citizens of countries such as European countries, Australia, and New Zealand are likely to be exempt from the Canadian visa requirement, but to be certain, contact the Canadian Consulate.

Remember that the Consulate in San Francisco does not process visa requests for entering Canada; you should forward your visa request to the Consulate in Los Angeles.

### **Traveling to Mexico**

Citizens from certain countries who wish to visit Mexico are required to obtain a visitor's visa (tourist visa) from the Mexican Consulate General in San Francisco [Phone (415) 392-5554, FAX (415) 495-3971. It is located on 532 Folsom Street, SF CA 94105. The office opens from 8-am to 1 pm Monday to Friday, and serves Alameda County, San Mateo County and San Francisco County.

The Mexican Consulate in San Jose [(408) 294-3414], open 8am to 4pm Monday-Friday (visas are issued from 8-12). The San Jose office is located between Jackson and Empire on 540 First Street and serves the south bay area and Santa Clara County.

### **Renewing your passport**

Consult your own consulate or embassy in the US to renew your passport. Note: Canadian citizens are not required to have a passport, but we do encourage you to have one to facilitate other services (getting a phone number) or benefits (employment authorization, social security number) while in the US.

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### Visa stamp

The visa stamp put in your passport by the US consul abroad was needed to enter the United States. The visa shows the latest date on which you can apply to enter this country. It does not show how long you may legally stay in the US.

When you arrive at the US “port of entry,” the US Immigration inspector examines your passport, your visa stamp, and your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) and determines whether you are admissible to the United States.

Note: Canadian citizens are not required to have a visa. They must show their DS-2019 or I-20 at the US port of entry when entering from Canada (if entering from outside the Western Hemisphere, then a valid passport must also be presented).

### Renewing your visa

\*It is necessary to renew your visa only if your visa has expired and you plan to leave and re-enter the US. If it is necessary for you to renew your visa in order to re-enter the US, you may do so by visiting the US consul in the country to which you are traveling (although it is highly recommended that you renew in your \*home country). The visa issuing officer must be assured that you will ultimately be returning to your home country before issuing an F-1, F-2, J-1 or J-2 visa.

\*Exception: If you travel to Canada, Mexico, or any of the islands in the Caribbean Sea (except Cuba) for less than 30 days, you do not need to have an expired visa renewed as long as you retain your I-94 card when you leave the US and do not apply for a visa at a US consulate in the contiguous country that you are visiting.

**DO NOT SURRENDER YOUR I-94 CARD** (See section 9 of page 2 of your I-20). Otherwise you will be expected to have a valid visa stamp in your passport! **Warning:** First, citizens of countries listed as “state sponsors of terrorism” (currently Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba) can’t take advantage of this automatic revalidation benefit. Second, any nonimmigrant (not just someone from the seven countries listed above) who chooses to apply for a new visa while in contiguous territory will no longer be eligible for the “automatic revalidation” benefit if the visa is denied or delayed beyond 30 days. So, for example, if you are denied a visa in Canada, Mexico you will then travel home from Canada or Mexico!

**\*\*WARNING:** Keep in mind that there is NO guarantee that a US Consulate or US Embassy from a country other than your own will issue you a visa stamp to re-enter the US. It is NOT possible to renew these visa types while you are within the borders of the United States.

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US State Department website that lists US Consulates/Embassies overseas:

<http://www.usembassy.gov/>

### Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure record)

The I-94 shows that you have been lawfully admitted to the US. It is usually stapled onto the US visa page of your passport. It contains an eleven-digit identifying number (called your admission number) which the DHS uses to keep track of your arrival into and departure from the United States.

NOTE: Your SEVIS ID # is now considered a more important number to keep track of you during your stay in the US, but I-94 numbers are still being issued.

### Expiration of Authorized Stay

There may be a date written in the stamped portion of your I-94; if so, this may have been done in error. You technically would have to leave the US by that date or you must apply to extend your stay or correct your I-94 card. ***Please contact a GGU LAW (ISS) advisor if your I-94 card does not have the "D/S notation written on it, and if a departure date has instead been indicated.***

If there is no date, but rather the inscription "D/S" (duration of status), you will need to apply for an extension only if you do not graduate before the date in item #5 of your I-20 (or item #3 of your DS-2019.) and you need to remain in the US to complete your studies beyond that time.