

Mississippi College International Student Travel Information

Before students leave the United States, they should make sure they have the following documents to re-enter the United States to continue their studies:

- valid passport (must be valid at least 6 months into the future)
- valid U.S. visa (except Canadian citizens)
- valid form I-20/DS-2019 with signature for re-entry (signature should be within 1 year of re-entry date or 6 months for students on OPT).
- all previous I-20s/DS-2019s
- current proof of financial support
- transcripts (not required but recommended)
- proof of current enrollment, or if travel is between semesters, proof of registration for the next semester (not required but recommended)

Additional documents for students on OPT: EAD card and job offer letter.

Valid U.S. Visa

The visa stamp in the passport, indicates the type of visa, the expiration date, and number of entries permitted. As long as the visa indicates F-1/J-1, is multiple-entry and has not yet expired, the student does not need to apply for a new visa if he/she plans to re-enter the U.S. with an I-20 to study.

Students should always check with the U.S. Consulate in the country in which they will apply for a visa. Each post follows U.S. laws and regulations but has its own procedures in issuing visas. Some points to consider:

- Applicants must prove to the visa officer that they will return home. In other words, the applicant must have sufficient ties to the home country.
- Some posts are now using the DS-160 (electronic visa application) which is \$160.
- Some countries have additional security checks that will take 28 days or more before visas can be issued. It is important to consider your situation and your studies if you are delayed by a security check. These security checks are based on a variety of things. Unfortunately, the Office of Global Education cannot speed up the visa process.

Visas are denied for a variety of reasons; if denied, students should ask for the reason in writing. Individuals frequently assume the visa was denied for the wrong reason. The most common visa denial is based on 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act; the visa officer is required to assume every visa applicant is an intending immigrant until the applicant proves otherwise. People applying for non-immigrant visas must show non-immigrant intent. Other reasons for visa denial include incomplete applications, inadmissibility, false documentation, etc.

Valid Form I-20 or DS-2019

If students plan to remain at the same school after re-entering the U.S., they can use the I-20/DS-2019 which has been endorsed by the International Student Adviser (Designated School Official). The I-20/DS-2019 should be endorsed within the semester the student is traveling or within 12 months of re-entry. If the student requires a new I-20/DS-2019 because the information on the document has changed, students may need to re-verify their financial support. *Please note that only the International Student Adviser, and Executive Director in the Office of Global Education, can sign Mississippi College I-20s. Do not ask faculty or staff outside to sign I-20s.*

Canadian Citizens

Canadians entering the U.S. need a passport and an endorsed I-20/DS-2019. Canadians re-entering the U.S. in F-1/J-1 status do not need a visa. F-1/J-1 students will need an endorsed I-20/DS-2019 and valid I-94 (for re-entry).

Travel to Contiguous Territory (i.e., Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands other than Cuba)

Adjacent islands include Saint Pierre, Miquelon, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, the Windward and Leeward Islands, Trinidad, Martinique, and other British, French, and Netherlands territories or possessions in or bordering on the Caribbean Sea.

Some individuals will require visas to enter Canada or Mexico. A list of countries whose citizens require visas is available on the Canadian consulate website and the Mexican consulate website.

When traveling to a contiguous territory, international students do not surrender their I-94s; hence, students will need the I-94s to re-enter the U.S. In general, to re-enter the U.S. from contiguous territory, the student must present a valid passport with a U.S. visa stamped within (valid or expired), I-94, and I-20/DS-2019 as well as financial documents. It is best to carry a transcript and current registration information.

Re-entry from contiguous territory for most students with an expired visa is possible as long as the trip has been less than 30 days, the student has not traveled to a third country from the contiguous territory, and the student was in status in the U.S. when entering contiguous territory. This type of re-entry is referred to as automatic visa revalidation.

Students from certain countries (currently Iran, Sudan, Cuba, Syria, and Sudan) may not benefit from this visa revalidation.

Important: Applying for a U.S. visa in Canada or Mexico

Please note that students who apply for a U.S. visa in contiguous territory must wait until the visa is issued. These individuals will not be able to rely on automatic visa revalidation, and if the visa application is denied, students should be prepared to return to their home country directly from Canada or Mexico. In other words, anyone applying for a U.S. visa in Canada or Mexico cannot use automatic visa revalidation.

Travel to all Countries (Including Transit in Airports) Except your Country of Citizenship

- Remember that you may need a visa to enter any other country; this will depend on where you are traveling and agreements with your country of citizenship.
- Remember that even though you may be able to use “automatic revalidation” to return to the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, or contiguous islands except Cuba, you may need a visa to enter Canada, Mexico or contiguous islands except Cuba.
- You may need a transit visa even if you are just entering the airport of a country.
- It is your responsibility to learn about the visa requirements to enter another country. The Office of Global Education can only advise on the requirements for entering/returning to the U.S.

Additional information on returning to the U.S. is found at Department of Homeland Security FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) of F Non-Immigrants: Entry and Exit