

I-20 DOs & DON'Ts

DO:

- Keep all I-20s (including previous I-20s) in a safe place
- Check to make sure the travel signature on page 3 was signed within 1 year from the date you intend to return to the U.S.
- Contact ISS any time you have made a change to your situation (such as your major or anticipated graduation date).

DON'T:

- Lose your I-20s (current I-20 and previously issued)
- Travel outside the U.S. without a current travel signature (signed within 1 year from the date you intend to re-enter)
- Wait until the last day to request a travel signature, updates to your I-20 or resolve problems.

F1 TRAVEL & VISA INFORMATION

ENTERING THE U.S. ON "INITIAL ATTENDANCE" I-20

If you are arriving to the U.S. on an initial I-20 (see line #3 on your I-20), please note that F1 visa regulations allow you to only **enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date on your I-20** (see line #5 on your I-20).

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

You are **required** have the following with you whenever you re-enter the United States:

- 1) **Valid Passport.** Your passport must be valid for 6 months into the future at all times while in the U.S. You should contact the consulate of your home country if your passport will be expiring. A list of foreign consulates located in the U.S. are available at: www.uwb.edu/iss.
- 2) **Valid F1 Visa.** Your F-1 visa is permission to enter the U.S. as a student. A visa can only be secured at a U.S. Embassy. ISS recommends that you apply in your home country. A list of U.S. Embassy locations are available at: www.uwb.edu/iss.
- 3) **Current UW Bothell I-20.** You may use your current UW Bothell I-20 for travel if the information on page 1 is still accurate. If there has been any change in your name, major or degree level, you should request a new I-20 from ISS before you travel.
- 4) **Current Travel Signature.** You need to obtain a travel signature from ISS on page 3 of your current I-20 in order to re-enter as a continuing F-1 student. ISS recommends that the travel signature be issued within 1 year from the date you intend to re-enter the U.S.

ISS **recommends** that you also have the following with you whenever you re-enter the United States:

- 1) **Unofficial Transcript.** A transcript is an official record from the University of your academic career. You may print this from your MyUW account.
- 2) **Current Course Schedule.** You may print this from your MyUW account.
- 3) **Evidence of Financial Support.** You may be asked at the Port of Entry to provide documents that verify that you can support your studies. Documents should match the financial sponsor listed on page 1 of your I-20 and can include bank statements, scholarship letters, etc.

TOURIST VISA FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

(including Canada)

You may be required by other countries to obtain a tourist visa if you are planning to visit a country other than your home country – including Canada and Mexico! Requirements and visa application processes vary, so contact each country's embassy or consulate in the U.S. for more information. **Canadian Consulate in Seattle, and how to obtain a Canadian tourist visa:** www.canadainternational.gc.ca/seattle/. A link to foreign consulates in the U.S. are available at www.uwb.edu/iss.

TRAVEL TO CANADA OR MEXICO

As a student on an F1 visa, you are eligible for Automatic Revalidation. This allows you to solely travel to Canada, Mexico, or Adjacent Islands (except Cuba) and re-enter the U.S. on an expired F-1 visa. This is allowed only if:

- 1) Your stay was less than 30 days;
- 2) You do NOT apply for a new F1 visa at a US consulate;
- 3) You are able to present to US immigration officials your passport, I-94 card, I-20 with valid travel signature, and evidence of full-time enrollment and financial support.
- 4) You are not a citizen of "state sponsors of terrorism" designated by the U.S. Dept. of State: Cuba, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria

DEPENDENT TRAVEL

A dependent with a valid F2 visa may re-enter the U.S. with his/her passport, visa and dependent I-20 with current program information on page 1 and a valid re-entry signature on page 3. ISS recommends that dependents carry evidence of F-1 visa holder's legal status and full-time enrollment.

TRAVEL WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

There are no special documents required for travel within the United States (including Hawaii and Alaska). However, ISS recommends that you carry your current I-20, passport, I-94 card and valid F1 visa with you in the event that you are asked by a law enforcement officer to provide evidence of your status.

ISS also recommends that you carry a valid Washington State Identification card, as a form or legal identification that is safe to carry on a daily basis. Information on how to obtain a Washington State ID card is at www.uwb.edu/iss.

OBTAINING A NEW F1 VISA ENTRY VISA

If your current F1 visa has expired or if you do not have an F1 visa, you must apply for a F1 visa at a U.S. consulate before you can enter the U.S. It is not possible to obtain an F1 visa within the United States.

If you will apply for an F1 visa, you should:

- 1) **Contact a U.S. Consulate.** You should contact the U.S. Consulate where you plan to apply for your F1 visa to learn about the visa application process. To access the nearest U.S. Consulate, visit: <http://usembassy.state.gov>
- 2) **Collect All Required Documents.** In addition to any required documents listed on the U.S. Consulate's website, you can also obtain the following official documents that verify your enrollment at UW Bothell, from the Office of the Registrar (UW1-160; registrar@uwb.edu; www.uwb.edu/registration/transcript). Students should allow at least 2 business days for processing.
 - **Official Transcript.** A transcript is an official record from the University of your academic career. You may request an official transcript from the Office of the Registrar. You may also print an unofficial transcript from your MyUW account.
 - **Enrollment Verification Letter.** This is an official document from UW Bothell that can confirm that you are enrolled in the current quarter, and registered for the future quarter. You may request this letter from the Office of the Registrar.

VISA DENIALS

It is rare for a returning student to be denied a new F1 visa, however there are no guarantees. Be aware that your risk of denial increases under the following circumstances:

- 1) You are applying in a country other than your home country
- 2) You have family members (spouse, parents, siblings) who are citizens or permanent residents in the U.S.
- 3) You are pursuing post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

If your visa application is denied or significantly delayed, contact ISS so that we are aware of your situation.

TIPS FOR THE VIEW INTERVIEW

The following are tips for you to consider when preparing for your visa interview. You should also visit the website of the U.S. Consulate in your home country for further information about preparing for your interview.

1. **Be honest.** Students have been denied visas for presenting false information.
2. **Ties to your Home Country.** You must be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the U.S. "Ties" to your home country that bind you to your home town, homeland, or current place of residence such as job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc.
3. **Financial Support.** Make sure you bring sufficient proof that you have enough money to support yourself in the U.S.
4. **English.** Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. If you are coming to the United States to study only English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.
5. **Know the Program and How It Fits Your Career Plans.** You should be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career.
6. **Employment.** Your main purpose in coming to the U.S. should be to study, not to work in the U.S. before or after graduation. While many students do work on-campus during their studies, employment is not their main purpose.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studying Abroad through a UW Program: Contact ISS if you are planning to study abroad to discuss full-time enrollment, UW health insurance enrollment, and valid immigration documents upon re-entry to the U.S.

Extended Absences: Your SEVIS record will be terminated if you are outside of the U.S. for more than 5 months, unless you have been authorized to study abroad. Consult with ISS if you plan to be out of the U.S. for more than 5 months.

Optional Practical Training: In addition to your valid passport, valid F1 visa, and I-20 you must present your EAD card and a letter from your employer to the immigration officials upon re-entry to the U.S.

QUESTIONS?

If you have additional questions about travel, visit our Travel section at www.uwb.edu/iss or contact International Student Services at iss@uwb.edu.