



## Office of International Students & Scholars

# What to Do Before You Travel

- **Plan ahead.** Think several weeks in advance about what you will need for your trip and assemble it. That way you will not be stressed at the last minute.
- **Make several copies of all your important documents.** Those include all of the I-20s you have been issued (from every school you have attended) and the pages in your passport showing your picture, birth date, passport number, expiration date, visa and I-94 card. Keep one set of copies in your carry-on luggage, one set in your checked baggage and leave a set at home, preferably with someone who can send them to you if needed.
- Visit the OISS to **have your I-20 signed**, if necessary, and to request a “Re-Entry Letter” if you are renewing your visa. Do this several days before you travel. *Do not* wait until the last minute.
- Obtain a “[Verification Letter](#)” from the Registrar’s Office. This letter states that you are currently enrolled as a student at Utah State. It typically takes two business days to have your request processed.
- **If you are traveling outside of the United States:**
  - a. Check your visa (for the United States) in your passport to learn if it has expired. If so, you will have to apply at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate to have it renewed before returning to the United States.
  - b. If you have changed your visa status to F-1 in the United States, you will have to apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate before returning to the United States. Remember, you are currently in “F-1 status,” but you do not have an “F-1 visa.”

*If you need to get your F-1 visa renewed or if you need to apply for an F-1 visa, you should contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in the country where you are traveling BEFORE you travel to learn how long the process may take.*

**Warning:** *Occasionally, depending on the country, it may take several weeks to apply for a visa so you may need to plan to be away from school for a few weeks or months. Also, if possible, you may want to make an appointment with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in the country you are traveling to BEFORE you leave the U.S. We recommend this because it often takes several weeks just to get an appointment.*

- c. If you are traveling outside the United States to a country other than your home country, call the embassy/consulate of that country to learn if you need a visa to enter that country. If so, ask what the requirements, cost and

timeframe are to apply for a visa. Keep in mind that it often takes 2-3 weeks to process a visa application.

- Get current “**Financial Support Documents**” from your financial sponsor. If the documents you have submitted to Utah State are less than one year old, you may request a copy of them from the OISS. You may be asked for them by an immigration official at the airport/border when you return to the United States. See paragraph 10 of “Instructions to Students” page of your I-20:

“10. Financial Support. You must demonstrate that you are financially able to support yourself for the entire period of stay in the United States while pursuing a full course of study. You are required to attach documentary evidence of means of support.”

Paragraph 10 means that you must have a copy of the documents showing your means of financial support which is dated less than one year ago. If you received an assistantship and tuition waivers, for example, you would need a letter from your department which shows how much money you received from them. If this amount is different from the amount shown on your I-20, we need to revise your I-20 to reflect the current information. Please contact the OISS to make this change.

If you need to renew your visa, you will definitely be required to show your current/recent ‘Financial Support Documents’ at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate where you apply for the visa renewal.

- If you are **traveling in the United States, make sure to carry your original passport and I-20 with you at all times.** If you are stopped by any government official (police, border patrols, immigration officers, etc.), you will be required to show them your original documents.
- **When you come back, be sure to come to the OISS so we can get a copy of your new I-94 card.**

## **Have a safe trip and a great time!!**

We look forward to welcoming you back to Utah State.