

## VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION

### New Students: Apply for and receive an F-1 or J-1 student visa

#### STEP 1: Pay the SEVIS Fee.

Once you've received your I-20 or DS-2019, you will need to pay a SEVIS fee to the [US Department of Homeland Security](#). In order to pay, complete the [Form I-901](#) along with the payment via mail or the Internet (dependents in F-2 or J-2 status are not required to pay the fee). The SEVIS fee must be paid at least 3 business days prior to a visa interview or the filing of the change of status application in the US. [Learn more](#) about the SEVIS fee. **Keep a printout of the receipt confirming the I-901 fee payment.**

#### STEP 2: Apply for your Visa

Use your I-20 or DS-2019 issued by Rutgers to apply for your visa. Review these NAFSA [tips on applying for a student visa](#), then [apply for a student visa](#) from a [United States consulate](#) in your country of citizenship or country of permanent residence.

#### Be Prepared

- Find out in advance what information you will need to supply on your visa application. All non-immigrant visa applicants must complete Forms DS-160 (online non-immigrant visa application) and DS-158 (contact information and work history for non-immigrant visa applicant). Others will need to submit DS-157 (supplemental non-immigrant visa application) as well. You can access all of these forms at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/forms.html>
- Applicants will also need to appear for an in-person interview in English and will have to pay a visa application fee

#### Current Students

If your visa has expired, you need to get a new visa from a US consulate or embassy **outside of the US**. You can't apply for a new visa inside the US.

#### Be Prepared:

- Visit the website of the [US consulate](#) you plan to apply at. You may also want to read the [Department of State information on visa denials](#), and [tips on how to apply for a visa](#).
- Review information on [how to make a visa appointment](#), and to check on [visa wait times](#) in the city you plan to apply. If you have applied for a visa and have been waiting for more than one month for the results of a security advisory opinion, be sure to [contact us](#).

#### Note:

Some visa applications require additional [administrative processing](#) beyond the consular interview. Most administrative processing is completed within 60 days but in some cases it may take longer. Apply for your visa well in advance of your anticipated travel date. If your application is undergoing administrative processing and you are unable to arrive at Rutgers in time for your program/session start date, please make sure you [contact us](#).

If your field of study or research is technology or science-related, we recommend you get a letter (on letterhead) from your supervisor, department chair, center director or graduate program director to submit with your visa application. The letter should explain as much about your program of study and research as possible with the goal of demonstrating that your research does not threaten national security. If you are working on a grant, the letter can name the Principal Investigator and the granting agency, grant number and grant name. It should also explain the purpose of the grant research. *The more information or evidence the letter can offer to convince the US Department of State that your work does not threaten national security, the better it will be.* The letter does not assure a waiver of the administrative processing, but can assist in the process.

**If you experience a problem when applying for a visa or at the port of entry, contact your [international student adviser](#) immediately!**

## Suggested items to take with you when applying for a visa

- Unexpired passport valid at least 6 months in the future
- I-20 or DS-2019 recently signed by your international student adviser along with all previously issued I-20s or DS-2019s. For more information about how to get a travel signature/ endorsement read our hand out titled: [Obtaining a Travel Signature for F-1 & J-1 Registered Students](#). Make sure the information (spelling of name, major, degree level, funding) on your most current document is accurate
- Current [Proof of financial support](#) (this may include personal or family bank statements, any affidavit of support, or copies of your fellowship or scholarship letter), matching the information on your I-20 or Ds-2019
- [SEVIS fee receipt](#)
- Unofficial [unofficial transcript](#) with your name on it (preferably showing proof of registration for the following semester if you are traveling during the winter or summer break.
- [Enrollment Verification](#)
- [Center letter clarifying Rutgers full-time policy](#), if applicable
- If on OPT or Academic Training (AT), your OPT or AT authorization
- Letter from academic official, if applicable (see note on page 1)
- For graduate students, a resume or CV, including a list of publications (if any) and a summary of past and present research. If applicable, a letter from your GPD/academic adviser discussing how your research is NOT technologically sensitive (see #2 above)
- If dependents are accompanying you, make sure their I-20s or DS-2019s are signed for travel and that you have a certified copy of your marriage certificate or birth certificates for children
- Evidence showing your intention to return to your home country upon program completion, including evidence of compelling social and economic ties to your home country.

## More Travel Links

- [Obtaining a Travel Signature](#)
- [Travel and Visa Information](#)
- [Bring Family to the U.S.](#)
- [Inviting Relatives or Friends as a B-2 visitor](#)

## TRAVEL AND VISA INFORMATION

### Planning to travel?

When traveling outside the United States, international students and scholars must have in their possession the following documentation to ensure their ability to re-enter the U.S. and resume their activities:

- Unexpired passport valid at least 6 months in the future
- Valid U.S. visa in the appropriate classification, e.g., F-1, J-1, H-1B, etc.\*
- Valid immigration document for the status being sought: I-20 or DS-2019 with travel endorsement from Global Services for F-1/J-1 students \*\*

\* If your visa has expired, you need to get a new visa from a US consulate or embassy outside of the US. You can't apply for a new visa inside the US. Find out about how to renew your visa or how to apply for a new visa: [Visa Application Information](#).

\*\* If you are in F-1 or J-1 visa status, make you have a valid travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019, prior to traveling outside of the United States. Find out about how to [Obtain a Travel Signature](#).

While not specifically required by regulations, the following additional documents are very strongly recommended when traveling abroad. These documents provide information about your legal status, academic and immigration history in the U.S. They need not be presented unless asked.

#### For F-1 AND J-1 Students:

- Your complete [unofficial transcript](#) and [Enrollment Verification](#) to prove good academic standing
- [SEVIS fee receipt](#)
- Current [Proof of financial support](#) (this may include personal or family bank statements, any affidavit of support, or copies of your fellowship or scholarship letter)
- All previously-issued I-20 or DS-2019 forms
- If on OPT or Academic Training (AT), your OPT or AT authorization

#### For J-1 Professors, Research Scholars, Visiting Research Students, and Student Interns:

- A recently dated copy of the appointment letter (proof of current employment or courtesy appointment with the university)
- Recent pay stubs or, if not employed by Rutgers, a recently-dated document showing proof of current funding source and amount
- All previously-issued DS-2019 forms

#### For H-1B Employees:

- A recently dated letter from your department confirming that you still hold the position named in the H-1B petition filed by Rutgers
- Recent pay stubs (the most recent 3 pay stubs is enough)
- If you need to apply for a new H-1B visa before returning to the U.S., keep copies of certain documents from your GLOBAL SERVICES file (a copy of your LCA and a copy of you I-129 form); be sure to request these from GLOBAL SERVICES at least one week prior to leaving the U.S.

### Useful travel resources for international students:

- Department of Homeland Security's [Study in the States](#) Website
- [FAQ for F-Nonimmigrants](#) from ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement)
- [I-94 Related Information](#) from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- NAFSA's (Association of International Educators) [10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa](#)
- Travel Guidance from [ICE](#) (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement)

### More Travel Links

- [Bring Family to the U.S.](#)
- [Inviting Relatives or Friends as a B-2 visitor](#)

## I-94 Record and CBP Admission Stamp: [Get your I-94 record](#)

The I-94 is an official US government record of when you enter and depart the United States. Your I-94 record confirms what immigration status you entered the United States in, and the duration of time you can legally remain in the U.S. This record is maintained in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) systems and can be accessed only AFTER you enter the US. Travelers will also receive a CBP admission stamp in their passport that also indicates immigration status and expiration of stay. Upon re-entry to the U.S. by land, visitors will receive a paper I-94 card that will indicate their date of entry and be notated with their immigration status and expiration of stay.

**F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders:** The CBP admission stamp will be notated “F-1 D/S” or “J-1 D/S” to reflect you have authorization to remain in the U.S for “Duration of Status.” If the stamp indicates anything other than “F-1 D/S” or “J-1 D/S,” visitors should ask the officer to re-process their documents. If they fail to recognize the problem while at the port-of-entry, visitors should immediately contact their international adviser upon return to campus.

**H-1 B Visa Holders:** The stamp will be noted with “H-1B” and a specific end date. The end date is usually the same as the end date requested by Rutgers in the H-1B petition it filed on behalf of the beneficiary, but in some cases it is an earlier date, either because the beneficiary’s passport expires earlier or because the port-of-entry officer made an error. If you are given a stamp with an end date that is earlier than the end date on your H-1B approval notice (Form I-797), notify Global Services immediately.

## Validity of Visa

A visa does not determine how long you may remain in the United States; it only determines when you may **enter or reenter** the U.S. To enter or reenter the U.S. in a specific nonimmigrant status such as J-1 or F-1, you must have in your passport a valid visa in that specific visa classification (unless you are a citizen of Canada). For information on the one exception to this requirement, see “Automatic Visa Revalidation” below.

Because U.S visas are needed only to *enter* the U.S., it is not necessary or possible to apply for a new visa from inside the U.S. As long as your visa is valid at the time of entry, you may remain in the U.S. until your I-94 expires as long as you are complying with regulations that apply to your specific nonimmigrant status. However, if you leave the U.S. for a short trip abroad and your visa has already expired or will expire while you are outside the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa at a U.S. abroad in order to be able to return to the U.S. in your previous nonimmigrant status. See [Visa Application Information](#) for up-to-date information and advisories.

## Travel to Canada, Mexico and Certain Adjacent Caribbean Islands

If you are traveling to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean, you do NOT need to obtain a new F-1 or J-1 visa to reenter the US as long as you meet the following conditions (via [Automatic Visa Revalidation](#)):

- Presently be in valid F-1 or J-1 visa status
- Have a valid I-20/DS-2019 [signed for travel](#)
- Have a print-out of an unexpired [I-94 record](#) with you (do NOT surrender it when you leave the US).
- Have an unexpired passport valid at least 6 months in the future
- Be in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean for less than thirty days

You MUST check with Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean nation you are traveling to as to whether you need a visa for your visit there (check the [website of the Canadian consulate in New York](#) or the [website of the Mexican consulate](#) for information on requirements for entry to those countries). And remember, the US government determines your eligibility to enter the US. Be prepared and have the needed travel documents with you. Automatic revalidation is unavailable to citizens of Cuba, Sudan, Iran, & Syria, however.

### Notes:

If a visitor chooses to apply for a U.S. visa while visiting Canada or Mexico and is denied the visa, he/she will become ineligible for the automatic visa revalidation benefit.

Certain airlines have internal policies and do not allow any-one with an expired visa on-board for international travel. In such cases even Automatic Visa Revalidation may not work. It is recommended that students and scholars check with the respective airlines prior to confirming travel plans.

Automatic Visa Revalidation does NOT apply to students who are citizens of the countries named above and traveling to their home countries. In those cases, students must obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa to reenter the US, except for citizens of Canada and Bermuda. Please note that it is more difficult to apply for a US visa while in one of these countries unless you are a citizen of that country.