



SUNY POLY

TRAVEL GUIDELINES FOR F-1 STUDENTS

All F-1 Students who depart the U.S. and wish to re-enter in F-1 Status to resume their studies or OPT/STEM OPT employment are required to have a travel authorization signature on their Form I-20.

Students traveling within the U.S. are not required to have a travel authorization signature.

IMPORTANT

Students may depart the U.S. at any time, even if they do not have a current travel authorization signature.

Travel authorization signatures are only required when you return to the U.S.

You may submit a request for a travel authorization signature AFTER you have already departed the U.S.

ABOUT TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

Travel authorization signatures may be viewed on page 2 of your Form I-20.

- **Your travel authorization is valid for:**
 - 12 months from the date of signature: If you have not completed your program of study, or
 - 6 months from the date of signature: If you have completed your program of study and are engaged in post completion OPT or STEM OPT employment authorization.

<i>Students will be required to present the following documents when re-entering the U.S.</i>	
Currently Enrolled Students	Students with approved post-completion OPT or STEM Extension OPT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A valid passport ○ A valid F-1 visa (except Canadians) ○ A current <i>printed and signed</i> I-20 with a valid travel endorsement ○ Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid, etc.) ○ Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment, transcript, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A valid passport ○ A valid F-1 visa (except Canadians) ○ A current <i>printed and signed</i> I-20 with a valid travel endorsement ○ Your EAD card for OPT or STEM OPT Extension ○ Proof of employment or employment offer
<p><u>Must return to the U.S. before the start of classes in the next upcoming term.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this requirement. ● Students who fail to return to the U.S. by the start of the semester may face SEVIS termination. 	<p><i>Vacation or approved paid time off (PTO) is allowed during OPT/STEM OPT employment and is <u>not</u> considered “unemployment time”.</i></p>

VISA INFORMATION/RENEWAL

- The visa in your passport was obtained at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad and is used for entry into the U.S.
 - **While you are in the U.S., you do not need to keep your visa current.**
 - You may remain in the U.S. with an expired F-1 Visa, provided you are following the requirements to maintain your F-1 Status.
 - It is only when you leave the U.S. and wish to return that you must be sure you have a valid U.S. visa to re-enter the U.S.
 - Canadian citizens are not required to have a visa stamp, but they must show their Form I-20 with valid travel authorization and proof of Canadian citizenship at the U.S. port of entry.
- **If your F-1 visa has expired:**
 - Visa’s may only be renewed outside of the U.S.

- You must contact a U.S. embassy or consulate outside of the U.S. to inquire about the visa renewal process prior to your re-entry to the U.S.
 - All instructions for visa renewals, including required documentation, are provided on the website for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will renew your visa.
 - *Questions about Visa renewal/requirements must be directed to the U.S. Embassy abroad where you will submit your request for renewal.*

REQUESTING A TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE

Students should only request a travel authorization signature if:

- 1) They will be traveling in the near future, or are already outside of the U.S. and are planning their return travel to the U.S.
 - a) Your travel plans do not have to be scheduled before you request a signature, you may request a signature in anticipation of travel.
- 2) The signature on page 2 of the current/most recently issued I-20 was issued more than 12 months (for currently enrolled students), or 6 months (for students with OPT/STEM OPT) prior to their intended return to the U.S.
- 3) There is no travel authorization signature on page 2 of their current I-20

To obtain the Form I-20 with Travel Authorization Signature:

- **Submit the [F-1 Student: Travel Signature Request](#) form**
 - *Do not email the ISS to notify the office of your submission. We will process your request as quickly as possible in the order it is received.*
- **The ISS will review your request within 5-7 business days**
 - *SUNY Poly Offices are open Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30. Offices are not open on Saturday and Sunday.*
- **Upon approval, your Form I-20 with travel authorization signature will be sent to you via email to the address you provide in the request form.**

IMPORTANT

To be fair to all students, applications to the ISS are processed in the order received and will not be expedited.

- **ISS processing time is up to 5-7 business days. Students will receive an email with their Form I-20 with travel authorization on page 2 attached once your request is processed.**

**There is no need to contact the ISS to inquire about the status of your request or to inform us of your submission. We do not expedite requests, and process them as quickly as possible, in the order it is received. Once your request is processed, you will be notified through the email address provided. **

NEXT STEPS

- You must **print** and **sign** (in ink) your Form I-20 document prior to your return to the U.S.
- You must present your most recent, signed Form I-20, along with your Visa and Passport, upon entry to the U.S.
 - CBP will not accept a Form I-20 on your phone or any other digital device.
- **Don't forget: It is your responsibility to keep all copies of your Form I-20, even after a new copy is issued to you!**
 - The ISS recommends that you keep all old copies of your Form I-20 in a folder with your important immigration documents.
 - The ISS cannot re-print old versions of your Form I-20.
 - If you lose or misplace an old copy of your Form I-20, this cannot be replaced. You will need to explain that the document was lost/destroyed if you are ever asked for a copy of this.

IMPORTANT

Students are responsible for being aware of current federal/local travel guidelines and requirements when traveling.

The ISS cannot guarantee re-entry to the U.S. in any circumstance.

It is the responsibility of the student to review all travel requirements and ensure all required documents are in order. Entry to the US is determined by [Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#).

Safe travels!