Departing & Re-entering the United States

Students in F-1 immigration status who plan to leave the United States (U.S.) for a temporary absence of five months or less, and will be returning for the continuation of your studies, you will need the items listed below to re-enter the U.S. (Students who have graduated and will be returning for post-completion OPT employment should see the Special Notes on the back of this handout):

1. A “Certification of Enrollment” which shows all past and present on-campus enrollment at Regent and full-time or part-time status for each semester you were enrolled. (This can be requested from the Registrar’s Office in Room 235, Student Center and takes approximately 3-5 days to process. The request form can be found here: http://www.regent.edu/admin/registrar/onlineforms.cfm)

2. Evidence of Financial Resources/Financial Documentation to show proof that you have the funds to support your studies in the U.S. as shown on your I-20. (This might be a personal bank statement, a letter from your sponsor, a letter from your academic department if you are receiving a scholarship, etc.)

3. Paper Receipt for the I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment.


5. Name & Contact Information of the University Designated School Official (DSO): Joy Leeann Johnson, (757) 352-4130, ljohnson@regent.edu (Campus Police: (757) 226-2075)

6. A Valid F-1 Visa (A valid visa is not required for Canadian students.) The visa is the stamp in your passport which has your photo on it. Be sure to check the expiration date and the number of entries you were granted on your visa. If the number of entries will be used up, or if your visa will expire before the date you will reenter the U.S., you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa for your reentry back into the U.S. If you had a change to F-1 status approved in the U.S., you will also need to apply for an F-1 visa to match your new F-1 status in order to reenter the U.S. after any departures. The U.S. Department of State recommends that you apply for the visa from your home country and not as a third-country national in another country. Due to significant changes regarding visa applications in Canada and Mexico, all students must consult with the OISS several months in advance before planning to go there for a visa application as a third-country national. If you must apply for a new visa, please be sure to read the important information on this page of the OISS website: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/visas.cfm

7. All of your I-20s with page “3” of the most recent one signed in ink by the OISS within the past 12 months for re-entry purposes. Check the bottom part of page 3 (not page 1) of your most recent I-20. If there is no travel signature there, you must request a signature from the OISS. If you have a travel signature on page 3 already, but that signature will be more than 12 months old before your return to the U.S., you must request a new travel signature from the OISS to be able to reenter the U.S. (For example, students who had their I-20 signed for travel in December 2013 will not need another travel signature until December 2014.)

➤AFTER You Re-enter the United States: You must visit this CBP website and print a copy of your I-94 Arrival Record to keep in your possession as evidence of your lawful U.S. entry and current immigration status: www.cbp.gov/i94 You must print a new I-94 Arrival Record EACH and EVERY time you re-enter the United States!!! IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have trouble retrieving the I-94, or if it does not list you with “F-1” student immigration status, please notify the OISS Director IMMEDIATELY so we can help work to resolve this problem for you. This is VERY important! See this government Fact Sheet for more details: http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/newsroom/fact_sheets/travel/i94_factsheet.ctt/i94_factsheet.pdf

(Over)
Special Notes:

► Students Who are Planning to Visit Other Countries
You must contact the embassy of the country you are planning to visit--at least 2-3 months in advance--to see if you will need a visa, even if you are just going to Canada or Mexico. Contact information for different embassies in the U.S. can be found on this page of the OISS website: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/links.cfm

► Automatic Visa Revalidation Benefit and Travel to Canada, Mexico, or Adjacent Islands (Other Than Cuba) for Less Than 30 Days--If you are planning a trip to any of the countries listed above for less than 30 days, you may not require a new F-1/J-1 visa to reenter the U.S. if all of the following conditions apply:

1. Your I-94 is clearly marked for "D/S" (Duration of Status);
2. You make it clear to the Immigration Border Patrol Officer before leaving the U.S. that you will return in less than 30 days. You must NOT surrender your I-94 card upon your departure because you will need it to reenter the U.S. without a new/valid F-1 visa;
3. You travel with your current/valid passport & I-20 with the required travel signature (not more than 12 months old for currently enrolled students); and
4. You do NOT apply for a new F-1 visa while in Mexico, Canada or the Adjacent Islands. (If you apply for a new visa there, you must re-enter on your newly approved visa. If that visa application is delayed, you will need to wait in that country until the application is processed. If that application is denied, you will not be able to return to the U.S.).

Special Note: Because all airline personnel are not familiar with immigration regulations and the Automatic Visa Revalidation benefit, it is strongly recommended that you carry a copy of the benefit with you when you travel. Otherwise, the airline personnel may not allow you to enter the plane without a valid F-1 visa. Information regarding this benefit can be found on this page of the ICE website (see section 2.E): http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222014
You can also ask for the supervisor of the airline to confirm the benefit with the immigration officers at the airport. The regulation regarding this benefit can be found at 8C.F.R. 214.1(b)(3). A list of the Adjacent Islands can be found under section 2.F of the same website.

State Sponsors of Terrorism: Aliens who are citizens of countries on the U.S. State Department's list of State Sponsors of Terrorism are NOT eligible for the Automatic Visa Revalidation benefit for trips to Canada, Mexico, or Adjacent Islands for less than 30 days and will need a valid F-1 visa to reenter the U.S., even after a short trip. (See the State Department website for details at www.state.gov)

► Special Registration Students--Please be reminded that you must depart the U.S. through authorized ports only. Failure to do so could result in a denial at the U.S. Port of Entry upon your attempted return to the U.S. and future immigration problems as well.

► Those Who Graduated and are Engaged in Post-Completion OPT Employment--To reenter the U.S. after a temporary departure, please be reminded that you will need: a passport valid 6 months into the future, a valid F-1 visa, a valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD), a letter from your employer stating the dates of your employment and salary, and all of your I-20s with page “3” of the most recent one signed for travel purposes within the past 6 months. F-1 regulations state that you are permitted to return to the U.S. to “resume employment”. See the note on the front page about the need to print your I-94 Arrival Record after each re-entry to the United States.

For OPT Graduates with F-2 Dependents: Your dependent(s) should have: a passport valid 6 months into the future, a valid F-2 visa, and the following items if the F-1 graduate is not traveling with the F-2 dependent: a copy of the F-1’s most recent I-20, a copy of the F-1’s valid/unexpired EAD, and the letter from the F-1’s current employer.

(LJJ, 11/26/13)