Travel and Re-Entry to the U.S. for an F-1 Student

If an F-1 student is planning to travel outside the U.S., they should refer to the following information to prepare themselves for their return.

1. **Contact the embassy or consulate of the country to which you intend to travel** (if other than your home country) to determine whether a health certificate or entry visa is required. Link to all Embassies in Washington D.C.: http://www.embassy.org/embassies/index.html

2. **Necessary documents to re-enter the U.S. for an absence of less than 5 months:**
   
   a. I-20 endorsed for travel by authorized personnel in the Center for Global Education.
   
   b. Copies of all previously issued I-20s or DS-2019s.
   
   c. Valid passport good for at least 6 months into the future.
   
   d. Valid F-1
      - If the F-1 visa will expire before the planned return date to the U.S., then the F-1 visa must be renewed in the student’s home country before they will be allowed to return. Consult your international student advisor for more information
      - If the student changed their status to F-1 while remaining in the U.S. through application to the USCIS they will need to apply for an F-1 visa to be placed in their passport. This process must be done in the student’s home country before they will be allowed to return to the U.S.
   
   e. An unofficial copy of your most recent transcript.
   
   f. Copy of your class schedule or the next academic term.
   
   g. Documentation of adequate financial support.
   
   h. Any work authorization document you may have been issued.

   Please see the authorized personnel from the Center for Global Education Office if you are planning to be outside the U.S. for longer than 5 months.

3. **Obtaining a signed I-20.**
   
   a. Bring the I-20 to the Center at least 5 working days before you plan to leave
   
   b. The I-20 should be signed for travel once per semester even though page 3 of your I-20 states that the signature is good for 1 year.
4. **Necessary documents for traveling outside the U.S. while doing Optional Practical Training:**

   a. Valid F-1 visa (refer to section 1.d. above if the visa will expire prior to returning to the U.S.).
   
   b. Valid passport.
   
   c. I-20 endorsed for travel within the last 6 months by authorized personnel in the Center’s office.
   
   d. Valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS.
   
   e. Employer’s letter stating the end-date of your employment and work responsibilities. If you are not yet employed, you should carry evidence of job seeking such as invitations for interviews and application letters.

5. **Re-entry to the U.S. after visiting Canada, Mexico or islands adjacent to the U.S.:**

   a. While in valid F-1 status, students may travel to a “contiguous territory” and return to the U.S. even if their F-1 visa has expired by the visit must be for no more than 30 days and only as a tourist. The student will still require an I-20 signed within the last 6 months and a valid passport.
   
   b. The visa will be “automatically validated” upon re-entry if you:
      
      - Do not allow the airline official to take your I-94 card when you leave the U.S.
      - Present your valid I-94 card to the immigration official upon re-entry to the U.S.
   
   c. Exceptions to automatic revalidation include those who apply for a U.S. via in Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands. Citizens from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba are also not eligible for automatic revalidation.