



## Are you traveling abroad over winter break? Information for F1/J1 Students Traveling Internationally

International students in F1 or J1 status, and their dependents (F2 or J2), need the following to re-enter the U.S. after traveling abroad:

- SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 with a valid travel signature endorsed within the last twelve months by OIA (or endorsed within the last six months, if you are on OPT or STEM OPT);
- Valid visa stamp (sticker inside your passport); and
- Current passport, valid at least six months after the date of your re-entry.

OIA recommends you scan and email yourself copies of these documents. Lost or stolen documents are much easier to replace with copies.

### How to obtain a travel signature from OIA

For current students, a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 is valid for 12-months from the last dated signature. If your signature is expired (e.g. beyond 12-months old), please come to OIA for an updated signature. If you will be traveling within the U.S., you are not required to have a valid travel signature. Note: if you are on OPT or STEM OPT, a travel signature should be renewed every 6-months.

### What is a visa stamp?

A visa is a sticker placed in your passport by a U.S. consulate or embassy. It functions as an entry document when presented with your I-20/DS-2019, permitting your entry into the U.S. in a valid visa status. Canadian citizens are exempt from requiring a visa stamp, but are required to travel with a valid Canadian passport and I-20 or DS-2019.

### Frequently asked questions:

- 1. What if I forget my I-20/DS-2019?** If you have a scanned copy, print and carry it with you on your return travels to Chicago. If you do not have a scanned copy and do not have your I-20/DS-2019 with you, you may be denied entry into the U.S., or you may be issued a Form I-515A. Form I-515A allows you to enter the U.S. conditionally—if issued to you, please plan to visit OIA upon arrival back in Chicago. In some cases, OIA may be able to ship a new document to you abroad, time permitting (see #3 below).
- 2. What if I am already abroad and notice my travel signature is expired?** If you have already left the U.S., travel using the I-20 or DS-2019 in your possession, even with an expired travel signature. You may be asked to follow-up with OIA after your arrival for a new signature or to respond to a I-515A.
- 3. What if there is a family emergency and I need to travel home unexpectedly?** If you find yourself in the position of needing to travel unexpectedly and depart the U.S., be sure to take the latest dated I-20/DS-2019 with you. If necessary, OIA may be able to ship an updated I-20/DS-2019 to you, time permitting, should you forget or need an updated signature. This can be requested on our website: <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/content/travel-signaturei-20-reprint-request-form>

For more information on traveling, visit the OIA website here: <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/travel-0>

To contact your OIA advisor, email: [international-affairs@uchicago.edu](mailto:international-affairs@uchicago.edu) or call the office at 773-702-7752. Always contact OIA for the most up-to-date information regarding your F1 or J1 student visa status.

**Please Note:** a lost or forgotten I-20/DS-2019, expired travel signature, or need for an updated copy of your I-20/DS-2019 does not constitute an emergency warranting contact with either the University of Chicago Police Department or the Dean on Call. Instead, you should contact OIA during business hours for assistance and next steps. For information about the Dean on Call and other campus support services, visit: <https://csl.uchicago.edu/get-help>