



## **F and J Travel**

### **International Student Services Office**

*All F-1 and J-1 students are required to read this handout before submitting a request for a travel signature. For more information on traveling outside the U.S. on the F visa please click [here](#) and [here](#). For more information on traveling outside the U.S. on the J visa please click [here](#).*

#### **F-1 Students:**

- Travel signatures are **valid for twelve (12) months** for **students who have not completed their academic program.**
- Travel signatures are **valid for six (6) months** for **students who are on Optional Practical Training (OPT).**
- Students whose travels will cause them to miss classes will need to request a Faculty Travel letter from their instructors/academic advisor. Click [here](#) for a sample Faculty Travel letter.
- Students on OPT will need to secure a letter of employment **PRIOR** to departing the U.S. in order to be eligible to re-enter the U.S. See below for more information.
- Students who are in their 60 day grace period after the completion of their academic program and have not applied for OPT or are in their 60 day grace period after the end date of their OPT cannot travel outside and re-enter the U.S. without a new I-20.
- ***Please be sure to provide any updated immigration documents (I-20, passport, visa, I-94) to the ISSO once you re-enter (example...new I-94, new port of entry stamped).*** You may email your new copies to [intl\\_stu@tamuc.edu](mailto:intl_stu@tamuc.edu), fax to 903-468-3200, or bring them to the ISSO.

#### **J-1 Students:**

- A travel signature is always valid for 12 months.
- J-1 students whose travels will cause them to miss classes will need to request a Faculty Travel letter from their instructors/academic advisor. Click [here](#) for a sample Faculty Travel letter.
- J-1 students who will be outside the U.S. for longer than three (3) months will need to contact the ISSO Responsible Officer (director) to discuss plans.
- J-1 Research Scholars, Professors, and Short-term Scholars who will be outside the U.S. for longer than one (1) month will need to contact the ISSO Responsible Officer (director) to discuss plans.
- J-1 Research Scholars, Professors, and Short-term Scholars who will travel outside the U.S. for a conference/symposium/training event (exception to home country) will need to request a letter from the ISSO Responsible Officer (director) for travel.
- If you have applied for or are considering applying for Post-Completion Academic Training, make sure you receive authorization before traveling internationally.
- ***Please be sure to provide any updated immigration documents (DS-2019, passport, visa, I-94) to the ISSO once you re-enter (example...new I-94, new port of entry stamped).*** You may email your new copies to [intl\\_stu@tamuc.edu](mailto:intl_stu@tamuc.edu), fax to 903-468-3200, or bring them to the ISSO.

**Documents:**

- If your visa will expire before your return to the U.S. or you do not currently have a visa, keep in mind that you must apply for a visa before you will be able to re-enter the U.S. Please click [here](#) for more information. Please provide the ISSO a copy of any updated visa.
- Your passport must be valid for at least **6 months beyond the date that you plan to return to the U.S.**
- Upon exiting the U.S., you will surrender your I-94 card. You will obtain a new I-94 card upon re-entry. Make sure the new I-94 card states your correct immigration status (i.e. F-1, F-2, J-1, or J-2) and is valid for Duration of Status (D/S). Please provide the ISSO with a copy of any updated I-94.
- It is advised that you bring the following documents to the ISSO for review prior to departure: passport, visa, I-94, and all I-20s and/or DS-2019s.
- It is recommended by the Department of State that **students traveling outside the U.S. during their academic program** be prepared to provide the following documents: official or unofficial Texas A&M University-Commerce transcript, SEVIS fee receipt for all F-1 and J-1 students, proof of financial resources that match your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Students whose travels will cause them to miss classes will need to request a Faculty Travel letter from their instructors/academic advisor. Click here for a [sample](#) Faculty Travel letter.
- **The ISSO discourages students from traveling outside the U.S. while on OPT** unless absolutely necessary. Students on OPT will need a passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of re-entry, a valid visa, I-94, their OPT I-20 with a travel signature (signature is valid for 6 months), EAD card, and a letter verifying employment. Students who have applied for the **17-month OPT Extension** but have not been approved are strongly discouraged from traveling outside the U.S. until their 17-month OPT Extension is approved. Students on **cap gap extension** should not travel outside the U.S. during the cap gap extension.
- Students who will be outside the U.S. for longer than 5 months, have a terminated record, or have had any type of academic action taken against them due to deficiencies in their academic performance will be required to meet with an international advisor to discuss their situation prior to departure.

**Traveling Inside the U.S:**

The ISSO **STRONGLY** recommends all F and J visa holders travel with all of their immigration documents while traveling any where inside the United States. This will include your passport, visa, I-94, and I-20/DS-2019. It is also strongly recommended that students on OPT also travel with their EAD card and a letter of employment.