

Obtaining a Renewal Visa

Are you traveling and need to obtain a renewal visa?

If you are not traveling outside the United States, it is not necessary to keep your visa current. Your **passport** must be valid at all times, but your visa can be expired if you are already in the US and do not leave. If you wish to leave the US and re-enter, you **will** need a valid visa in order to re-enter. **EXCEPTION:** A rule called *automatic visa revalidation* allows students traveling to Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean to re-enter on an expired visa. If you are traveling to one of these countries, come see an advisor to learn about your options.

How to obtain a renewal visa

There are two ways to obtain a visa:

1. Travel to your home country
2. Travel to a third country (ONLY available for visa renewals, not initial visas)

If you wish to travel to a third country (that means any country other than your home country), be sure to talk to an advisor about your travel choice. This is only an option for students renewing their visa, not students seeking to change to a different visa status. Either way you choose to get your visa, you will need to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in the country and schedule an appointment. Check this website for a list of all the US Embassies and Consulates in the world: <http://usembassy.state.gov>.

If you choose to travel to a third country, you may need a separate visa to travel to that country. Make sure you check into this ahead of time. Third country renewal is slightly riskier than home country renewal; understand the risks before you travel. **BE CAREFUL:** If your application for a new visa is denied, you will not be allowed to re-enter the United States.

What you need

- Passport valid for at least 6 months into the future.
- Complete a Non-immigrant Visa Application form DS-160 online at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> and then bring the confirmation page with your application ID to the visa interview.
- I-901 receipt (SEVIS fee). You can obtain another copy of your I-901 receipt at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/dhs/loadSearchPage.do>.
- I-20 or DS-2019 that has been signed for travel within the last 6 months.
- An official GSU transcript and transcripts from any past schools. Enrollment verification for your current semester and future semester enrollment is also helpful (One Stop Shop).
- Proof of financial support from you, a sponsor or GRA showing ability to cover the cost of tuition and living expenses. The amount you will need to show can be found at:
 - a. #7 on I-20 for F-1 students
 - b. #5 on DS-2019 for J-1 students
- A list of your family who live in your home country. List their names, addresses and places of employment. Also list any property or businesses you and/or your family may own. (The most common reason that student visas are denied is inability to prove non-immigrant intent. Therefore it is recommended that you bring any documents that will prove your intent to return to your home country after you complete your studies.)

The visa officer at the Embassy or Consulate in your home country may request specific application materials. We recommend that you contact the Embassy or Consulate prior to your interview to ensure that you have everything needed for the issuance of your visa.

If you have any questions contact your ISSS advisor.