

TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, VISITING SCHOLARS & INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEES

December 15, 2010

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S. during winter break, please read this travel advisory so that you will be less likely to have problems during your trip and when you return to the U.S. This advice should also help you return to the U.S. on time as it is not reasonable to expect exemption from assignments and exams due to your late return to the U.S.

The topics addressed in this advisory include:

- Departure Procedures for Individuals Who are Subject to Special Registration
- Border Patrol Checks at Public Transportation Hubs
- Advice about Domestic and International Travel
- Important Advice about Bringing Money into the U.S.
- Important Reminder about Your Passport
- Important Reminder about Your I-94 Card
- Things to Consider about Renewing your U.S. Visa
- Important Reminder about Your I-20 (for F-1 Students)

Departure Procedures for Individuals Who Are Subject to Special Registration

Individuals who are subject to Special Registration must notify Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) when they leave the U.S. and may only leave through designated ports. In determining if you are subject to Special Registration, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have an FIN number on my I-94 card?
- Was I ever required to Special Register when I entered the U.S.?
- Was I ever required to report to the local USCIS office for Special Registration?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you are subject to Special Registration departure procedures, which means that you must notify Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) when you leave the U.S. and may only leave through designated ports. (For a list of designated ports, please open the Word document at www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/nseers/). If you don't, you may be denied re-admission to the U.S. at a later date.

For further information about Special Registration, please consult:

<http://www.ice.gov/nseers/>

Border Patrol Checks at Public Transportation Hubs

In the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase in activity by Border Patrol agents in and around public transportation hubs, such as bus and train stations within 100 miles of the U.S.-Canada border. Although Amtrak train stations and Greyhound

bus stations in Rochester, Syracuse, Chicago, Detroit and other cities are not international border crossings, Border Patrol has legal jurisdiction in such locations and may stop you to request proof of legal immigration status. These agents will usually wear green uniforms, but are sometimes not in uniform.

Please be reminded that you are required to carry your original I-94 card at all times. We also urge you to carry the following documents any time you are near an airport, train or intercity bus station and any time you travel outside Buffalo:

- Original passport
- AND
- I-20 (for F-1 students) OR DS-2019 (for J-1 students and scholars) OR I-797 approval notice (for H-1B employees).
- UB card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it) (for students) Note: Border Patrol considers university ID cards as evidence of student status. Since UB cards do not have dates on them, it is a good idea to carry a print-out of your course schedule as well.

If you cannot prove your immigration status, Border Patrol agents can detain you until they determine that you are in the U.S. legally. We do not want your trip to be delayed or, even worse, for you to end up in a detention facility so please carry your immigration documents when you travel!

If you receive discourteous treatment or incorrect information about your immigration status from a Border Patrol agent, you should note the agent's name (it can be found on his/her name badge or you can ask the agent for his/her name) and contact International Student and Scholar Services, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus at (716) 645-2258.

Advice about Domestic and International Travel

If you will travel outside Buffalo during winter break, we advise you to carry the following documents with you. If you will travel outside the U.S., you must carry these documents with you.

- Valid passport
- Valid U.S. visa stamp with at least one remaining entry (for travel outside the U.S.) (Exception: travel to Canada, Mexico and Caribbean islands as explained at www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/traveltocanada.html)
- I-94 Card

In addition, you will need to carry the following:

For F-1 Students

- Valid I-20 with unexpired signature of Designated School Official on Page 3 AND all previous I-20's (Note: Each DSO signature is valid for one year. If the signature will be less than one year old on the day you return to the U.S., you do not need a new signature. Also, if you have multiple I-20's, bring all of them but only present your current I-20 initially.)
- Financial Documents showing ability to cover the costs of a U.S. education
- UB Card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it)

For J-1 Students and Scholars

- Valid DS-2019 with unexpired signature of (Alternate) Responsible Officer in the Travel Designation box on Page 1 AND all previous DS-2019's
- Financial Documents showing ability to cover the costs of a U.S. education (*for J-1 students only*)
- UB Card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it) (*for J-1 students only*)

For Students on Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Academic Training (AT)

- Valid I-20 with unexpired signature (not more than six months old) of Designated School Official on Page 3 AND all previous I-20's + written job offer * + valid EAD card (*for F-1 students on OPT*) **OR**
 - Valid DS-2019 with unexpired signature of (Alternate) Responsible Officer in the Travel Designation box on Page 1 AND all previous DS-2019's + Letter Authorizing Academic Training (*for J-1 students on AT*)
 - A letter from your employer confirming your employment, your job description and the dates of your employment
- Please note that, if you are near the end of your OPT or AT, you may have difficulty re-entering the U.S. for this purpose.*

For H-1B Employees

- Valid H-1B Approval Notice (Form I-797)
- A letter from your employer confirming your employment, your responsibilities and the dates of your employment

Important Advice about Bringing Money into the U.S.

If you plan to bring money (e.g. cash, money order, certified check, travelers' checks, letter of credit) into the U.S., please note the following from the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) website:

"Travelers leaving or entering the U.S. are required to report monetary instruments (i.e. currency or checks) valued at \$10,000 or more on a "Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments" form FinCEN 105" (available at www.fincen.gov/fin105_cmir.pdf or from a CBP officer). "Failure to declare currency in amounts over \$10,000 can result in its seizure."

Please Note:

- Do not assume that you can multiply \$10,000 by the number of people in your group and bring that amount of money. The border officer will try to determine to whom the money really belongs. If s/he determines that it belongs to one person, s/he will seize it if the total amount exceeds \$10,000.
- Never make false statements to a border officer about money or anything else. The penalty for making false statements to border officers is very severe, including a fine and up to two years of imprisonment.

- If you do not follow the above-mentioned advice and your money is seized, we advise you not to fill out any forms to request that the money be returned to you. To file a request that will be approved requires in-depth knowledge of the relevant regulations and the way that such requests are adjudicated. For these reasons, it is much better to hire an attorney.

Important Reminder about Your Passport

As you know, your passport must be valid at all times while you are in the U.S. and traveling outside the U.S. In addition, your passport must be valid for six months beyond the period of your intended stay in the U.S. unless your country of citizenship is one of the Six-Month Club countries.

Please check the “Six-Month Club” list at www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/inspections_carriers_facilities/clp/bulletins/clp_bulletin_04162008.ctt/clp_bulletin_04162008.pdf. If your country of citizenship is not on this list, then check the expiration date on your passport. If you do not have six months beyond the period of your intended stay, you should renew your passport before you return to the U.S. If you don’t renew your passport, you may be denied re-entry to the U.S.

Important Reminder about Your I-94 Card

When you depart the U.S. for travel to Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America (or Canada and Mexico for 30+ days), you should turn in your I-94 card at the airline counter or Port-of-Entry. If you neglect to turn in your I-94 card and are an F-1 student or J-1 Exchange Visitor, an alert will be placed on your SEVIS record and you will likely have difficulty when you re-enter the U.S.

Things to Consider about Renewing Your U.S. Visa

If you are planning to renew your U.S. visa during winter break, we recommend that you read “Applying for a Non-Immigrant Visa” at www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/visa2.html.

You should also consider whether or not you will have sufficient time to renew your U.S. visa during winter break. Due to background checks, mandatory visa interviews and scrutiny of individuals studying or doing research in “sensitive fields”, you may encounter delays in the processing of your visa application. Note: Each semester, at least one UB student is delayed for months due to background checks so we urge you to consider this point carefully.

If your field of study or research may be considered sensitive (ie. electrical engineering, computer science, biological science, urban planning, etc.), you should obtain a letter from your professor explaining in detail the nature of your studies or research. This letter should be written in simple language so it can be easily understood by non-specialists.