Notices for International Student Travel During COVID-19

Special Announcement on U.S. Department of State Worldwide Travel Advisory, Level 4 (effective 3/19/20)

As of March 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of State has issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory urging individuals not to travel. We urge students consider this health and safety advisory before making the choice to travel. International travel is highly discouraged at this time. Below are some of the current travel restrictions in place, though more may be imposed at any time:

- Indefinite travel bans continue to be in place for travelers from China or Iran who have been present in either country within the past 14 days, as well as travelling from Europe (including the U.K.). U.S. citizens and permanent residents are exempted but non-immigrants are not. In this case, F, J and other non-immigrant international students are subject to this ban.
- Travel across the U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico is very limited at this time
- U.S. Non-immigrant visa processing is largely suspended worldwide at this time; if your visa is expiring soon, consider that you may not be able to renew the visa in a timely manner
- For more information, please view NAFSA’s webpage here: https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/covid-19-restrictions-us-visas-and-entry

Note on Quarantines

- Based on the Albany County and NY State Departments of Health guidance, the University at Albany is highly discouraging travel to countries or regions impacted by the coronavirus. If you must travel, please note that NYS Department of Health has advised that “Student and faculty returning from currently impacted countries or regions of impacted countries will be required to be quarantined for 14 days upon return.” What constitutes a currently impacted country or region may continue to expand as the situation develops. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov(locations-confirmed-cases.html. A quarantine would require a student to remain in a single room; arrange for food delivery and other services; and check in with the local health department and receive clearance from that department at the end of the 14 days before leaving the quarantine room. More details on the requirements of a quarantine are available here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html
- Students who must travel are required to call UAlbany Student Health Services at 518-442-5229 before returning to campus. For more instructions on this critical process, please visit https://www.albany.edu/risk-management/coronavirus-covid-19-information (section heading beginning with “I am planning a trip or have returned form a trip to on the geographic areas…”). F-1 students on OPT are recommended to check with their local health department for guidance upon return.
• Your home country may also have quarantine requirements for students returning home. In quarantine, your access to the technology needed to successfully engage in remote coursework may be limited, and you should consider this before travelling.

Other Considerations Before Travelling:

• Make precautionary plans for what you will do if your return to Albany is delayed. For example, if you choose to travel internationally and cannot return as planned due to a travel restrictions. Your academic progress towards your degree may be delayed if you are unable to access courses remotely; time zone differences may cause you difficulties with your coursework and learning; your OPT/CPT eligibility may be impacted.
• Consider carefully whether or not you will have the academic resources to be able to complete your coursework from home (technology, WiFi, server access, time differences which may impact your ability to participate). Download the Authenticator App to access your email and download the GlobalProtect VPN to your laptop or other device so that you can securely connect to the UAlbany network.
• Remember that we do not know what travel restrictions may be in place come August. While ICE is temporarily allowing students to maintain status while studying remotely, this guidance could update as we approach the Fall term, which may require you to be participating in in-person study as well as in the U.S. in order to maintain an active F-1/J-1 student status. Before returning to the U.S., check ISSS for the latest information.
• Check the validity of your passport, visa, and travel signature. Instructions for requesting a travel signature during COVID-19 remote office operations are available on the homepage of our website: https://www.albany.edu/isss/

Students are required to carry the following documentation when re-entering the United States:
• Passport valid at least 6 months into the future.
• Most recent I-20 or DS-2019 including up to date information and a valid travel signature. For most current full-time students, the travel signature is valid for one year. For students on OPT, it is valid for 6 months. If your travel signature is older than 6 months, check with ISSS before travelling to find out if you need a new one.
• Unexpired F-1 or J-1 visa stamp – (citizens of Canada and Bermuda are exempt from the visa requirement). You need this in order to re-enter the United States. Please note that most U.S. embassies/consulates are currently closed and not processing non-immigrant visa applications at this time due to COVID-19 related health concerns, so if your visa is set to expire soon please consider this before travelling, as you will need a valid visa to re-enter the U.S..
• Students on OPT: Students on OPT must additionally carry a valid EAD card, I-20 signed within the past 6 months for travel, and proof of ongoing employment (i.e. contract or letter from employer). Consult ISSS before travelling while on OPT. [can you adjust the margins on the previous page to locate this entire bullet on the first page]
Students are recommended to also carry the following:

- If the country you are traveling to requires that you have a visa to enter that country, you will need to go through the process of applying for that visa. You will need to check with that country’s Department of Immigration. If you are transiting through a country, check to see if you need a transit visa for that country.
- Proof of Enrollment or transcript at the University at Albany
- Proof of funding – Verifying the funding shown on your I-20 or DS-2019. Examples include personal or family bank statements, affidavit of support, and copy of scholarship, assistantship, or fellowship letter.
- For J-1 students, it is a good idea to carry proof of health insurance as well.

Note on Special Circumstances/Travel Restrictions Related to the COVID19 (Coronavirus)

- Travel with a copy of your I-94 and I-94 travel history (available at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov) or other documentation as evidence of your travel history in case you are asked to demonstrate whether or not you have been to an impacted area.
- Closely monitor the travel advisories and updates for any country you are travelling or transiting through, including WHO, local/national departments of health, and visiting country consular website. Be aware of any travel restrictions the U.S. might impose limiting reentry by monitoring the CDC website. If returning to NYS, monitor the NYS Department of Health at https://www.health.ny.gov/ for any updates on quarantining and other restrictions within the state. Also continue to check the University at Albany webpages dedicated to coronavirus information and updates at https://www.albany.edu/risk-management/coronavirus-covid-19-information.
- Consider registering with your home country’s consulate in the country you’re visiting