

TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE U.S. DURING STUDY

Rules Regarding a Temporary Absence

If you remain continuously registered for a full course of study with SCC, but must travel outside the United States, you are permitted to reenter the U.S. after a “temporary absence” **of five months or less** using: **Your current SCC I-20** if page three (3) must be properly signed for travel by the DSO (see also “Required Documents” and “Travel Signatures” below) **AND** as long as there is no significant change to the information on that I-20,

OR

A new SCC I-20 if there has been a significant change to the information on your current I-20,

OR

A new school’s I-20 if you will attend a school other than SCC when you return.

If You Are Outside of the U.S. for Longer Than a Temporary Absence

After a period of more than five months outside the U.S., you are considered gone for longer than a temporary absence. **Your current I-20 will be invalid** and you must request a new I-20 to return to SCC, or re-enter on a new school’s I-20 if you will attend a school other than SCC when you return.

Important: Although you will be considered in valid F-1 status after re-entry on the new I-20, you will be ineligible for *off-campus employment (for CPT, for example) until after you have maintained a full course of study for another 9 consecutive months.*

Required Documents

Many students choose to travel outside the United States during their course of study, often returning to their home country during summer or winter school breaks, or visiting other countries for vacations. Anyone may leave the U.S. at any time. However, to return to the United States in valid F-1 status, you are required to hold the following documents:

- Valid passport at least 6 months into the future
- Valid F-1 visa stamp
- Your Form-I-20 endorsed on page three by a designated school official (DSO) at the International Students Services (ISS) Office. This “travel signature” indicates that you are in good standing at SCC and are eligible to return. Only a DSO at the ISS is authorized to sign your Form I-20. A DSO travel authorization signature is valid for one year except for travel to Canada, Mexico and adjacent islands, in which case the signature is valid for six months.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Travel Signatures

To request a travel authorization signature on your Form I-20, please visit the DSO with your passport containing the visa stamp and Departure Record (I-94 card). Travel signature requests are processed in one business day. However, in case of complications with your documents or record, we recommend that you request your travel signature at least one week in advance of the day you plan to travel.

If you plan to visit a country other than your home country, please consult the embassy or consulate of that country to find out if you will require a tourist visa to enter. You may find information about foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S. by visiting **www.embassy.org**

If you have been on a study abroad program or have interrupted your studies for any reason (such as a certified Leave of Absence) you may need a new Form I-20 to return to the United States. Please contact your International Student Advisor in ISS for more information.

If the F-1 stamp in your passport is expired and you will be traveling outside the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa stamp in order to reenter the U.S., *except when traveling to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands. Please see "Immigration Requirements for Entry to the US (F-1 Students)" Visiting Canada, Mexico or Adjacent Islands.*

Traveling to territories that are contiguous to the United States or in the neighboring Caribbean should generally be treated like travel to any other country. However, there are special exceptions that allow for an easier return to the U.S. if you have an expired F-1 visa.

Visit Study in the States for more information about traveling as an international student. **Fill out the form below and submit it to a DSO and make an appointment before leaving.**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES



TRAVEL REQUEST/I-20 SIGNED

Student: _____

ID#: _____ Country Visiting: _____

Approximate date leaving: _____

Approximate date returning: _____

Requesting Travel Letter Yes No
(Travel letters must be picked up in person)

I acknowledge that I read and understand the attached information.

I acknowledge that my current visa/passport have not expired. I plan to return for the
_____ semester.

Student _____ Date _____
(Travel letters must be picked up in person)