

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

TRAVEL WITHIN THE US:

If you are **traveling within the United States**, make sure to **carry your original passport and I-20/DS-2019** with you at all times. **DO NOT CHECK YOUR DOCUMENTS WHEN BOARDING FLIGHTS—KEEP THEM IN YOUR CARRY ON.** If you are stopped by a government official (police, border patrol, immigration officer, etc.) you will be required to show your original documents.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE US:

1. Make several **copies** of all of your **important documents**. These include all of the I-20s/DS-2019s you have been issued (from every school you've attended) and your passport picture page, visa and I-94 card (both sides). Keep your originals with you in your carry-on luggage (do not check your original documents), one set in your checked baggage, and one set at home, preferably with someone who can send them to you if needed. Keep your International Student Coordinator's contact information available at all times – just in case!
2. **Plan ahead.** At least two weeks before you travel, visit the International Student Coordinator or another designated official in Admissions (please remember to check-in with the Student Affairs Receptionist first) to **have your I-20/DS-2019 signed** (signatures are valid for 5 months). J1 students—If your DS-2019 is not issued by CGU, you will need to have your sponsor sign your form; CGU can not sign for you.
3. Make sure your documents are valid:
 - A. Check the **visa** in your passport to make sure it has not expired. If your visa has expired, you will have to apply at a US Embassy or Consulate (generally in your home country) to have it renewed before returning to the United States (remember to provide a copy of this to your International Student Coordinator). **If your visa has expired and you are on F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) or J-1 Academic Training, you are generally not eligible to apply for a new visa. Check with your embassy BEFORE traveling.**
 - B. If your visa has not expired, check to make sure that the visa allows **multiple entries** (denoted by an M). If your visa restricts the number of your entries, make sure that you have not reached your limit. If you have reached your entry limit, you will need to apply for a new visa. **If you are on F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) or J-1 Academic Training, you are generally not eligible to apply for a new visa. Check with your embassy BEFORE traveling.**
 - C. Check your **passport** to make sure that it is valid for at least six (6) months after your return date to the U.S. If it isn't, contact your Embassy/Consulate (Los Angeles, San Francisco, or your home country) to find out how to renew your passport. You will need to check with them to see if travel is possible before your passport is renewed. If you renew/extend your passport, please provide your International Student Coordinator with a copy.

SPECIAL CASES/CONSIDERATIONS:

- **CHANGE OF STATUS:** If you have changed your visa status to F-1/J-1 in the United States, you will have to apply for an F-1/J-1 visa at a US Embassy or Consulate before returning to the United States. Remember, even though you are currently in "F-1/J-1 status" you do not have an F-1/J-1 Visa, which is required to reenter the country. **You can typically only apply for a**

visa in your home country. Once granted, please remember to provide a copy of your new visa to your International Student Coordinator.

- If you need apply for an F-1/J-1 visa, you should contact the US Embassy/Consulate in your home country BEFORE you travel to find out how long the process is currently taking. Take this time into serious consideration when making your travel plans.
- If possible, make an appointment with the US Embassy in your country BEFORE you leave the U.S, as obtaining an appointment can be difficult.
- Check with your embassy to find out what other documents you will need (transcripts, financial documents, etc)
 - If the financial documents you have submitted to CGU are less than 6 months old, you may request a copy of them from your International Student Coordinator.
 - You may need official transcripts and/or a Status Letter from Student Records in the Office of Admission & Records. The request forms can be found in the literature rack in the Student Affairs lobby (give completed forms to the Receptionist). **Keep in mind that it may take several days to process your request, so please plan early.** (Official transcripts are available for \$6.00 USD. Status letters are free).
- If you are **traveling outside of the United States to a country other than your home country**, call the embassy of that country to learn if **you need a visa to enter that country**. If so, ask what the requirements, cost, and timeframe are to apply for a visa. Keep in mind that it often takes 2-3 weeks to process a visa application. Make sure that you reenter the US on your F-1/J-1.
- If you have applied for or are on **Optional Practical Training (F-1) please read the “F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT): Travel While on OPT” document found online at www.cgu.edu/international under Handouts and Forms for detailed BEFORE you decide to travel.**
- If you are on **Academic Training (J-1)**, make sure you take an employer’s letter with you when you travel along with your current DS-2019 signed for travel.
- **NSEERS:** If you are a student who is required to undergo **Special Registration**, refer to the information that you were provided regarding your designated departure and arrival areas in order to complete your Special Registration process. [Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is a designated arrival/departure area].

If Traveling to Mexico or Canada –

*It is important that you remember when traveling by car to accurately claim your visa status (do not say you are a U.S. Citizen in order to leave the border quickly). If you do not claim your visa status when asked, you may be deported for not informing the U.S. Customs & Border Protection of your legal status.

*Your I-20/DS-2019 must have a valid entry stamp on the top right hand corner (if it is your only I-20/DS-2019) and/or you must have a valid visa. If not, you will need to be given a new I-94 card and you will need to pay a cash replacement fine and visit Secondary Inspection within 30 days of your return to the U.S.

*If you are a Special Registration student, you must leave through the Old Time Mesa border entry (not through Tijuana) in Mexico, and when you return you must re-register with Special Registration—as reentry is risky, we recommend that you take the time to decide if it is worth it for you to go to Mexico.