Renewing Your Student Visa

Overview

If you are currently studying in the U.S. in F-1 status and your visa is about to expire, please remember that you may remain legally in the United States with an expired visa because you were admitted to the U.S. as D/S (Duration of Status). This means that you are eligible to remain in the U.S. until you either reach the end date on your I-20 or until the end of your academic program, whichever comes first. Your visa is simply an entry permit to get into the U.S.

However, if you are planning a trip outside of the United States and your visa is expired or about to expire, you will need to renew your F-1 visa outside of the U.S. to be able to re-enter and resume your studies. It is not possible to renew your visa within the U.S.

Checklist for Your Visa Appointment

☐ Schedule a visa appointment/interview before you depart the United States
  ☐ U.S. Embassies and Consulates (http://usembassy.state.gov/)
  ☐ Visa Appointment Wait Times (http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html)
☐ A completed visa application form (available at your Embassy's website)
☐ Proof of payment of visa application fees
☐ Current I-20 with a valid signature from Global Education
☐ All previously issued I-20s
☐ A passport valid for at least 6 months or more into the future
☐ Updated financial support documentation
☐ Proof of current enrollment and/or pre-registration for the next semester
☐ Proof of home country ties, including but not limited to: proof of property ownership, bank accounts, significant family in your home country, a job offer in your home country upon completion of your U.S. studies (you may or may not be asked about this, but it is always good to be prepared)
☐ For dependents applying for an F-2 visa: You should also bring your marriage certificate.
☐ Your official transcripts, which can be ordered online at www.my.wtc.edu. Important: Make sure to allow for processing times and final grade deadlines.
Automatic Revalidation

Overview It is possible for nonimmigrants in F-1 status, and their F-2 dependents to reenter the United States with an expired U.S. nonimmigrant visa stamp after a visit of not more than thirty (30) days **ONLY** when traveling to Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands (except Cuba).

Note: It is not recommended that Automatic Visa Revalidation be used to apply for readmission to the United States from your home country if home country is Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands (not including Cuba). For example, a nonimmigrant from Mexico traveling to Mexico for less than 30 days with an expired F-1 visa should apply for a new visa while they are in their home country. They may encounter difficulty if they attempt to reenter the U.S. with an expired F-1 visa, even if they have retained their original Form I-94 Departure Record. An F-1 student from Mexico can use automatic revalidation for a trip to Canada or an adjacent island.

Requirements You are eligible for Automatic Visa Revalidation only if:

1. You are in possession of all the following documents at the time you reenter the U.S.:
   - Your most recent Form I-94 marked D/S for “duration of status” (if you still maintain an old paper I-94). If you last traveled outside of the U.S. after May 2013, Customs and Border Protection will verify your I-94 number electronically.
   - The expired visa stamp, OR an USCIS approval notice (Form I-797) if you possess an I-94 card from a change of status.
   - A valid I-20 has been endorsed for travel by Global Education
   - A valid passport

2. You have only been to the countries or territories listed above (Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands- not Cuba) for a period of no more than 30 days.
3. You have maintained your F-1 status and intend to resume the same status when you return to the U.S.

- and -

4. You have not applied for a new visa while abroad (see next paragraph).

If You Apply for a Visa While Abroad

Automatic Visa Revalidation is not available to citizens of any country who apply for a U.S. visa while abroad. If you intend to apply for a U.S. visa while in one of the countries listed above, you should decide carefully, as you will not be able to return to the U.S. until your visa is approved. This caution is particularly important for nationalities that may be subject to an extensive security check. If your visa is denied, you must return to your home country and reapply at a U.S. consulate there.

Ineligible Nationalities

Automatic visa revalidation is not available to nationals of **Iran, Syria, Sudan and Cuba.** Students from **Iraq and Libya** may encounter difficulties as well. If you are a citizen of one of these countries and your F-1 is no longer valid, you will need to follow the above procedures under “Checklist for Your Visa Appointment.”