

J-1 Exchange Visitor Travel Information To Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean Islands

A valid unexpired U.S. entry visa is ***not*** required if you travel to contiguous territory – Canada, Mexico or a qualified adjacent Caribbean Island (excluding Cuba) – **for less than 30 days**. This is known as “automatic extension of (visa) validity” or “automatic (visa) revalidation.” These guidelines apply to current J-1 Exchange Visitors whether they entered the U.S. as J-1 or later changed status to J-1.

You may reenter the U.S. from Canada, Mexico or a qualified adjacent Caribbean Island¹ without a valid visa provided:

- 1) You do not visit Cuba. Automatic revalidation does ***not*** apply for travel to Cuba.
- 2) Your stay in Canada, Mexico or a qualified adjacent Caribbean Island (excluding Cuba) is **for less than 30 days**.
- 3) You are ***not*** a citizen of Iran, Syria, Sudan or Cuba, or other country designated as a state sponsor of terrorism by the Department of State (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>).
- 4) You **maintained** your J-1 nonimmigrant status when last in the U.S. and intend to resume your J-1 activity upon reentry.
- 5) You apply for readmission **within** your initial admission or extension of stay (i.e. not after your approval has expired.)
- 6) Your visa was ***not*** cancelled or otherwise declared **inadmissible** to the U.S. under Section 212(a) or 212(d)(3)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Note: Do not confuse 212(a) with 212(e). Automatic visa revalidation applies even if you are subject to 212(e).
- 7) You do ***not*** apply for a new visa in Mexico, Canada or the Caribbean Islands during your visit. If you apply for a new U.S. visa while in one of these countries, you must wait for a decision before being eligible to reenter the U.S. Individuals subject to security or technology checks (performed as part of the visa application process) may experience **delays of 30 to 120 additional business days or more in some cases**, while the visa application is being reviewed. If the visa application is denied, you cannot reenter the U.S. until you obtain a new entry visa from the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your home country. That is, if denied, you must travel to your home country for a new visa in order to reenter the U.S. For more information on visa applications, go to <http://travel.state.gov/>.

When traveling on a cruise ship, check with the carrier for any immigration restrictions **before** booking your trip. Depending upon where the cruise docks, automatic revalidation may ***not*** be available.

CAUTION: Those who have applied for a waiver of INA Section 212(e), the J-1 2-year foreign residence requirement, or have applied for a change of immigration status, should consult with the DIS directly prior to making any travel plans.

Please inform the DIS of your travel plans at least **2 weeks** in advance so that we can endorse your SEVIS Form DS-2019 for travel. When reentering the U.S. using automatic visa revalidation, the documentation to present should include:

- 1) Original Form I-94 or printout of your I-94 electronic record. **DO NOT SURRENDER YOUR ORIGINAL FORM I-94 TO IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES**
 - Carry a copy of the original I-94 and provide it if your I-94 information is requested. If your last entry to the U.S. was under I-94 automation, carry a 2nd printout of your electronic I-94 and provide it if requested. Guidance about the electronic Form I-94 is available at http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/Automated%20I-94_Flyer.pdf.
- 2) Valid passport
- 3) Original, valid DS-2019 with travel validation signature
- 4) If you changed your status to J-1 inside the U.S.: original USCIS Form I-797 Approval Notice
- 5) Identification Badge (ID) badge
- 6) Current letter of verification to confirm your award/assignment/appointment with NIH; the letter should include a brief description of your research activities at NIH (request from your Institute/Center; a sample can be found at <http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/SampleLetterTravel.doc>)

Automatic revalidation is not valid to travel from a contiguous territory (ex: Canada) to a non-contiguous country (ex: Germany) and return to the U.S. via a contiguous territory. The use of automatic revalidation to enter the U.S. after travel to a third country is a violation of immigration laws that may lead to deportation.

Citizens of certain countries require an entry visa to enter Canada (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/>), Mexico (<http://www.embassyofmexico.org/>) or the Caribbean Islands. Please contact the appropriate consulate for entry requirements.

¹ Per 8 CFR 286.1(a), “adjacent islands” are defined as: *Anguilla, Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Barbuda, Bermuda, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Marie-Galante, Martinique, Miquelon, Montserrat, Saba, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Christopher, Saint Eustatius, Saint Kitts-Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Maarten, Saint Martin, Saint Pierre, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and other British, French and Netherlands territory or possessions bordering on the Caribbean Sea.*