

International Student Travel Tips Summer Break (2022)

Since the COVID pandemic began in 2020, international students have faced travel delays and uncertainties. Before making plans, please consider the availability of flights to and from your destination, your visa expiration date, and other travel risks. The following travel tips provide guidance for evaluating travel risks and planning international travel during following the Spring 2022 semester.

1. Process/Timeline

- **Review travel information** published on [ISSS website](#). Also, please check travel restrictions posted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and the government web sites of the countries you will enter during your travel.
- **Request a travel signature** from ISSS **at least** two weeks prior to travel. Normally, it takes 1-2 weeks to process a request for a travel signature. However, travel signature requests submitted during Travel Signature Days (**May 2-12**) will be processed by the next business day.
- **Apply for an F-1 visa if needed.** If your visa has already expired or will expire prior to your return, you must apply for and receive a new visa before your return. Please [check the web site](#) of your home country's U.S. consulate. Please review "**4. Visa Process**" for more detailed information.
- **Purchase airline tickets.** Be aware of requirements for a negative COVID test, and/or proof of vaccination. Plan time for visa application processing if necessary.
- **Organize all documents** recommended in the document checklist. Be sure to carry these original documents with you during your return to the U.S. We recommend carrying paper copies as well and keeping electronic copies stored on your smart phone.
- **Travel to the U.S.** Check "**5. Travel to U.S.**" for more information.

2. Document Checklist

- **Required Documents:**
 - **Original Passport** with at least 6 months validity (from the time you will return to U.S.)
 - **U.S. Student Visa.** Be sure the expiration date is later than your expected return date
 - **I-20 Form** with a valid travel authorization signature. Signatures are valid for up to 12 months.
- **Recommended Documents:**
 - **Academic History or Transcript** showing completed course work and grades
 - **Schedule of classes for the next semester.** Schedule classes prior to travel and ensure that you are enrolled in face-to-face courses.

3. COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Minimization

- [Presidential Proclamation 10294](#) on October 25, 2021, updated and revised travel restrictions related to the COVID pandemic.
 - **Proof of vaccination:** All non-U.S. citizen, non-U.S. immigrants traveling to the United States by air are required to show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Learn more about this [requirement](#).
 - **COVID Testing for all travelers:** Before boarding a flight to the United States, you are required to show a negative COVID-19 test result taken no more than 1 day before travel. There is also an option for people who have documented recovery from COVID-19 in the past 90 days. Learn more about these [requirements](#).

4. Visa Process

- Immigration regulations and travel restrictions have been changing often and could change while you are outside the U.S.
- Some consulates offer a visa interview waiver for continuing F-1 or J-1 students. If this waiver is available at your consulate, you may be able to drop off your visa application documents instead of applying in person.
- If a visa interview is required, schedule your visa interview as early as possible. Check with the local embassy or U.S. consulate office so that you can carefully plan your [visa application process](#) and interview appointment: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.
- The availability of visa interview appointments varies by location. You may also check the [current visa appointment wait time](#).

** Citizens of Canada or Bermuda do not need a student visa.*

5. Travel to U.S.

- Plan sufficient time in your itinerary at your port of entry. Be sure you have extra time to go through immigration inspection and arrive at the gate for your domestic flight to Knoxville.
- **Email international@utk.edu if problems occur** during travel such as visa application delays, restriction from boarding your flight, and delays at the port of entry.
- After you have been readmitted to the U.S. in F-1 immigration status, **find your new I-94 arrival record** by going to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>

Travel Questions?

Contact a CGE advisor during Immigration Advising hours, Monday – Friday from 1pm to 4pm.

International Student & Scholar Services contact information:

Phone: 865-974-3177

Email: international@utk.edu