Traveling During the Winter Holiday?

If you are planning to travel outside the US during winter break, make sure your travel documents are valid and endorsed. This includes:

- Valid passport
- Valid F1 or J1 visa
- Valid I-20/DS-2019 with a valid travel endorsement signature. Note: I-20 travel signatures are good for 1 year for current students. If you are on OPT, your travel signature is good for only 6 months. These times are calculated based on the date of the most recent travel signature.

Note: to get a travel signature, you do NOT need to make an appointment. Just make sure you come during our hours.

- If you are on OPT, you should also bring your EAD card and proof of employment. If you have applied for OPT but not yet received your EAD card, you should bring your Approval Notice and/or Receipt Notice.

The OIS will be closed starting Dec. 22 and will reopen Jan. 2, so please plan accordingly if you need to meet with an advisor and/or get a travel signature. If you want to leave the US and return again, but you need to renew your F-1 or J-1 visa, you can request a Visa Renewal Letter from the Forms page of the OIS website. Please request your letter at least 2 weeks before your departure.

When you re-enter the US, if you do not have your I-20/DS-2019, or the signature is not valid, you can ask for a Form I-515. Once you are in the US, you must make an appointment with us immediately so we can fix your I-515.

If you will be going on a cruise, make sure to bring your I-20 with you!

As you know, the I-94 is now an electronic record. The OIS does not require students to submit their I-94 upon returning to the US, but we do recommend that you retrieve your I-94 from www.cbp.gov/i94 whenever you re-enter the country. You will NOT be able to retrieve your I-94 while you are outside the US, because the I-94 is an ENTRY document. Please check the Travel section of our website for more info about travel: http://www.fordham.edu/info/21326/current_students/i94/travel

Your I-20 End Date

Look at your current SEVIS I-20 program end date. Do you still plan to complete your studies on the date listed on your I-20? If that date no longer reflects your intended completion date, you MUST let us know immediately.

I-20s with a December 2018 completion date:

1. If you plan to finish your program by Dec 2018, you do not need to anything. If you want to stay in the US to work on OPT after your completion, you must apply for OPT immediately (if you have not already). To do so, please have the OPT form completed by your academic advisor and make an appointment with an OIS advisor.

2. If you will NOT finish your program by Dec 2018 you need to request an I-20 extension and should contact the OIS immediately. Your I-20 will NOT be extended automatically- you must contact OIS. We will issue you an updated I-20 after we have received an email confirmation from your Academic Advisor or Class Dean. Failure to request an I-20 extension will result in your F-1 status (I-20 record) completing itself in SEVIS, and you will lose options to stay in the U.S.
Important Reminders

- Make sure your address information is up-to-date and correct!
- US phone numbers are now required by SEVIS (Federal Law). Make sure you enter your US phone number in my.fordham.edu (Enroll Full-Time! All students must enroll full time in classes. This means at least 12 credits/term for undergraduates, and at least 9 credits for graduates.
- Only students in their last term may enroll less than full time.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT is a type of work authorization allowing you to do work/internships while a student. To be eligible, you must have been holding F1 status for at least 1 academic year. Whether or not your position is paid does NOT influence whether you need to apply for CPT.

CPT is issued per semester. If you are working under CPT and plan to continue employment into the spring 2018 term, make sure the CPT authorization on page 2 of your I-20 includes the spring months. If it does not, you will need a new CPT authorization.

If you are currently working under CPT and wish to continue your internship/employment in the spring while still a student, you must apply for a new CPT authorization for the spring semester.

Please be sure to apply for CPT work authorization BEFORE starting work. It is illegal to work prior to obtaining CPT authorization. OIS cannot back-date CPT employment.

Please make sure your CPT application form is filled out completely—it must include the full address of the employer (including zip code), as well as a specific start and end date. NOT ‘spring 2018’ or ‘April 2018’ etc.

If you are considering full time CPT, OIS does not decide whether you would be ‘allowed’ to do the position full time—that is the decision of your school. However, keep in mind that 12 months or more of full-time CPT will start deducting time from your OPT (optional work authorization for after the completion of studies).

Is Your OPT Application Taking Longer Than Expected?

Check your status with an E-Request.

Over the past few months, USCIS processing times for EAD cards have substantially increased. The normal processing time for cards is now roughly between 3 and 5 months, starting from the date USCIS receives an application. Consequently, we encourage students to apply for OPT as early as possible and remain patient during the waiting period.

However, if you have been waiting for over 4 months to receive your card, you may make E-Request on the USCIS website to check your case status. Carefully follow our E-Request Tutorial to let USCIS know that your case is outside the normal processing time. Please note, that this does not guarantee a response nor does it expedite the process.

Furthermore, please contact OIS directly if your case has been pending for over 5 months so we can make a direct inquiry with USCIS.
Health Insurance Information

The insurance plan continues to be managed by Aetna Student Health. Current students who are currently enrolled in the school’s plan will be covered from January 1, 2019-August 22, 2019. Students can find providers online at www.aetnastudenthealth.com. Students can also print their ID cards on this website as well. F-1 or J-1 students are automatically enrolled and charge for the insurance. Students can go online to print their ID cards after January 1, 2019. Students who want to waive the school’s plan must complete a waiver online by February 23, 2019 by submitting proof of insurance that meets the following requirements. See below:

- Medical benefits must be UNLIMITED
- Deductible- not to exceed US$500 per year
- Medical evacuation- $50,000
- Repatriation - $25,000
- The insurance company must be headquartered and operating in the US, with a US claims address and customer service telephone number.
- The plan must be ACA compliant, the plan must provide inpatient hospitalization benefits in the New York City area including mental health benefits. The plan must provide outpatient benefits in the New York City area (including office visits, outpatient mental health visits and laboratory and radiology procedures).
- Coverage for emergency only care does not satisfy the requirement.

The following types of insurance plans will not be acceptable for waiving the Fordham plan:

- Travel policies with limited benefits and exclusions of coverage. The plan must be ACA compliant.
- Insurance plans that always require students to pay for treatment out-of-pocket and then be reimbursed.
- Plans advertised as ACA Comparable do not satisfy the waiver requirement.

Current students who would like to waive the school’s plan for the spring semester will have to send an email to studentinsurance@fordham.edu with their name, Fordham ID number and current insurance policy for review to determine approval of the insurance waiver. The deadline is February 23, 2019.

For students that are graduating in December and have the school’s insurance, their coverage will end on December 31, 2018. Students can extend their coverage for 90 days. The coverage will be from 8/23/19-11/22/19. Students can apply for this extension online at www.aetnastudenthealth.com and click on 90 day continuation plan. The students will have to pay with a credit card.

Are you Moving in 2019?

Please make sure your US local address is up to date! If you have moved out of your previous US address, or if you lived in university housing last semester but will live off-campus this fall, you M bust update your address on your my.fordham account! SEVIS (Federal Law) requires this information, and the OIS would rather not have to bother you for this information. By checking and updating your information on my.fordham.edu, you can satisfy the federal requirement and save the OIS from having to send you emails.

To update your address and phone number: 1) log in to my.fordham.edu 2) click on the Student tab 3) click on the Banner Self-Service folder, and then the Information folder in the My Information portal 4) click on Update Addresses and Phone

Non-University Local: Current US local address. This field is REQUIRED for anyone not living in university housing!!

Please enter your US phone number here, too!

Permanent: Current home address in another country (not the US!)

Mailing: Wherever you want mail to be sent to

Billing: Wherever you want bills sent to

Your my.fordham account is also where you can update your email address and phone number.

If you are not able to update your address and phone number using my.fordham, please just send an email to ois@fordham.edu telling us your new address and phone number.

Remember: the way you write your US address is important! You should write your US address following this model:

Street # Street Name Apartment # City, State, Zip code

For example:

97 W 50th Street Apt 12C
New York, NY 10023