



Office of International Education
International Student, Scholar, and Immigration Services (ISSIS)
1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602-5407
issis@uga.edu
(706) 542-2900 fax: (706) 583-0123



H-1B TRAVEL CHECKLIST

While most of us need to travel for work, visiting family, or vacation, there are times when traveling outside the U.S. while in H-1B status is NOT advised. If one of the below situations apply to you, then the International Student, Scholar & Immigration Services (ISSIS) does NOT recommend travel, and any travel you take will be at your own risk. You should not travel outside the U.S. if:

- You have an application on file to change your immigration status to H-1B from another status, or from H-1B to another immigration status. If you leave the U.S. before the H application is approved, your application will be considered abandoned, and you will not be allowed back into the U.S.
- An H-1B extension has been filed for you, but your current authorization (I-797 approval notice) has expired. If you leave the U.S. before the extension is approved and after the current approval has expired, you will not have any valid paperwork and you will not be allowed back into the U.S.
- An H-1B “change of employer” application has been filed for you, but your current authorization (I-797 approval notice) has expired. If you leave before the H-1B at the new employer has been approved and after the current approval has expired, you will not have any valid paperwork and you will not be allowed back into the U.S.

If the above situations do not apply to you and your H-1B has been approved or you are awaiting the approval of an extension and your current I-797 will still be valid on your return date, then you should not have any problems traveling outside of the U.S. In order to re-enter the U.S. after your trip, you should have the following items:

- Valid, unexpired form I-797 (this can be checked out from ISSIS).
- Valid passport with an expiration date of *at least 6 months* in the future.
- Valid H-1B visa stamp in passport.*
- Photocopy of the entire H-1B application filed for you by UGA (copy from ISSIS).
- Letter from your employer confirming that you are still employed in the position described in the H-1B petition, that you are making a short trip and expected back to work soon (ISSIS recommends that you carry two originals written on department letterhead).

*If your visa has expired or you have changed your status in the U.S. and never had an H-1B visa, you must obtain a new H-1B visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before you can re-enter the U.S. To find out what specific documents you should have with you to obtain your H-1B visa, you should visit the web site for the Embassy or Consulate you will be going to at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

The only time a valid H-1B visa is not required for re-entry to the U.S. is when traveling to Canada or Mexico for 30 days or less. In this case you will travel under what is known as "Automatic Visa Revalidation." To take advantage of this you should request a letter from your H advisor at the same time you request your I-797. You will show this letter at the border along with your expired H-1B visa. In this situation you would retain your I-94 card when departing the U.S..

After your travels, remember to bring your original I-797 back to the ISIS along with your visa and I-94 card so that we can make copies of your new documents.

Upon entering the U.S., please look at the date written on your I-94 card. This date should match the end date of your I-797 approval notice!! ***Please contact ISIS immediately if it does not.***

Have a great trip, and email ISIS at isis@uga.edu if you have any problems while you are abroad!