

**Division of International Services
Office of Research Services
National Institutes of Health**

**J-1 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 the Caribbean Islands 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 the Caribbean Islands (excluding Cuba) without a valid visa if you:

- 1) Are **not** a citizen of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea or Cuba, or other country designated as a terrorist country by the Department of State. (See <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/>)
- 2) Your stay in Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean Islands was for less than 30 days.
- 3) You maintained your J-1 nonimmigrant status when last in the U.S. and intend to resume your J-1 activity upon reentry.
- 4) You apply for readmission within your initial admission or extension of stay (i.e., not after your approval has expired.)
- 5) Your visa was not cancelled or otherwise not 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 revalidation applies even if you are subject to 212(e).
- 6) You did **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, (see http://travel.state.gov/reciprocity/VISAS_MANTIS/visas_mantis.htm) may experience delays of 30 additional business days or more, 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.

When reentering the U.S. from Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean Islands using automatic visa revalidation, the minimum required documentation you must present is:

- 1) Form I-94. **DO NOT SURRENDER YOUR VALID FORM I-94 TO IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES.**
- 2) valid passport
- 3) original, valid DS-2019 with travel validation signature
- 4) NIH ID card
- 5) a current letter of verification to confirm your fellowship with NIH (request such letter from your IC).

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 US 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 information regarding this matter.