



Renewing your F-1/J-1 Visa in a Country Other than your Home Country

Applying for a visa in a country other than your home country (or 'third country') is typically more difficult and is not advised unless it is the only option (i.e. no embassy in your home country, embassy in home country closed). You may need to prove that you have continuously maintained lawful immigration status during your time in the U.S. or be sent back to your home country to apply for the visa. Since refusal in a third country is more likely than in the home country, students should plan well in advance of their date of travel. Please make sure to carefully read through ALL of the information below and follow all of the guidance below if you choose to renew your visa in a third country. Please note as with ALL visa petitions, the Office of International Affairs & Division of Global Engagement can only provide immigration advising and cannot ensure the procurement of any visa.

Conditions & Limitations:

In order to reapply for an F-1 or J-1 visa in a third country, you must:

- Have been continuously maintaining lawful non-immigrant status during your stay in the U.S.
- Be currently enrolled or planning to enroll for the next academic semester at UL Lafayette or have received an authorization to engage in optional practical training (for F-1 students) or Academic Training (for J-1 students). F-1 students on OPT will need an EAD card and J-1 students will need the Academic Training authorization letter. (Note: applying for a visa while on OPT can be risky; ask an advisor or read the OPT handouts for more information.)
- Obtain a UL Lafayette I-20 or DS-2019 from the Office of International Affairs or Undergraduate Admissions/Graduate School (newly admitted students only)
- Have a "valid" reason for applying in the country where the consulate/embassy is located; you are likely to be denied if your only reason for applying in that country is to avoid your home country consulate/embassy. Examples of "valid" reasons include: to attend a conference, to visit family or friends, no home country consulate/embassy or consulate/embassy closed in home country.
- Be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the visa officer that you have enough funding to complete your program and that you plan to return to your home country. If you have relatives that are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, this will be more difficult to do.

Process:

STEP 1: Find Out if You Need a Visa to Enter all Country(s) You Are Traveling Through

Whether or not you need a visa to enter a specific country depends on your country of citizenship and legal permanent residence. Check with the Embassy or Consulate of each country to find out whether or not you need a visa. A good resource for finding foreign Embassies or Consulates in the US is <https://www.usembassy.gov>. Applying for visas is costly and time consuming, so plan ahead. If your plane is landing in another country, you may need a visa for that country as well, even if you do not plan to exit the plane.

STEP 2: Contact the US Consulate in the "Third" Country to Investigate Procedures

Each consulate/embassy has different procedures and timelines for visa applications. Before you finalize your travel plans, consult the U.S. Department of State website for procedures at individual consulates and to make sure they accept third country visa applications (<https://www.usembassy.gov>) and to see how long it will take to obtain a visa appointment: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>



STEP 3: Complete the Online Visa Application (FORM DS-160) & Secure an Interview

- To access the DS-160, please visit: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
- Upload a photo that meets the requirements
- Schedule your visa interview in the third country (after completing STEPS 1 and 2)
- Pay the non-refundable visa application fee and issuance fee.

STEP 4: Obtain and Carry all the Documents You May Need to be Granted the Visa

- A valid passport (must be valid within 6 months of entry date to U.S.)
- A valid UL Lafayette I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students) – If everything is correct on your current immigration document, the OIA will not need to reissue you a new one for visa renewal.
- A valid signature (travel authorization) on page 2 of the I-20, which is less than 12 months old or a valid signature on the bottom right-hand corner of the DS-2019, which is less than 12 months old. New students who are enrolling at UL Lafayette for the first time OR who are enrolling in a new degree program do not require a travel authorization.
- Expired visa (if available)
- Application fee payment receipt
- Photo (if photo cannot be uploaded electronically)
- Academic transcripts (for continuing students only)
- Standardized test scores (if applicable)
- Verification of enrollment letter (To request: please complete the Student Update Form located at: <https://internationalaffairs.louisiana.edu/sites/internationalaffairs/files/Student%20Info%20UpdateTravel%20Request%20Form.pdf>.)
- Financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover ALL expenses while in the U.S. This can be either a letter from your department stating the amount of funding you are receiving, a letter from another financial sponsor stating the amount that they are giving you, PLUS supporting financial documents (i.e. bank statements). Please note that most scholarships/assistantships do not cover all expenses, and therefore, it is advisable to provide proof of personal or family funding.
- Since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa, be prepared to explain your intent to depart the U.S. upon your completion of course of study.

While all of this documentation may not be required, it is best to bring as much as possible with you.

STEP 5: Attend Your Visa Interview

Before attending your interview, we recommend that you read through some interview tips from our professional organization, NAFSA. To access these tips, click [here](#).

Please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html> for more information or contact us at oia@louisiana.edu.