**2021 INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDE FOR F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS**

Provided by LSU International Services (5/2021)

COVID-19 international travel rules change frequently. Check without office and agencies like DOS, CDC, WHO for the latest information before making any international travel plans to or from the US. Be prepared to be flexible.

The key will be to stay as up to date as you can on the various requirements of the countries you are travelling from, to and through, the flights you board and all destinations. As you decide to travel during the next phase of the world pandemic, there will be uncertainty and inconsistencies. You should prepare the best you can and be ready for many challenges and changes.

As of 4/20/2021, the US Department of State issued updated travel warnings that better reflect the CDC's science-based Travel Health Notices. Nearly 80% of countries are now listed at Level 4 although no substantial changes have happened in these countries regarding COVID-19: **Do Not Travel advisories due to ongoing risks posed by COVID-19.**

*It is unknown at this time how these new DOS country listings will affect US border posts actions and consulates abroad but changes should be expected once further guidance is released.*

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDANCE**

* Request a US visa appointment at a US Consulate (if needed). Accept an appointment date that may be later than you need. It can provide the option of requesting an earlier appointment date. If the US Consulate you planned to use is closed or backlogged for appointments, you may try to get an appointment at another US Consulate. Be aware some US Consulate are not taking appointments from third country nationals.

[Travel (lsu.edu)](https://www.lsu.edu/intlpro/is/current-students/travel/index.php) (current students)

[U.S. Immigration Procedures | International Services (lsu.edu)](https://www.lsu.edu/intlpro/is/prospective-students/visa.php) (new students)

Contact LSU International Services if you have any questions or issues in the visa application process: [isograd@lsu.edu](mailto:isograd@lsu.edu)

Upon approval of your visa, the embassy or consulate will stamp your visa in your passport. You should ensure that you have the National Interest Exception (NIE) marked on your visa stamp or issued to you by email if you already had a valid US visa if you are coming or transiting through a country that requires this in order to board flights and enter the US during the summer. Be aware that these requirements can change for any country at any time. The NIE is only valid for 30 days from the day it was approved and for a single entry only and needed to board the plane.

If you are not approved for the NIE, be aware that you must remain physically present in a country not impacted by US travel restrictions for a full 14 days or more before you will be eligible to enter the US.

NOTE: New and continuing F-1 students who are returning to the US no earlier than 30 days before their fall 2021 semester program begin date (for new F-1s) or first day of class, do NOT need to obtain a NIE. The NIE is exempted in these cases.

[National Interest Exceptions for Certain Travelers from the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, and Ireland (state.gov)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/national-interest-exceptions-from-certain-travelers-from-the-schengen-area-uk-and-ireland.html#:~:text=The%20Department%20of%20State%20also%20continues%20to%20grant,and%20bolster%20key%20components%20of%20our%20transatlantic%20relationship.)

* If you have gained the appropriate visa and decided to plan the trip, check for travel restrictions from the governments of both your current location, transit locations, and your destination. With new restrictions being added all the time, it is advisable to re-check with the airlines you plan to use and review risk assessments by country for specific COVID-19 travel rules including testing and quarantine periods. You can check their embassy web site, the CDC GOVID-19 guidance for international travel and WIKIPEDIA’s list of travel restrictions by continent and country:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Travel_restrictions_related_to_the_COVID-19_pandemic>

* If you plan to travel to another country before entering the US, check travel restrictions in that country.

Each country has its own standards and protocols for entry regarding COVID-19 tests and quarantine periods.  It is very important to know these requirements prior to travel:

[**COVID-19 Country Specific Information (state.gov)**](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftravel.state.gov%2Fcontent%2Ftravel%2Fen%2Ftraveladvisories%2FCOVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html&data=04%7C01%7Cnrigby%40lsu.edu%7Cd78ea0e4f0484980035308d91fa7b864%7C2d4dad3f50ae47d983a09ae2b1f466f8%7C0%7C0%7C637575627478889045%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=8%2F2EUDo2DlzIqVOWEvVOeV4ACq%2BJ2jgV9hZ0UDAZ6CI%3D&reserved=0)

* It is recommended to purchase independent travel insurance - “cancel for any reason” or “change of mind” coverage. This way, you can recover at least part of your costs if you have to cancel your trip. While travel insurance can be purchased up until the day before departure, certain coverages, like “cancel for any reason” must be purchased immediately after paying for the trip.
* All air passengers age two and older traveling to and from the US must be tested for COVID-19 no more than three days before their flight or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 3 months before they board a flight to the US. Travelers must show proof before boarding their plane. This rule does apply to everyone who has already been fully vaccinated. Full vaccination may eliminate quarantine period requirements in some cases. Make sure that you will be able to get a COVID-19 viral test at your destination before your return to the US. NOTE: COVID-19 rapid test are not accepted.
* During this time of travel restriction, some passengers are experiencing temperatures being taken and evaluations for anyone who looks ill in order to be cleared to board flights.
* Delay your travel if you are waiting for test results or if you test positive for COVID-19.
* ALL persons who have been fully vaccinated (i.e., have received both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine) may be able to bypass self-quarantine guidelines of certain counties, including the US. The recent pause on the Johnson and Johnson vaccination does not affect travelers who present evidence of being a recipient of this to bypass self-quarantine guidelines. International travelers who have received the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized vaccine (specifically, Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson) no longer need to self-quarantine after arriving in the US and they may no longer need to get tested before leaving the US, unless their destination requires them to do so. Verifications should be made in advance to avoid travel issues.
* Get tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after travel unless you have been fully vaccinated and your destination allows this to bypass self-quarantine requirements.
* After international travel, even if you test negative, it is recommended that you stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days.
* If you are unable to get tested or feel ill, it is safest to self-quarantine for 10 days after international travel.

For additional information:

[**CDC Expands Negative COVID-19 Test Requirement to All Air Passengers Entering the United States | CDC Online Newsroom**](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fmedia%2Freleases%2F2021%2Fs0112-negative-covid-19-air-passengers.html&data=04%7C01%7Cnrigby%40lsu.edu%7Cd78ea0e4f0484980035308d91fa7b864%7C2d4dad3f50ae47d983a09ae2b1f466f8%7C0%7C0%7C637575627478879055%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=hCeUfrfWFftVh7cgds83WOZ5pFa8dp24%2FGJ826m8m9g%3D&reserved=0)

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Ftravelers%2Finternational-travel-during-covid19.html&data=04%7C01%7Cnrigby%40lsu.edu%7Cd78ea0e4f0484980035308d91fa7b864%7C2d4dad3f50ae47d983a09ae2b1f466f8%7C0%7C0%7C637575627478899047%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=PNYfz1oIOsB8ciDAeAd0RRBCx2fYOmp8LHeXs9TsBXU%3D&reserved=0)