Leaving and Re-Entering the U.S.

Updated May 12, 2021

There are many issues that will affect your decision and ability to travel to the U.S., and unfortunately with the ongoing global pandemic and changes in the U.S. administration, what was true last week might be different tomorrow so it's important to stay informed with up-to-date information. You may want to review the frequently asked questions (FAQ) page which includes international travel issues. In addition to the information below you should also review the detailed information provided by NAFSA: Association of International Educators [1]

Whether you are traveling to the U.S. for the first time or during your stay at Yale, review the information below carefully. At a minimum, you will need a valid passport, valid visa (except Canadian citizens) and a valid visa document. Click the box below for details about your immigration status. If you have questions or concerns, check with your OISS adviser [2] before you make travel plans. If you had a difficult time entering or re-entering the U.S. please let us know. [3]

Information Specific to Visa Category

F-1 Students [4]
J-1 Students [5]
J-1 Scholars [6]
H-1B Workers [7]

U.S. Immigration Inspection [8]

When you arrive, you will clear U.S. immigration [8] with a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at your port of entry. (There are also several airports outside the U.S. where you clear immigration before your flight in a pre-clearance process. [9])

Secondary Inspection

Most Yale students and scholars will clear U.S. immigration after your documents are reviewed by a CBP officer. However, a few may be referred to another officer to verify your student status or for additional questioning. This is referred to as "secondary inspection [10]". Although a referral to secondary inspection can be intimidating and make you feel anxious, there is usually little cause for alarm. It can, however, take you an hour or two to complete the inspections process.

If the CBP officer has questions that can be answered by OISS ask the officer if they would like to call OISS for confirmation. During office hours, you can call your designated OISS adviser [11] directly or the general office number, 203-432-2305. After hours please call the Yale Police Department at 203-432-4400 who will immediately call the OISS executive director or associate director.

I-94 Record

Every non-immigrant entering the U.S. on a sponsored visa (F, J, H, etc…) will have what's called an I-94 record created by the authorities upon entry. It is the responsibility of international students, scholars and family members to look up their I-94 record [12] after entering the U.S. to ensure there are no errors. If you have any difficulty looking up your I-94 record please check with your OISS adviser right away. [2]

Transit Visas When Changing Planes
If your travel plans require a change of planes in a third country, you must check to see if you need a transit visa. Some countries (including the U.S.) required an entry or transit visa, even if you are only changing planes and resuming your travels during a short time frame. Before purchasing your ticket, make certain you are aware of any travel requirements or restrictions.

Third Country Visits

When planning to visit a country outside the U.S. which is not your country of citizenship or legal permanent residence, be sure to determine whether or not you will need a visa to enter that country [13].

Canada, Mexico and Contiguous Islands

If you are traveling to Canada, Mexico or the contiguous islands for less than 30 days you may be eligible for a visa renewal exemption [14].

Travel to Cuba

The U.S. still has an economic embargo against Cuba which includes certain types of travel. Tourism continues to be prohibited according to the Office of Foreign Asset Control (see item #8 [15].) The embargo affects people currently living in the U.S. including international students and scholars. Traveling through other countries prior to arriving in Cuba does not change whether or not you are subject to the embargo (see item #36 [15].) There are specific educational activities that are permitted in Cuba. For details please read the Yale International Toolkit [16] about travel to Cuba before planning your trip.

Resources for Yale Affiliates Traveling Outside the U.S.

Travel Plan Database [17]

Yale maintains a travel plan database so the University can assist you in the event of an emergency. Please register your travel [17] when leaving the U.S. for school related or personal travel. You need your NetID to register.

Emergency Travel Assistance

All students, faculty and staff members, and other Yale affiliates who have a Yale University NetID are covered by International SOS Travel Assistance [18] for both business and pleasure travel.

Yale and the World Services

Yale has a number of resources for faculty, staff, and students to help plan your international activity – from working and studying abroad to coming to Yale from abroad. Visit the International Toolkit [19] for resources for Yale affiliates traveling abroad.

Source URL: https://oiss.yale.edu/travel/leaving-and-re-entering-the-us

Links:
[1] https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/covid-19-restrictions-us-visas-and-entry#interview
[2] https://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss
[3] https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss
[4] https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/f-1-students/traveling