What documents do I need to travel out of the U.S?

- Be sure to carry the following documents with you for travel abroad:
  - Valid Passport Visa, I-94 Card
  - Valid Visa
  - I-94 (I-94 will be taken at the port of exit)
  - I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed for travel by an ISS Staff member
  - Official transcript (Registrar’s Office, 322 Student Union)
  - "Letter of Current Enrollment" (Registrar’s Office, 322 Student Union)
  - SEVIS Fee Receipt
  - Proof of financial support (a personal bank statement, Research Assistant/Teaching Assistantship verification letter that includes salary and tuition payment details, or sponsor's letter and sponsor's bank statement).
  - Documentation of approval to take a reduced course load, if applicable
  - Evidence of concurrent enrollment, if applicable

Applying for a visa in your home country

The ISS recommends that you apply for a visa at the US Consulate or Embassy in your home country. Most consulates require a personal interview with a consular officer, as well as collection of biometric identifiers (fingerprints and digital photograph). It is always advisable to check with the consulate or embassy where you will be applying to determine current application and documentation requirements, as well as processing times. To find out about processing times and procedures consult the website of the consulate to which you plan to apply: http://usembassy.state.gov

Proof of ties to your home country

Not only will you need to provide the documents above you will need to show proof of ties to your home country. From the Department of State web site: “Student visa applicants must establish to the satisfaction of the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning, and that they will depart the United States when they have completed their studies. It is impossible to specify the exact form the evidence should take since applicants’ circumstances vary greatly”. Examples of such evidence may include: copies of bank statements from a bank in your home country, evidence of ownership of property or residence in your home country, a job offer letter from home, or letters from family.

Background and security checks

Consulates and embassies are more frequently conducting background checks on individuals, resulting in possible delays in visa issuance. Background/security checks can be triggered by, but not limited to, arrests in the United States, certain courses that appear on your transcript, or by your field of study. Background/security checks can take a few days up to several months and possibly even longer.

What if I travel to Mexico, Canada or the Caribbean?

If you plan to travel to a country that is contiguous* to the U.S. (but not Cuba!) and you intend to stay there less than 30 days and will not apply for a new U.S. visa, you may re-enter the U.S. on an expired visa stamp (this regulation is known as Automatic Visa Revalidation). Please note that citizens of Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba will not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. with an expired U.S. visa stamp, even if the trip is to a contiguous country.

How does Automatic Visa Revalidation work?

When traveling to a contiguous country, keep your I-94 card with you upon exiting the U.S. Tell the immigration official at the port of exit (border) that you intend to stay outside the U.S. for less than 30 days and that your U.S. visa is expired. Make sure to have your I-20 or DS-2019 signed by an ISS Staff member before you travel and present that document along with your valid passport, I-94, and expired (or current) visa to re-enter the U.S.
Can I renew my U.S. visa while in Mexico or Canada?
If you are planning to renew your current US visa in Mexico or Canada, please visit with an ISS staff member first. In general, ISS does not recommend that third-country nationals apply for a U.S. visa in Mexico or Canada because of lengthy delays due to background/security checks and complications in case of visa denial. Re-entry back into the United States will be based only on the successful approval of a visa. If your visa application is denied, you would need to depart directly to your home country to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. You may not use Automatic Visa Revalidation if you applied for a visa while abroad!

You can also see the web site for the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez or the US Embassy in Ottawa Canada for detailed information:

http://ciudadjuarez.usconsulate.gov/nivtcns3.html

http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/categories-and-requirements.html

Do I need a visa to enter Mexico or Canada?
If you are traveling to Mexico or Canada, or any country that is not your country of citizenship, you may need a visa to enter that country. The following contacts may be helpful to determine if you need a visa to enter another country:

Canada: http://canadaonline.about.com/od/travel/a/usembassy.htm
Foreign consular offices in the United States: http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/