

SUBJECT:

IMPORTANT: Summer Immigration Updates for UNM International Students and Scholars

Dear International Students and Scholars,

We continue to see changes in government immigration policies that are unsettling and raising lots of questions for all of us. Your status and well-being are a priority, which is why we provide you with the information you need to navigate these uncertain times.

For more information, come to our [Know Your Rights and Responsibilities](#) presentation this Friday on Zoom at 1:00.

Here is an update of what we know currently:

Visa Appointment Pause

Last week you may have seen reports about a pause in visa appointment scheduling for F and J visa applicants while the state department develops procedures for enhanced Social Media vetting. State Department officials have declared that this will be a short pause. Previously scheduled appointments are continuing and students and scholars are being issued visas. Anyone with a current visa appointment should continue with the process, as scheduled, unless informed otherwise by the consulate. If you are trying to schedule a visa appointment, you should check the system daily to be sure you can get an appointment when visa scheduling restarts.

Further Restrictions on Visa Issuance for Chinese Citizens

The U.S. State Department also announced last week that there will be further visa restrictions for Chinese nationals. There is no real information about what these restrictions will entail. However, it makes international travel riskier for Chinese passport holders. As additional information becomes available, we will let you know.

Assessing Your Risk

It is important that you assess your personal risks before making any decisions about international travel. Below is a summary of what you should be paying attention to.

Those with high risk factors who are currently in the United States should NOT travel outside the U.S. unless willing to take the risk of not being able to re-enter. If you do NOT have any of the below risk factors and you travel with your VALID/UNEXPIRED passport, visa, and I-20/DS-2019 (signed by an advisor in the last 6 months if you are

returning to UNM), you have what you need to lawfully enter the U.S. (students on OPT also need to travel with the EAD card and a letter confirming OPT employment).

1. You have a high risk factor if:

- You had an encounter with the police in the U.S. even if it did not result in an arrest/conviction, or if you have been informed that your visa has been revoked. Encounters can include: being pulled over for DUI, shoplifting, driving more than 20 miles per hour above the speed limit, and domestic violence, even if you did not go to jail and even if the charges were dismissed.
- You come from one of the countries [on the list for a potential travel ban](#)
- You have been involved in political protests
- You actively comment on U.S. government policies on your Social Media accounts (particularly regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict)
- You need to renew your visa to return to the U.S. (especially if it expired more than one year ago because an in-person interview is now mandatory).

Please also refer to the [message we sent to current students on March 28th](#) to assess the specific risks for your individual situation.

- 2. Your social media will be reviewed.** US government agencies will now be considering social media content that indicates an alien endorsing, espousing, promoting, or supporting antisemitic activity as a negative factor when adjudicating immigration benefit requests or issuing visas. It is unclear if other politically sensitive content will lead to benefit denials. Please consider the consequences carefully before you post on social media. Remember you will be required to provide all social media handles that you have had in future applications, so save your replies to remain consistent in your answers. More information is here: <https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/government-scrutiny-digital-footprint-and-social-media>

- 3. Enrollment full-time and in person is MANDATORY from the start of the semester until classes are finished for student visa holders.** If you are having trouble and you need to drop any classes, ALWAYS talk to an international advisor before you withdraw from class! If you will be out of the U.S. for more than a week at any time during the academic semester, you should bring additional documentation that shows permission to be away that is signed by your advisors/instructors. Consult with a GEO advisor if you will be gone for longer than 2 weeks during the semester.

- 4. Work ONLY if you have received authorization.** The only work that is automatically allowed for student visa holders is [On-campus employment](#) (up to 20 hours per week during the semester and more during the breaks for students continuing in the academic program) J students must report any on campus work to GEO before the work begins. Any work that is not for UNM or that is for more than the normal hourly limit, MUST be authorized through an application process BEFORE the work begins

or the work is not lawful. Information about work is on our website here: <https://isss.unm.edu/students/work/work-and-rules.html>

5. Keep Your documents valid and carry them with you when you travel (carry your I-94 in ABQ) After arrival, if traveling out of ABQ, carry:

- I-20/DS-2019 signed by an international advisor within the last 6 months (page 2 of I-20 for F and page 1 of I-20 for J)
- Valid passport (valid for 6 months into the future if entering the U.S.)
- Paper I-94 (Printable AFTER entry at cbp.gov/i94)
- If traveling out of the U.S. you will need a valid U.S. entry visa to return. If you are working, you must also have valid work authorization documents to travel.

6. Follow all rules to maintain status

- a. F and J Student rules to maintain legal status in the US are on our website here: <https://isss.unm.edu/students/immigration-travel/legal-status.html>
- b. J Scholar rules to maintain legal status in the US are on our website here: <https://isss.unm.edu/scholars/immigration/legal-status.html>

To find out more you are invited to come to our *Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Workshop* this Friday, June 4 on [Zoom](#) with GEO and the ACLU.

CONTACT A GEO ADVISOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CANNOT MEET REQUIREMENTS SO WE CAN HELP YOU NAVIGATE ANY PROBLEMS!

You can schedule an individual appointment to meet with an international advisor here: <https://calendly.com/global-education-office/advising?month=2023-10>

OR

Meet an advisor at Drop-ins Monday-Friday from 1:00pm - 3:00pm on [Zoom](#) or in-person at Mesa Vista Hall room 2120.

For emergencies (like being stuck at the port of entry or interactions with law enforcement) you can reach us on the GEO emergency line at 505-277-4436 (4GEO).

We wish you a safe and calm summer and look forward to seeing you soon!