

Temporary Absence from the U.S.

As an F-1 student, you are eligible to leave the United States and return with your current I-20 if you meet the following conditions:

- You are currently maintaining F-1 status
- You will return to resume studies at NOVA in the same program and same major
- Your I-20 will be valid for at least one semester after you return
- You will be physically outside the U.S. not more than 5 months

In order to return with the same I-20, you will need to:

- 1) Give a written statement to your international student advisor regarding your plans to return to the U.S. to resume your studies. Note: you do not need permission to be out of the country; however your advisor needs a general knowledge of your plans.
- 2) Provide the advisor with the date you will leave the United States. This can be in your written statement or a copy of your airline ticket.
- 3) Give your current I-20 to the advisor to sign for reentry.

The advisor will sign the I-20 showing that you must return five months from the date you departed or at the beginning of the next semester, whichever is earlier.

NOTE: You must plan to enroll in full time classes in the next available opportunity after your return. For example, if you leave the US at the end of the fall semester in December and plan to return in May, you will be required to study full time in the summer session.

The Office of International Students (OIS) will *terminate* your I-20 for “*authorized early withdrawal*”.

30 days before you wish to return to the United States, you must contact OIS and request to have your I-20 record set back to “active”. OIS will request this update from the SEVP Help Desk. OIS will contact you via email once this has been updated.

DO NOT TRY TO RETURN TO THE U.S. UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED THAT YOUR I-20 RECORD IS ACTIVE.

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