The visa stamp in my passport is about to expire. Do I need a new one?
The visa stamp in your passport is for entry purposes only. Once you are in the U.S., your I-20 or DS-2019 combined with your I-94 card become the active documents that permit you to remain in the U.S. You are allowed to stay for D/S or "Duration of Status", which means the period of time in which you are maintaining your non-immigrant status. The completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019 is the expiration date of your status. Your I-20 or DS-2019 can be extended at the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) if necessary (see the "Extension of Stay" handout for further details).

Applying for a visa in your home country
We recommend that you apply for a visa at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your home country. Most consulates require a personal interview with a consular officer and collect biometric identifiers (e.g. fingerprints and digital photograph). Always check with the consulate or embassy where you will be applying to determine current application and documentation requirements as well as processing times. You can find a list of consular websites at http://www.usembassy.gov.

Background and security checks
Consulates and embassies frequently conduct background checks that can result in possible delays in visa issuance for individuals. 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 several months or longer.

Applying for a visa in a third country
F and J students who apply for a visa stamp in a third country – including Canada and Mexico – and get denied will not be allowed to reenter the U.S. on an expired visa stamp. If your 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. Please talk to an Immigration Advisor at ISSS before making the decision to apply for a visa in a third country.

If you are subject to a background or security check upon application for a visa renewal in a third country, you will have to remain in that country until the background or security check is completed and the visa is approved before you are allowed to re-enter the U.S.

Please note that you may need an entry visa to enter a third country.

The following contacts may be helpful to determine if you need a visa to enter another country:
- Canada: (213) 346-2711 or http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/index.asp
- Mexico: (512) 478-2866 or http://www.sre.gob.mx/austin
- Foreign consular offices in the United States: http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco
Visa application process in Mexico or Canada

An appointment for a visa renewal in Mexico or Canada is made in advance in one of the following ways:

For consulates in Mexico:
- The U.S. Consulates in Mexico only process F-1 visa renewals for continuing students in full-time degree programs who can demonstrate that their initial F-1 visa was issued in their home country.
- Call 1-900-476-1212. You can pay by the minute using a U.S. 900 number. Charges will appear on your telephone bill.

For consulates in Canada:
- Web Address: http://www.usvisa-info.com/en-CA/selfservice/ss_country_welcome
- Call toll-free at 1-877-341-2441 or go to http://usvisa-info.com/en-CA/selfservice/us_service_options for a list of phone numbers for various consulates throughout Canada.

What will I need to apply for a new visa?
- Current SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, signed for travel by an Immigration Advisor within the last year.
- Official UT Transcript in a sealed envelope and Letter of Good Standing, also called "letter of enrollment," both available at the Registrar's Office (Main Building 1).
- Proof of financial support. You should be able to verify the amount shown as the total on your I-20 or DS-2019 with a personal bank statement, Research Assistant/Teaching Assistantship (verification letter should include salary and tuition payment details), or sponsor's letter and sponsor's bank statement.
- 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.
- Issuance Fee charged for visa. The visa application fee is $160 for F and J visas. Depending on the country of citizenship, there also may be an issuance fee (also called a visa reciprocity fee). Check http://travel.state.gov/visa/fees/fees_3272.html to determine if you will be charged this fee.
- SEVIS Fee, when required. If you leave and re-enter the U.S. to regain legal status with an I-20 issued after September 1, 2004, or are readmitted to the University and are returning with a new I-20 issued after September 1, 2004, you are required to pay the SEVIS fee. This fee is US $200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1 visa applicants (See SEVIS fee handout, or visit www.fmjfee.com).
- Application form DS 160 (can be completed online here: http://evisaforms.state.gov).
- One passport-size photograph; if completing the DS-160 online, see photograph guidelines here: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/frvi_3877.html

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