

CSU Guidance to Faculty, Students, and Staff Considering International Travel in Spring & Summer 2025

Due to uncertainty and evolving federal policies, the CSU strongly encourages all faculty, staff, and students to carefully assess the necessity of international travel at this time. The decision to travel outside the United States is personal, but the **CSU advises all members of its community to proceed with extreme caution**. Immigration policies, practices, travel bans, and health and safety risks are shifting daily and often cannot be fully assessed or projected in advance.

Before undertaking international travel for any work, study, personal, or leisure purpose, including to conduct research, attend conferences, teach abroad, participate in learning programs or community service projects, employees and students are urged to carefully consider and assess the variables outlined below, all of which may impact travel plans, personal safety while abroad, and the ability to reenter the United States.

Note: The California State University system provides pro bono (free of charge) legal immigration services through a contract with [Immigrant Legal Defense](#) (ILD).

CONCERNS AND EXPLANATIONS

Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies	Constant policy changes by the federal government (such as executive orders or Department of Homeland Security memos) could affect visa eligibility or re-entry requirements mid-trip, leaving travelers vulnerable to unexpected barriers.
Citizenship Status and Border Control	Recently, there has been greater emphasis on stricter border control, which could lead to longer screening processes, device searches, or interviews, especially for travelers with certain nationalities or research interests.
Visas	Individuals holding visas (H-1B, F-1, J-1, O-1, etc.) may face increased scrutiny or delays when re-entering the U.S., particularly if they traveled to or transited through countries under heightened security or diplomatic strain with the U.S. Travelers seeking visa renewals may also experience longer processing times, resulting in delays in reentering the U.S. It is also important to note that visas are frequently tied to specific institutions or programs of study. Thus, any disruption in travel, employment or study can inadvertently impact legal status.
Country-Specific Bans and Restrictions	Travelers from certain countries could be affected by current or proposed travel bans or enhanced screening procedures, depending on national origin or prior travel history. A proposed 3-tier travel ban would suspend visas to 10 countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Cuba and North Korea. Partial suspensions of student and tourist visas to Eritrea, Haiti, Laos, Myanmar, and South Sudan are also being considered. Finally, 26 additional countries, including Belarus, Pakistan and Turkmenistan, are being considered for a partial suspension of U.S. visa issuance
Legal and Diplomatic Issues	Foreign laws often differ significantly from those in the United States, particularly regarding freedom of speech and expression, religious or political dissent, and data privacy. Violation(s) of these laws, intentional or not, may impact the ability to re-enter the United States.
Geopolitics	Tensions in some areas of the world, such as the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia or Africa, may increase risks of conflict, detainment, or restricted movement by foreign nationals, especially from Western countries.

Security Risks	Some destinations may have increased threats of terrorism, civil unrest, or targeted violence, which can pose direct dangers to travelers.
Cybersecurity Concerns	Traveling with research data or devices may make students and faculty vulnerable to surveillance or cyber espionage, especially in countries with aggressive data policies.
Research Scrutiny	Faculty and students involved in sensitive research areas such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, or defense-related fields may face additional questions at the border.

TO ASSESS THESE RISKS, CONSULT THE FOLLOWING EXTERNAL RESOURCES:

U.S. Department of State – Travel Advisories

- Provides country-specific travel advisories (Levels 1–4), alerts, and safety information. Includes details on entry/exit requirements, health risks, crime, and civil unrest. Check [*the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)*](#) to receive real-time alerts and embassy assistance.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Travelers’ Health

- Offers country-specific health notices, required vaccinations, and COVID-19 guidance. Great for understanding current outbreaks or public health precautions abroad.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- Guidance for travelers with immigration or visa concerns (especially re-entry policies) as well as digital privacy and what CBP can inspect (e.g., electronic devices).

U.S. Embassy or Consulate Website for the Destination Country

- Provides contact information and security updates for a specific country. Helpful in case of emergency or a lost passport. Often includes information on local law or customs that might affect travelers.

Airline and Destination Country’s Official Immigration Website

- For entry/exit requirements, visa status checks, COVID-19 restrictions, and transit rules. Some countries require health declarations or online registration in advance

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Employees planning to travel to foreign destinations for business reasons must request approval from their campus president (or their designee) before making any travel arrangements and should contact their campus Risk Management Office for guidance.
- Travel for business or study to countries on the US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs Current Travel Warning List (Level 4 “do not travel”) or those deemed war risk requires approval from the Office of the Chancellor.
- Employees should consult with IT services to understand secure devices or data protection best practices for international research.

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students who decide to travel either internationally or within the U.S. should consider carrying:

- Valid passport
- Valid F or J visa (Required)
- Valid travel signatures on your Form I-20/DS-2019 (Required)
- (For F-1 students) I-20 travel signature on page two that is less than 1 year old
- (For J-1 students) DS-2019 travel signature on page 1, bottom right corner, that is less than 6 months old
- Proof of connection to a CSU University (course registrations and transcript copies would be helpful)
- Evidence of funding