



School of Medicine  
Graduate Medical Education

## FAQs: International Travel During Residency/Fellowship for IMGs

---

### When should I start planning international travel?

- Plan at least 8–12 weeks in advance, especially if:
  - o Your visa has expired and needs renewal
  - o You need a travel signature on your DS-2019 (J-1 holders)
  - o You need approved time off from your program

---

### What is a DS-2019, and do I need one for every trip? *\*Email your TPL if you need a soft copy\**

- No, as long as it is still valid and includes a signature.
- The DS-2019 is typically valid for one year and can be reused.
- The DS-2019 is your J-1 Certificate of Eligibility, issued by ECFMG (not your hospital or school).
- You must have a copy of a valid travel signature signed by ECFMG to re-enter the U.S.

---

### If a J-1 physician leaves the United States after initial arrival, re-entry to the United States will generally require: [Preparation for International Travel](#)

- Passport, valid for at least six months beyond the program end date on most recent Form DS-2019, unless exempt (six-month club)
- Valid J-1 or J-2 visa stamp (not required for Canadian citizens)
- DS-2019 form with travel signature in the Travel Validation

---

### How to Request a Duplicate DS-2019 *\*only request a duplicate if it's expiring\**

To request a travel-validated or duplicate DS-2019, follow these steps:

1. **Complete the [Request for Duplicate Form DS-2019](#)**
  - o Fill out the form fully and accurately.
2. **Obtain Program Director's Signature**
  - o Your program director must sign the form to approve your travel.
  - o Mailing DS-2019 Form to your home address.
3. **Log in to Your ECFMG Portal ([My Intealth](#))**
4. **Submit the Completed Form**  
*\*\*\*You may also provide and upload an airbill if you would like to expedite the process \*\*\**
5. **Allow 2–3 Weeks for Processing and Mailing**
  - o Processing time may vary, plan travel accordingly.

---

### What happens if I travel without a valid DS-2019 or signature?

- You may be denied re-entry to the U.S. if you don't have your DS-2019 and if it is not signed or has an expired signature.
-