How to Renew Your Student Visa

In most countries, to renew your student visa to the United States to attend St. John's University, you must make an appointment with your nearest American embassy or consulate. Before you apply for the visa, you should understand the process and rules governing the renewal of a U.S. visa. Please read the following information very carefully and contact us if you need more information or help.

The Rules
1. **By law, you are seen as someone who plans to remain in the U.S. permanently.** The consul MUST, by U.S. law, say, “You’re not coming back home when you finish your studies!” Student visas are only given to persons who can convince the consul that they intend to return permanently to their country. You convinced the consul once so the process should be easier the second time!

   You should not attempt to renew a visa if you are on authorized F-1 optional practical training or J-1 academic training after completion of studies, as it is harder to convince the consul you will return home.

2. **You must prove that you are making normal full-time progress** toward completing the education or professional objective that brought you to the U.S. and can still finance it.

3. **Consuls are impersonal when administering laws.** In the U.S., laws are applied equally to all people regardless of status or gender. DO NOT TRY TO NEGOTIATE OR DISCUSS PERSONAL MATTERS with the consul.

4. **U.S. Government officials like official documents.** Try to have papers to show the consul that prove why you are qualified to renew your student visa.

Be Prepared
1. Make sure to come to ISSSO at least three weeks prior to travel to obtain a travel signature.
2. You must have a valid passport. It needs to be valid at least six months into the future.
3. You must have original financial documents, such as bank statements from your sponsor, which are current (within two months of your visa appointment).
4. Be ready to prove that you have been a full-time student and are making normal progress toward completing your educational or professional objective which brought you to the U.S. Plan to account for all time since your last visa interview.
   * Take transcripts from every school that you have attended in the U.S. St. John's University transcripts can be requested at the Registrar's Office or online.
   * If full-time study is not clear from the transcript, get a full-time letter from the ISSSO certifying that you were maintaining your student status.
   * Did you change your major? Be prepared to describe your career opportunities back home.
   * Did you attend the school that appears on your last student visa? If not, be prepared to explain why not. If the new school was at a higher academic level, emphasize it.
   * Did you pursue the program that was approved during your last visa interview? If not, be prepared to explain how the new program prepares you for a career in your home country.

International Student and Scholar Services Office
St. John Hall, Room 116  Phone: (718) 990-6083 Fax: (718) 990-2070  ISS@stjohns.edu
5. Be ready to convince the consul that you will return home permanently after you complete your studies. Present papers that can prove that you still have strong “ties” to your home country, which will force you to return.
   - If your family owns property or land, bring deeds to prove this
   - If your family owns a business, bring a letter from the bank describing it
   - Show how you have been making regular trips back home. If you haven’t, explain why not: stayed in summer school to finish sooner; family visited the U.S.
   - If your program of study is in great demand in your home country, get a letter from a possible employer saying that they are interested in hiring those with your degree

6. Do not emphasize any ties that you have to or family members currently living in the U.S.

7. Do not talk about working in the U.S. unless you have an assistantship, fellowship or on-campus job OR employment authorization from U.S.C.I.S.

8. Visit this site for more information on renewing your student visa: www.travel.state.gov
   - Click the tab Visas at the top of the page
   - Click Find an Embassy on the left had side of the page
   - Click on the page of the City and Country where you plan on renewing your visa. This will give you information on how to schedule an appointment to renew your non-immigrant F-1 visa as well as additional required documents that you must prepare for your visa appointment

If you have any questions or concerns when you are overseas, please contact our office and speak with an International Student Advisor.