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APPLYING FOR A NEW F-1 VISA IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, MEXICO (F-1 STUDENTS ONLY)

I. EXPLANATION

New student and scholar visas cannot be obtained in the US. If your F-1 visa in your passport has already expired and you want to apply for a new visa at the US consulate in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, please read the following information carefully. *Please note that there are risks inherent in applying for a visa in Mexico.* Stricter enforcement of entry rules has made the process more risky for some students. Students applying in Juarez will have visas cancelled upon applying for a new one. If a security check is needed, students may have to wait up to 60 days before being cleared. If you are subjected to a security check, immigration officials may "parole" you into the country on a temporary basis until a decision has been reached on the new visa. If you are paroled in, you will not be able to work until your new visa is approved and your paroled status has been cleared. If you have an assistantship, this will be problematic for you. **Please speak with an advisor before you go.**

II. CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Currently, the US consulate in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, accepts visa applications from a limited population of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) – those who are not Mexican citizens. Therefore, only *F-1 students* who fulfill the following requirements are eligible for an appointment at the US consulate in Juárez, Mexico in order to apply for a new F-1 visa:

- Have maintained their legal student status
- Be enrolled full-time in a degree program at UNM
- Have had a previous F-1 visa that was issued in their home country (highly recommended)

III. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Changes which affect re-entry to the US: Effective April 1, 2002, the State Department modified the "*automatic revalidation of visa*" benefit that allows certain non-immigrants to re-enter the United States after a visit of 30 days or less to "contiguous territory" with an expired visa (contiguous territory includes Canada, Mexico, and the adjacent islands other than Cuba). As of April 1, 2002 the following individuals are NOT eligible to return to the US as a part of automatic revalidation:
 - a. **Nationals of countries identified as state sponsors of terrorism** by the State Department's annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report. The most recent State Department report was released in June 22, 2004 and list Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba as states sponsor of terrorism.
 - b. **Any non-immigrant who applies for a new visa while in contiguous territory** (not just someone from the 7 countries listed above). Those who apply for a new visa and are denied must obtain a new F-1 visa before they can re-enter the US.
2. Remember that you cannot go to Juarez to renew your F-1 visa because you are afraid of being denied a visa in your home country.
3. Even though the visa process usually takes only one day for some individuals, you might have to spend more time in Mexico or be "paroled" back into the US if your application is selected for security checks. Currently, security checks can take 60 days to complete.
4. You should be aware that any encounter with a law enforcement agency in the US could result in an FBI record and will affect the visa application process as well as any future applications.
5. It takes between 4-5 hours by car to get to Juarez, Mexico from Albuquerque. You can also go to El Paso, Texas by bus or plane and take a short taxi ride to Juarez, Mexico. You may consider traveling to El Paso the day before your visa appointment date. Directions and contact information are available at: <http://ciudadjuarez.usconsulate.gov/wwwhmap.html>.
6. The Consulate is located east of downtown Juarez and El Paso. It is best reached from the United States by coming into Mexico via the Bridge of the Americas, which is just south of the intersection of Interstate Highways I-10 and I-54. Bear left onto Lincoln Avenue and turn left on Hermanos Escobar. Turn right on Lopez Mateos and the Consulate will be seen at approximately 100 yards on the left hand side of the road. Look for the non-immigrant visa entrance.
7. You will not be permitted to take any electronic devices including cellular phones, beepers, etc. into the Consulate. Also, weapons (including pocket knives), spray cans, and perfumes are not permitted. All your personal belongings will be searched at the entrance to the Consulate. Also, only the actual visa applicants who have an appointment will be allowed inside the Consulate. Therefore, anyone else accompanying you will have to wait for you outside.
8. It may take several hours to complete the visa process. Please remember to be patient and friendly. Lines may be lengthy and you may have to wait for a long time, but it is important to remain calm and respectful.
9. Visit the website: <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/mx2/wwwhnivf.html>

V. VISA APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 1: MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE US CONSULATE IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MEXICO

Appointments must be made in advance (often at least three weeks or more). You will receive an appointment letter with the

appointment date and confirmation number, which you will need to bring with you when you apply for your F-1 visa at the US consulate in Juarez. *Do not go to the US consulate in Juarez without an appointment. No one will be allowed access to the Consulate without an appointment letter*

For applicants in the US: You can make an appointment for your visa application via the Internet at: <http://www.visa-usa.com.mx> or call MINACS at 1-900-443-3131 (Monday-Friday, 7am-9pm; Saturday-Sunday, 9am-3pm Eastern Time).

For applicants in Mexico: You can make an appointment for your visa application by calling TELETECH at 01-900-849-4949 (Monday-Friday, 7 am-9 pm; Saturday-Sunday, 9am-3pm Central Time). TELETECH cannot be accessed from the US. The US consulate in Juarez is open Monday through Friday except for American and Mexican Holidays. For a list of current holidays, please visit: <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/mx2/wwwhholy.html>

STEP 2: OBTAIN A SEVIS I-20

You will have to bring a SEVIS I-20 when you go to apply for your new F-1 visa. If you do not have a SEVIS I-20, please make an appointment with an OIPS advisor by calling 277-4032 to discuss your situation. *Please bring a copy of your current unofficial transcript and your passport with your I-94 card to your OIPS appointment.*

STEP 3: BRING THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS WITH YOU FOR THE VISA APPOINTMENT IN JUÁREZ, MEXICO

Read the information sent to you by the US Consulate in your appointment letter carefully and follow their instructions regarding documentation for your F-1 visa interview. These are some of the documents requested by the US consulate:

- ❑ **SEVIS I-20** signed for travel by OIPS advisor within last six months
- ❑ **Valid passport** (for at least six months into the future)
- ❑ **Appointment Letter** with your appointment date and confirmation number sent to you by the US consulate
- ❑ **Official academic transcript in a sealed envelope.** You can obtain official transcripts from the Records Registration Office in Student Services, Room 250 for \$3. Transcripts are processed within 3 to 5 business days.
- ❑ **Proof of sufficient funds.** If you have an assistantship, bring a copy of your current assistantship contract or a letter from the department that awarded you the assistantship stating the amount you receive including the cost of tuition and student health insurance if covered by your contract. If you do not hold an assistantship, bring a current bank statement regarding either your personal or family's account or your sponsor's bank account. If you are on a scholarship or a student loan from your government, bring the appropriate documentation specifying the amounts you receive.
- ❑ **Visa application fee.** The current visa application fee is \$131, which you will have to pay in cash at a local bank, called BANAMEX (Banco Nacional de Mexico) and obtain a receipt. BANAMEX is located three blocks south of the US consulate in Juarez.
- ❑ **SEVIS fee.** Beginning September 1, 2004 all students must pay a mandatory US \$100 SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) fee. This is a US Government fee and is in addition to any visa fee. You must pay this fee at least 3-business days prior your interview at the Consulate. The payment of the fee will be recorded in the SEVIS system and should be fully processed before you go to the Consulate for the interview. We recommend that you bring proof of payment to your interview. You can pay the SEVIS fee in one of two ways:
 - Through the Internet at www.FMJfee.com by using a credit card and completing the online Form I-901. Once you have submitted the payment please print the computer-generated receipt. This receipt will be your proof of payment.
 - Through the mail by submitting a completed Form I-901 and a check or money order drawn on a US Bank payable in US Currency. For proof of payment, you will need to wait until you receive the receipt (Form I-797) by mail. Because we do not know how much time it takes to obtain this receipt we strongly recommend you try to pay the SEVIS fee through the Internet (option 1 above). For more detailed information on the fee payment process and to download the form I-901 please go to the SEVIS website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>
- ❑ **Reciprocity fee.** There may be a reciprocity fee for visa applicants from certain countries. For more information regarding specific countries and reciprocity fee amounts, please visit: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm>
- ❑ **Visa application forms.** You will need properly completed DS-156 & DS-158 Forms and supplement DS-157 for all males between the ages of 16 and 45. You can download these forms from the following website: <http://evisaforms.state.gov/>
- ❑ **Passport photo (front profile).** You will need one recent color photograph (taken within the past six months), 2x2 inches (5x5 cm). It must show a front view, full face, on plain light (white or off-white) background. For additional information regarding the visa application process in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico please go to the website: <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/mx2/wwwhnivf.html>
- ❑ **Additional documentation for students engaged in a Science and/or Technology course of study.** Applicants engaged in a Science and/or Technology course of study must also bring with them: a complete Curriculum Vitae or resume, a complete list of publications (if applicable), a research statement in non-technical terms and a letter from your sponsor(s). Make sure you consult the consulate website for updated requirements: <http://ciudadjuarez.usconsulate.gov/wwwhnivfm.html>.

STEP 4: GO THROUGH IMMIGRATION INSPECTION WHEN YOU RE-ENTER THE US When you depart Mexico after you have obtained your new F-1 visa at the US consulate in Juarez, it is very important that you show your documents to a US immigration inspector at the border.

STEP 5: BRING NEW DOCUMENTS TO OIPS When you come back to Albuquerque, please bring your new F-1 visa and your I-94 card (if you've received a new one) to OIPS so that we can make copies of these documents and update your file.