

Subject: Important Update: U.S. State Department Pause on New F, M, and J Visa Appointments

Dear UAMS Community,

We want to inform you of an important update from the U.S. Department of State (DOS) that may affect individuals currently on or planning to apply for F-1, J-1, or M-1 visas.

Effective May 27, 2025, the DOS has temporarily **paused the scheduling of new student and exchange visitor visa appointments** at U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide. This pause applies to **F-1 (students), J-1 (exchange visitors), and M-1 (vocational students)** as the DOS develops expanded "social media screening and vetting" procedures.

What This Means:

- **New visa appointments** for F, J, and M visas are **temporarily on hold**.
- **Existing visa appointments** that were scheduled **before May 27 will still be honored**.
- If you are currently in the U.S. in **F-1 or J-1 status**, we **strongly advise against international travel** at this time if your visa stamp has expired and would require renewal for re-entry.
- The pause affects both **first-time visa applicants** and **current F or J visa holders** who need a new visa stamp due to travel.

Who Is *Not* Affected:

- Individuals applying for a **change of status** or **extension of stay** within the U.S. through **USCIS**.
- Holders of **H-1B or other visa types** not listed above.
- **F-1 and J-1 visa holders currently in the U.S.** who are **not traveling internationally**. These individuals can remain in the U.S. legally even if their visa stamp has expired, provided their status remains valid.

⚠ Please note: Visa stamps cannot be renewed from within the U.S. A valid visa is only required for re-entry after international travel.

We understand this development may cause concern, particularly for those planning summer travel or onboarding. The U.S. Department of State has indicated that **additional guidance will be issued in the coming days**, and our office is closely monitoring the situation.

If you have specific questions or concerns about how this may impact your situation, please contact our office at AskImmigration@uams.edu.

Additional resources:

[Reuters article on visa appointment pause](#)

[U.S. Department of State Global Visa Wait Times](#)

Travel Guidance from UAMS Immigration Services