

# Expansion of National Interest Exception Travel Students, Business Travelers, Investors, and Academics

## Eligible Travelers

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Washington announced that certain travelers from Schengen area countries could resume traveling to the United States if, as determined by a Consular Officer, they qualify as a National Interest Exception (NIE) to President Trump's March 11, 2020 Presidential Proclamation that suspended routine travel from the Schengen Area to the United States. Those traveling as students (F1 and M1), researchers (certain J1 programs), investors (E2), or business travel (B1) may be eligible for the exception. Effective July 15, 2020, the following travelers may apply to be considered for the NIE:

- **Economic:** Temporary travel that provides a substantial economic benefit to the U.S. economy. Examples may include:
  - **Technical experts and specialists** to install, service, maintain, or receive training for vessels, machinery and other specialized equipment used by U.S. and foreign firms with a substantial investment in the United States. Travel is temporary in nature and of a defined period.
  - **Senior-level managers and executives**, and their dependents, who provide strategic direction necessary for the success of the company or venture.
  - **Professional athletes, dependents, and essential staff** who enter the United States to participate in major sporting events, which bolster the U.S. economy.
  
- **Investors:** Travel in connection with investment or trade in the U.S. economy that generates a substantial economic impact, including **investors** and **treaty-traders** and the senior-level employees who provide strategic direction or expertise essential to the success of the investment, and their dependents.
  
- **Students:** All students, and their dependents, traveling to the United States to:
  - Pursue a full course of study per INA 101(a)(15)(F);
  - Pursue a full course of study per INA 101(a)(15)(M); or
  - Participate in an exchange program as a bona fide student.
  
- **Academics:** All exchange visitors and their dependents traveling to the United States under INA 101(a)(15)(J) in the following categories:
  - Professors
  - Research Scholars
  - Short Term Scholars
  - Specialists

While the Embassy and Consulates aim to process National Interest Exceptions (NIE) requests as soon as practicable, there is likely to be increased wait times due to substantial backlogs. Please allow up to **60 business days** to review your documents and qualifications. **The Embassy and Consulates cannot accept NIE requests for individuals who are currently physically present in the United States.** If you are currently in the United States and seek to depart and re-enter the United States at a later date, you should carefully consider your travel

plans, understanding that there is no guarantee that you will be given a NIE to re-enter the United States within your expected travel dates.

### **Travelers with Valid Visas**

Travelers that already have valid visas are required to verify that they qualify for a National Interest Exception (NIE) before they are permitted to travel to the United States. **To do so, travelers must send the following documentation and information to the Embassy or Consulate where your visa was issued. Do NOT email multiple addresses or you will not receive a response. As noted above, the Embassy and Consulates cannot accept NIE requests for individuals who are currently physically present in the United States.**

**NOTE:** F and M visa holders with a valid I-20 do not need to be re-approved for each entry to the United States.

- Visa Issued in Milan: [usvisamilan@state.gov](mailto:usvisamilan@state.gov)
- Visa Issued in Rome: [RomeVisa@state.gov](mailto:RomeVisa@state.gov)
- Visa Issued in Florence: [VisaFlorence@state.gov](mailto:VisaFlorence@state.gov)
- Visa Issued in Naples: [NIVNaples@state.gov](mailto:NIVNaples@state.gov)

### **Please attach the following documentation**

- Photo/scan of your passport biographic page;
- Photo/scan of your valid U.S. visa;
- DS-2019 (for J visa holders); and
- If applicable, additional supporting documentation in English, such as a letter outlining your qualifications and travel purpose.

### **Please include the following information**

- Name as it appears on passport:
- Current location (city, state/region, country):
- Date exited the United States:
- Reason exited the United States:
- Date of proposed re-entry to the United States:
- Reason for re-entry to the United States:
- Phone #:

While the Embassy and Consulates aim to process NIE requests as soon as practicable, there is likely to be increased wait times due to substantial backlogs. Please allow up to **60 business days** to review your documents and qualifications. You will be notified by e-mail if you meet the NIE requirements. Print out that e-mail as confirmation of your excepted status.

### **Travelers with ESTA**

Information about the status of ESTA registrations is provided through the [official ESTA website](#). **If your ESTA was cancelled but you fall in to one of the excepted travel statuses (see above for categories), you are required to verify that you qualify for a National Interest Exception (NIE) by emailing the Embassy or Consulate of your region of residence before traveling to the United States. Do NOT email multiple addresses or you will not receive a response. NOTE:** Tourism travel to the United States continues to be suspended.

- U.S. Consulate General Milan: [usvisamilan@state.gov](mailto:usvisamilan@state.gov) (regions of Friuli, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Trentino Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto)
- U.S. Embassy Rome: [RomeVisa@state.gov](mailto:RomeVisa@state.gov) (regions of Abruzzo, Lazio, Sarderghna, Umbria, Marche)
- U.S. Consulate General Florence: [VisaFlorence@state.gov](mailto:VisaFlorence@state.gov) (regions of Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, San Marino)
- U.S. Consulate General Naples: [NIVNaples@state.gov](mailto:NIVNaples@state.gov) (regions of Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sicily, Molise)

**Please attach the following documentation**

- Photo/scan of your passport biographic page;
- Photo/scan of your valid ESTA authorization; and
- Additional supporting documentation in English, such as a letter outlining your qualifications and travel purpose.

**Please include the following information**

- Name as it appears on passport:
- Current location (city, state/region, country):
- Date of proposed entry to the United States:
- Reason for entry to the United States:
- Phone #:

While the Embassy and Consulates aim to process NIE requests as soon as practicable, there is likely to be increased wait times due to substantial backlogs. Please allow up to **60 business days** to review your documents and qualifications. You will be notified by e-mail if you meet the NIE requirements. Print out that e-mail as confirmation of your excepted status.

**Travelers without a Visa**

Travelers that do not yet have their required visas and that they fall in to one of the excepted travel statuses (see above for categories) should apply for their visas as normal. Please visit <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/> or [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) to begin your application process. **NOTE:** Tourism travel to the United States continues to be suspended.

If you have an urgent need to travel, including after-sales, commissioning, and installation specialists and technicians, you may request an expedited appointment online at <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/>. In your request, please explain in detail your qualifications for a NIE and be prepared to provide supporting documentation via email, if requested by the Embassy or Consulate.

**Limitations of NIE Travel**

Although travelers approved for a national interest exception for **economic and investor** related travel will be issued full validity visas, the exception is valid only for 30 days from the date of approval and is valid for a single entry to the United States. An individual who departs the United States and wishes to return must be re-assessed for a national interest exception.

**F and M visa holders with a valid I-20 do not need to be re-approved for each entry to the United States.** F and J travelers are reminded that they must still meet all Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) requirements.

*All individuals are reminded that their admission remains subject to a determination by Customs and Border Protection officers at ports of entry and that they may be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon arrival. DHS requires travelers using a NIE waiver to fly into one of 15 specifically designated airports found [here](#).*