Travel Outside of the U.S. for Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs)

Extended travel abroad, including sabbatical, for legal permanent residents/LPR (“green card” holders) may have consequences on maintaining status. All UMass Lowell faculty who hold Legal Permanent Resident status and who are considering travel abroad for 6 months or more are encouraged to contact UMass General Counsel’s Office for guidance on your particular travel plans. Departure from the U.S. for 12 months or more can lead to automatic abandonment of LPR status. For extended travel questions, contact General Counsel’s Office Sandra Torres, Immigration Counsel at storres@umassp.edu or Sara Rufli, Immigration Paralegal srufli@umassp.edu or call 774-455-7300.

International travel for less than 6 months is fine. For more information on LPR rights and responsibilities, including maintaining status, go to: https://www.uscis.gov/tools/settling-us/welcome-united-states

Follow the proper campus protocol/obtain required travel approvals which will include guidance on how to travel with electronic devices, with the Office of Institutional Compliance, https://www.uml.edu/Research/OIC/contact.aspx

Re-entry at Ports of Entry, including Airports

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has broad authority to question, inspect, and detain any person – including U.S. citizens – attempting to enter the U.S. at ports of entry, such as airports. Additionally CBP may search your electronic devices without any suspicion of wrongdoing or probable cause. Please be prepared for additional delays in re-entry as CBP has increased screening and secondary inspection activities. There is no right to have an attorney present during immigration inspection at ports of entry. However, you have the right to refuse to answer questions about your religious beliefs and political opinions and still be allowed to enter the country.

It is not uncommon to be asked to go into Secondary Inspection upon re-entry. Be sure to follow their instructions. You will not be permitted to leave or use any of your electronic devices until the Inspectors are finished with your case. There is a normal 3+ hour processing period in Secondary Inspection. This does not indicate problems with your case, merely that the Inspectors have a large caseload to review ahead of yours.

All Ports of Entry into the US are federal property. They actively enforce all federal law, including the Controlled Substance Act. They use sniffing dogs and other methods to identify any illegal substance or paraphernalia. (Marijuana is an example of an illegal federal substance, no matter which state you re-enter from and what their local laws are on marijuana.) CBP is reporting that possession of marijuana at immigration inspection at Logan is the biggest reason for prolonged detention of individuals attempting to re-enter. For legal permanent residents, violation of federal law could have serious immigration consequences, including deportation.

UMass guidance: Cooperate with CBP officials. If you encounter problems with an officer who is behaving disrespectfully, is abusive or harassing ask to speak to a supervisor. Try to remember the details of the conversations – their questions and your answers – as fully as possible and get all officer name(s). Contact an immigration attorney, https://www.uml.edu/docs/Immig_Attorneys_LIST_tcm18-277615.pdf, with serious re-entry issues.
Regardless of recent Massachusetts state law, possession of marijuana remains a federal crime at places like Terminal E at Logan where CBP is actively enforcing the federal Controlled Substances Act. Any attempt by CBP to request an UMass employee to “voluntarily” sign Form I-407 Record of Abandonment of Lawful Permanent Residence should be denied. The form is voluntary and cannot be used to deny entry. Should you receive this request by a CBP officer, please contact General Counsel’s Office for follow-up guidance.

**General Immigration Requirements**

You are legally required to carry your green card with you. Also carry a pdf version of it on your phone and a photocopy. Leave a copy of it with a friend or family member back in the U.S.

Always remember to report USCIS of U.S. change of address within 10 days at: https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange – this remains a requirement for the duration of your permanent residency status.

**Good Practice for All Travellers**

- Keep a separate copy of your immigration documentation, separate from originals – and leave one set with family or a trusted friend in the U.S.
- Communicate travel plans with family and a trusted friend and create check-in procedure for flights. For example: Text or call a friend immediately upon landing at your destination abroad and again on your return to the U.S. Contact your friend again within 4 hours after your initial communication with them when landing in the U.S., and before going through Customs.
- Memorize phone # of your above-mentioned trusted friend who has agreed to be your travel check in partner.

**Know your rights at airports and other ports of Entry**


**Border Searches of Electronic Devices including cell phones**

https://www.dhs.gov/publication/border-searches-electronic-devices and