The visa/visa stamp in my passport is about to expire. Do I need a new one?
The visa/visa stamp in your passport is for entry purposes only. Once you are in the U.S., your I-20 or DS-2019 combined with your I-94 card become the active documents that permit you to remain in the U.S. You are allowed to stay for D/S or "Duration of Status", which means the period of time in which you are maintaining your non-immigrant status even if your visa expires. The completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019 is the expiration date of your status. Your I-20 or DS-2019 can be extended at the International SEVIS Office if necessary.

If your visa expires while you are in the US you will be required to renew it only if you leave the US and before you are allowed re-entry. It is recommended that you renew your visa in your home country.

Applying for a visa in your home country:
We recommend that you apply for a visa at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your home country. Most consulates require a personal interview with a consular officer and collect biometric identifiers (e.g. fingerprints and digital photograph). Always check with the consulate or embassy where you will be applying to determine current application and documentation requirements as well as processing times as all are different. You can find a list of consular websites at http://www.usembassy.gov.

Background and security checks:
Consulates and embassies frequently conduct background checks that can result in possible delays in visa issuance for individuals. Background/security checks can be triggered by, but not limited to, arrests in the United States, certain courses that appear on your transcript, or by your field of study. Background/security checks can take several months or longer.

Can I apply for my visa to be renewed in another country other than my home country?
It is not recommended. F and J students who apply for a visa stamp in a third country – including Canada and Mexico – and get denied will not be allowed to reenter the U.S. on an expired visa stamp. If your application is denied, you would need to depart directly to your home country to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. Please talk to someone in the Division of Global Affairs SEVIS before making the decision to apply for a visa in a third country.

In addition, if you are subject to a background or security check upon application for a visa renewal in a third country, you will have to remain in that country until the background or security check is completed and the visa is approved before you are allowed to re-enter the U.S.

Automatic Visa Revalidation (in contiguous territory and adjacent islands)
After initial entry to the US, a student who has an expired visa may re-enter the US without obtaining a new visa under the following conditions:

1. travel is solely to a contiguous territory (Canada or Mexico) or adjacent islands (excluding Cuba) and travel is for a period not exceeding 30 days.
2. the student has retained the I-94 arrival/departure card with F-1 D/S entry noted
3. the student’s I-20 is properly signed
4. the student has not applied for a new visa at the US consulate with the result being either a denial or delay of more than 30 days
5. the student is not a citizen of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, Cuba or Syria
6. **post-completion OPT only**--the student has a valid EAD card and employer’s letter showing evidence of employment or job offer
7. You may be required to have an entry visa for the contingent territory. Contact the Mexican or Canadian consulates for information
VISA RENEWAL:

You will not be able to re-enter the US if you have a newly-issued or renewed passport which does not have any US visa stamps; therefore, you should carry both the expired and the new passport.

What will I need to apply for a new visa?

Step ONE: Contact your local US embassy and ask for specific documents/forms/fees needed at www.usembassy.gov. From this webpage, choose your country.

The information they give you should be very similar to the below check list; Please review the checklist in case you need items from the US before you depart.

- Current SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, signed for travel by a Designated Signature Office in DGA, SEVIS within the last year (or within 6months if on OPT).
- Official KSU Transcript (www.getmytranscript.com) in a sealed envelope and/or Letter of Enrollment Verification available in the KSU Registrar’s Office.
- Proof of financial support: You should be able to verify the amount shown as the total on your I-20 or DS-2019 with a personal bank statement, sponsor's letter and sponsor's bank statement or (for Professors) a Research Assistant Verification Letter stating financial support or salary.
- Proof of ties to your home country. From the Department of State web site: “Student visa applicants must establish to the satisfaction of the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning, and that they will depart the United States when they have completed their studies. It is impossible to specify the exact form the evidence should take since applicants’ circumstances vary greatly.” Examples of such evidence may include: copies of bank statements from a bank in your home country, evidence of ownership of property or residence in your home country, a job offer letter from home or letters from family.
- Issuance Fee charged for visa. The visa application fee is approx. $141 for F and J visas. Depending on the country of citizenship, there also may be an issuance fee (also called a visa reciprocity fee). Check http://travel.state.gov/visa/fees/fees_3272.html to determine if you will be charged this fee.
- A copy of the paid SEVIS Fee. This fee is US $200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1 visa applicants (if you lost your receipt or need to pay the fee, visit www.fmjfee.com for more information).
- One passport-size photograph; if completing the DS-160 online, see photograph guidelines here: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/frvi_3877.html
- (Only if on OPT) a copy of your original signed offer letter, recent paystubs, and a letter verifying travel, along with your EAD card.

Step TWO: After renewing your visa, you will need to submit a copy of it to the Division of Global Affairs, SEVIS office along with your new I-94 number. This can be sent scanned thru email to jsharp23@kennesaw.edu