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What is a J-1 exchange visitor?

The International Center is designated by U.S. Department of State as an Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor. Exchange Visitor is the title of a J-1 status holder, which is a U.S. non-immigrant classification. We often also refer to an Exchange Visitor as “EV”, “J-1”, or “visiting scholar”. The J-1 exchange visitor status allows temporary educational exchange (which may be either paid or self-funded) in the United States. If you want to invite a scholar to participate at your department in J-1 status, you would [request a Form DS-2019 immigration document from the International Center](#).

What is a DS-2019?

The Form DS-2019 is a certificate of eligibility of J-1 status. It is issued by the International Center through the Department of Homeland Security's SEVIS system. The DS-2019 allows a person to request a J-1 visa to enter the U.S. The DS-2019 also determines the length of a J-1's legal stay in the U.S. [Hosting Unit Responsibilities](#) [1] explains U-M department responsibilities when hosting J-1 Exchange Visitors, and general information about the DS-2019 and J-1 status is on our [J-1 Visitor page](#) [2].

How does a person become a J-1 exchange visitor (scholar)?

The department at University of Michigan wishing to host the person begins the DS-2019 request process by preparing and [submitting an e-Form to the Shared Services Center \(SSC\)](#) [3] or, for the Medical School, by contacting the Medical School Immigration Compliance Unit (MS-ICU). The SCC (or the MS-ICU), evaluates English proficiency, collects documents from the prospective Exchange Visitor and enters information into M-Pathways. They then transfer the request to the International Center for review and approval. Once an International Center advisor has approved the request, the request for the visitor's Form DS-2019 is submitted to the U.S. government's SEVIS system (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) so that Form DS-2019 can be issued. Form DS-2019 is either mailed directly to the Exchange Visitor, or is provided to the department for mailing, depending on the hosting department's instructions. A \$220 SEVIS I-901 fee must be paid and then the scholar should go to an appointment at the U.S. consulate for the J-1 visa. The Exchange Visitor applies for J-1 visa (a visa application fee is also required) at the consulate. When the visa is approved the Exchange Visitor can enter the U.S. with the DS-2019 and J-1 visa up to one month before the start date of the DS-2019. When the Exchange Visitor has arrived in the U.S., he/she must attend J-1 check-in program at the International Center and will be automatically enrolled in the mandatory health insurance program (for the J-1 and any J-2 dependents). For more information about the J-1 Exchange Visitor process, visit [Hosting a J-1 Exchange Visitor](#) [4].

What is the 2 year rule or 212(e)?

Under specific circumstances, J-1 and J-2 status holders may incur a [two-year home physical presence requirement](#) [5]. If one is subject to the rule, this means that he/she is not eligible to change to H, L or Permanent Residency (PR) classification without first returning to the home country for a total of 2 years. A [waiver of this requirement](#) [6] can be applied for and obtained in specific circumstances. If the two year rule applies, changing status from J to another non-immigrant classification (such as F-1) in the United States is prohibited. The two year rule does NOT prohibit one from returning to the U.S. in any classification besides H, L, or PR.

What is the health insurance requirement?

All J-1 exchange visitors and accompanying J-2 dependents at the University of Michigan are required to

have [health insurance coverage](#) [7] that meets the University's standards at all times. The exchange visitor and any J-2 dependents will be automatically enrolled in our Aetna Student Health insurance program after they attend the mandatory immigration check-in program. The insurance plan coverage will be effective on the exchange visitor's program start date (Form DS-2019, Item 3). If the scholar will receive health insurance coverage through University Benefits, the Aetna Student Health insurance can be cancelled once the scholar enrolls in Benefits and the Benefits have begun. If the scholar holds insurance from their home country, he/she will have the opportunity to apply for a waiver of the mandatory health insurance at a later time. In order for a waiver to be granted, the health insurance coverage must be proven to meet specific [mandatory standards](#) [8].

What is the "check-in" requirement? Do we need to do anything if the scholar will be delayed in arrival?

The check-in requirement is linked to the start date of the SEVIS DS-2019. We must report the arrival of the J-1 in SEVIS within the first 30 days after the document begins. If an exchange visitor is delayed and will enter the U.S. more than fifteen days after the DS-2019 start date you should request an "amendment" of the DS-2019 so that the start date is changed to a later date. After completing the online Pre-Arrival and Post-Arrival trainings, a newly arrived scholar may call the International Center to schedule attendance at the Physical Presence Check-In.

What is the time period that a J-1 exchange visitor scholar may enter and leave the U.S.?

The scholar may enter the U.S. to begin J-1 status no more than thirty days before the start date of the DS-2019. J-1 exchange visitors are usually granted admission for "duration of status" which is noted as D/S on the admission stamp in the passport and on the Form I-94 printed from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> [9]. With duration of status granted, a J-1 has a thirty day grace period to depart the U.S. after the expiration of the DS-2019. J-2 dependents must depart before or with the J-1.

What can we do if a J-1 scholar applies for a visa and it is denied or delayed?

The University of Michigan is committed to assisting our international students and scholars when possible, through our Visa Assistance Program. If your exchange visitor contacts you to notify you that he/she has experienced a visa delay or denial, please ask him/her to fill out the on-line [Visa Assistance Web Form](#) [10]. The information gathered in this form will be sent to a U-M email group. The members of this group will take all possible steps to assist the scholar with U-M related matters including employment. The U-M can also assist with suggestions and recommendations about best practices regarding visa requests and will advise on next steps.

Do you have any information on housing, schools, transportation, etc, which may aid the J-1 scholar and his/her family members?

Yes, we do have many resources on [life in Ann Arbor](#) [11] to help ease the transition.

How does a scholar travel and re-enter the US or renew the J visa?

Please refer to detailed information on our website about [travel and visa application](#) [12] for further details. The U.S. visa (stamp or sticker in your passport) is a travel document which allows entry to the United States with a valid DS-2019. The scholar only needs to have a valid J visa when re-entering the U.S.; the scholar may remain in the U.S. with the valid DS-2019. If the scholar plans to travel and re-enter the U.S. from abroad after the visa has expired, the scholar needs to apply for a new visa before he/she

re-enters U.S. The scholar can only apply for the visa outside the country at a U.S. Consulate.

How can a J-1 scholar have a family member/friend/colleague visit the U.S.?

The spouse and children under 21 of the J-1 exchange visitor are eligible for J-2 dependent status. You or the scholar may request DS-2019 from International Center for J-2 dependents during the program. Family members or friends who are NOT children under 21 or the spouse of the J-1 exchange visitor should apply for a B-1/B-2 visitor visa which allows eligibility to visit the United States temporarily for tourism or business purposes. Family members from certain countries may be eligible to travel to the U.S. for visits of up to 90 days without a B-1/B-2 visa through the [U.S. Department of State Visa Waiver Program](#) [13]. It is recommended that the scholar give his/her family members a letter of invitation to document the purpose of their visit. Refer to [Family Visitors to the U.S.](#) [14] for an invitation letter template and more details on the visa application requirements.

Is it permissible for a J-1 scholar to work/receive payment outside the University of Michigan?

In addition to employment at the University of Michigan related to the J-1 objective, J-1 scholars and professors may be eligible to be authorized for incidental employment directly related to the J-1 objective, such as providing occasional lectures or consulting. Incidental employment should be approved by the U-M International Center prior to the activity. For more information, refer to [Incidental Employment for J-1 Scholars and Professors](#) [15].

My department has decided to continue sponsorship of a J-1 scholar longer than the current DS-2019. How can we extend the program?

The exchange visitor may be eligible for an "extension" of Form DS-2019 if he/she has not reached the maximum duration of the J category (see section 4 of the DS-2019) and has not applied for and received a waiver of the Two-Year Foreign Residency Requirement. You, the sponsoring department, would submit an [e-form for an extension request to the Shared Services Center](#) [3] or, for Medical School units, to the Medical School Immigration Compliance Unit (MS-ICU). Extension requests should be submitted well in advance of the DS-2019 expiration. For more information on program duration and extension you may contact icenter@umich.edu [16]. The maximum length of program for Short-term Scholars is six months, for Specialists one year, and for Professors and Research Scholars, five years.

Do we need to do anything when a J-1 scholar leaves the country?

If the scholar will return home and is ending participation more than 15 days before the end date of the current DS-2019, the end of the program should be reported to International Center by submitting our [Departure Form](#) [17]. If the scholar is leaving within 15 days of the end date of the DS-2019, no action is required.

Our scholar has tax questions that we don't know the answer to. Do you have advice regarding taxes?

U-M International Center staff members are not authorized to give advice regarding taxes. We do have some helpful information about taxes, tax preparation, ITIN, or tax treaty questions at [Taxes and Social Security](#) [18]. The [Internal Revenue Service](#) [19] is the U.S. department in charge of taxes. Tax forms and information can be found on the [IRS](#) [20] website. [GLACIER Tax Prep](#) [21] tax preparation software is available free of charge to any international scholar with a UM/Ann Arbor unickname and password. Assistance is available via GLACIER Tax Prep online help (click on the Help link at the top of any Glacier

Tax Prep screen). You will then be able to send a question to the Glacier Tax Prep Support Center. The Support Center will send a response to the email address in your Glacier Tax Prep record. Information and assistance with tax withholding forms for international students, faculty and staff is available from the [U-M Payroll Office](#) [22]. Their website includes information on determining tax status (“nonresident or resident alien” for U.S. tax purposes) and on tax treaties, as well as some basic information on the taxation of foreign nationals.

Who is required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee and when?

The Department of Homeland Security requires a fee of \$220 for all new J-1 program applicants to cover the costs of the operation of the SEVIS program. If a future scholar is issued a new DS-2019 for beginning a new program he/she must pay I-901 SEVIS fee. Transfer, extension, or other updates to the original DS-2019 do not require SEVIS fee. You can read more information on our website at [What to Expect When Traveling](#) [23] and go to the official website for [SEVIS fee information and payment](#) [24]. Some departments choose to pay this fee on behalf of the exchange visitor but it is optional. If you do want to pay the fee, you will need the exchange visitor’s SEVIS ID number, name, and date of birth. This information must match the information printed on the exchange visitor’s Form DS-2019. After the SEVIS fee payment is made, a receipt should be printed. The scholar should bring it to the visa interview and when traveling to the U.S.

Can a medical doctor be sponsored in J-1 status?

The U-M International Center is authorized to issue a Form DS-2019 to foreign medical graduates (M.D.s) to enable them to come to the U.S. for the primary activity of observation, consultation, teaching, or research. They can participate in a non-clinical exchange program, either with NO PATIENT CONTACT OR CARE, or where patient contact is only INCIDENTAL to the primary activity. M.D.s with direct patient contact must be sponsored by [ECFMG](#) [25].

Examples of acceptable activities that involve no patient contact or incidental patient contact:

- Doing a diagnostic examination in the presence of a senior physician who repeats the exam or ensures at every step that it is done correctly and the proper diagnostic information is obtained.
- Being present during therapies and treatment with opportunities for hands-on experience in ways that do not compromise the care of the patient.
- Being present in the operating room and having limited patient contact, but not performing procedures.

In order for a foreign medical graduate to be sponsored by University of Michigan's J-1 program, the department must provide one of the following statements written and signed by the dean or the dean's designee on University of Michigan letterhead:

- If no patient contact or care is involved: “This letter certifies that the program in which (EV's name, M.D.) is to be engaged is solely for the purpose of observation, consultation, teaching, or research and that no element of patient care services is involved.”
- If incidental patient contact or care is involved: “This letter certifies that the program in which (EV's name, M.D.) will participate is predominantly involved with observation, consultation, teaching and research. Any incidental patient contact involving Dr. (EV) will be under the direct supervision of a physician who is a U.S. citizen or resident alien and who is licensed to practice medicine in the State of Michigan. Dr. (EV) will not be given final responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Any activities of Dr. (EV) will conform fully with the State Licensing requirements and regulations for

medical and health care professionals in the State of Michigan. Any experience gained in this program will not be creditable towards any clinical requirements for medical specialty board certification.”

I have more questions. How can I contact International Center?

You may email questions to icenter@umich.edu [16] for response by one of our International Student/Scholar Advisors. You also can call our Front Desk (734.764.9310, press 0 for the Receptionist) to ask questions via telephone. If no advisor is currently available, your phone call will be returned as soon as possible.

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/departments/faq>

Links

- [1] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/departments/hosting-unit-responsibilities>
- [2] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/departments/introduction-j1-exchange-visitor-program>
- [3] <https://ssc.umich.edu/human-resources/j-1-visa-coordination/>
- [4] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/departments/hosting-j1-exchange-visitor>
- [5] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/j-two-year-requirement>
- [6] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor.html>
- [7] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/healthins>
- [8] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/healthins/waiver>
- [9] <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>
- [10] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/visa-assistance>
- [11] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/life>
- [12] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-outside-us-reentry>
- [13] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>
- [14] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/other-family-visitors>
- [15] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/scholars/j1-scholars/occasional-lectures>
- [16] <mailto:icenter@umich.edu>
- [17] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/sites/default/files/forms/J1_ScholarDepartForm.pdf
- [18] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/tax>
- [19] <https://www.irs.gov/>
- [20] <https://www.irs.gov/forms-instructions>
- [21] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/tax/tax-software>
- [22] <http://www.finance.umich.edu/finops/payroll/foreign>
- [23] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/what-expect-when-traveling>
- [24] <http://www.fmjfee.com/>
- [25] <https://www.ecfmg.org/>