

## Introduction to the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

### Purpose of J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

The objective of J-1 exchange visitor program is "to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges." [Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hayes Act) of 1961]

### Eligibility Criteria

- Intent to pursue appropriate activity
- Intent to return to home country (as determined by consular officer)
- Sufficient funding
- Appropriate background for program activity
- Adequate English

### Visitor Categories

- **Research Scholar:** An individual primarily conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project. The research scholar may also teach or lecture.
- **Short-term Scholars:** A professor, research scholar, specialist, or a person with similar education or accomplishments coming to the U.S. on a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills at research institutions, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions, or similar types of institution. Examples include educators, scientists, research fellows, writers, and museum administrators. The short-term scholar may also engage in collaborative research.
- **Professors:** An individual primarily teaching, lecturing, observing or consulting. A professor may also conduct research.
- **Specialists:** An individual who is an expert in a field of specialized knowledge or skill coming to the U.S. for observing, consulting, or demonstrating special skills.

### Exchange Visitor Category Time Limits

Category	Minimum Duration of Stay Required	Maximum Duration of Stay
Professor or Research Scholar	3 weeks	5 years
Short-term Scholar	N/A	6 months

Specialist

3 weeks

one year

## **Dependents J-2**

Dependent spouses and children of J-1 scholars or professors enter on J-2 visas and have their own DS-2019s. Having J-2 status does not inherently give the J-2 the permission to work, but it gives the person the right to apply for work authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

## **Immigration Documents for Exchange Visitors**

### **DS-2019: Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Exchange Visitor Status**

- Issued by the educational institution or organization after determining the exchange visitor (EV) meets eligibility requirements. The individual must not be a candidate for a tenure-track position. Departments request Forms DS-2019 through the International Center.
- EV uses the DS-2019 to obtain a J-1 visa at an American Embassy or Consulate abroad to enter the U.S.
- The DS-2019 should be endorsed by the Alternate Responsible Officer of the J-1 program before the exchange visitor travels outside of the U.S. for re-entry to the U.S.

### **Visa: Permission to Apply for Entry into U.S. at a Port of Entry**

- Issued by an American Embassy or Consulate abroad (Canadian citizens need a DS-2019 but do not need a visa).
- Must be valid to enter / re-enter the U.S., except from Canada, Mexico, and the adjacent islands (with some restrictions).
- As long as the EV remains in the U.S., it does not matter if the visa has expired since it is a travel document, and not the permission to stay.

### **Form I-94**

J-1 Scholars and J-2 Dependents entering the U.S. are given proof of legal non-immigrant status at the Port of Entry by a Customs and Border Protection Officer. For those entering at an airport, proof of status is a stamp and notation in the passport. The hand-written notation should indicate your status (F-1, J-1, F-2, J-2) and your duration of stay D/S. You should print a paper copy of your Form I-94 to document your status at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> [1]. Those entering the U.S. at a land border will receive a small white I-94 card with the same notations.

### **Passport**

Issued by exchange visitor's home government. Required to enter the U.S.

## **Documents Required for an Exchange Visitor to Enter the U.S.**

- Valid passport with a J-visa (Canadians are exempt from visa requirement)
- Form DS-2019
- I-901 SEVIS Fee Receipt
- Optional but recommended documentation
  - Financial support documentation
  - Letter of Invitation

## **Mandatory Check-in**

- All exchange visitors who are issued Form DS-2019s for the purpose of either "begin a new program" or "transfer" are **required** to complete the [Mandatory Check-in Process](#) [2] in order to fully comply with DOS and SEVIS requirements.
- It is important that departments communicate with the exchange visitor often and *inform the IC immediately if the exchange visitor's arrival will be delayed more than 15 days after the begin date of the Form DS-2019 starting date can be amended.*
- IC is required by DOS and SEVIS to validate the exchange visitor's arrival within 30 days of the program start date on the Form DS-2019. If the exchange visitor's SEVIS record is not validated within these 30 days, it will automatically become "invalid" and the exchange visitor will need to leave the U.S. immediately.

## **To Maintain Valid J-1 Status, an Exchange Visitor Must**

- Have a valid DS-2019.
- Have a valid passport.
- Conduct employment as indicated on the DS-2019. Departments must contact the International Center if the department wishes an EV to engage in collaborative work outside of UM or if the EV wishes to participate in occasional lectures at another institution.
- File timely and appropriate transfer and extension notification to the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) through the sponsoring agency.
- Maintain required health insurance coverage.
- Update address within 10 days of change, in Wolverine Access.

## **Terminology and Concepts**

### **Department of State (DOS)**

Created and administers regulations and policies governing the Exchange Visitor Program. Issues J visas to exchange visitors and their dependents at U.S. consulates/embassies abroad.

### **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

Admits the alien into the U.S as a J exchange visitor, adjudicates certain immigration benefits, and manages SEVIS.

### **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**

DHS tracking system that requires all colleges and universities to report information about J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents. The International Center is responsible for SEVIS reporting on behalf of the University of Michigan.

### **Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)**

Individuals who have been appointed by an exchange visitor program sponsor and authorized by DOS to perform certain duties such as preparing and signing DS-2019 forms.

## Twelve month bar

Time spent in the U.S. previously in J status may affect an alien's eligibility for participation as a *professor* or *research scholar*. An individual may not be eligible to *begin a new program* if he/she was physically present in any J status (including J-2 status) for 6 months or more during the immediately preceding 12 months from the date of program commencement set forth on the new Form DS-2019.

## Two-Year home residency requirement

Under specific circumstances, the EV may incur a "two-year home physical presence requirement." This means that when an EV completes his/her J-1 program, he/she may not change immigration status to H-1, L-1 or Permanent Residency without first returning to his/her country for 2 years, or obtaining a waiver of this requirement. The J-2 dependents are subject to the HPPR if the J-1 principal participant is subject to that requirement. IF HPPR applies, change of status to another non-immigrant classification such as F-1 in the United States is prohibited.

## Early Departure

If the exchange visitor discontinues his/her J-1 program with a department, the department must notify the IC because the IC is required to report the event to SEVIS. In addition, departments need to notify the IC if an exchange visitor leaves the J-1 program *more than 30 days before the end date on the Form DS-2019*. The J-1 exchange visitor early departure form is available on our web site.

## 30-Day Grace Period

Upon successful completion of the J-1 program, the exchange visitor will have an additional 30 days to remain in the U.S. though he/she may not be employed during this 30-day grace period. The 30-day grace period is intended for purposes of traveling within the U.S., packing, and preparing to depart the U.S.

---

**Source URL:** <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/departments/introduction-j1-exchange-visitor-program>

### Links

[1] <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>

[2] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/events/scholar-checkin>