

Applying for a J Exchange Visitor Visa to “Begin a New Program” & U.S. Arrival Procedures

Please review your form DS-2019(s) (Certificate of Eligibility for the Exchange Visitor Status) to ensure that all of the information on the document is correct for you and, if applicable, your dependent(s). Your name should be recorded as it appears in the machine-readable portion of your passport, generally found at the bottom of the biographical section. If any of the information is inaccurate, please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) immediately to request an updated Form DS-2019.

Purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Program

The primary purpose of the J-1 exchange visitor program is to 1) foster the exchange of ideas between Americans and foreign nationals; 2) increase mutual understanding; 3) encourage international teaching and research collaborations; and 4) cultivate connections between U.S. and foreign individuals. For more information about the Exchange Visitor (EV) program, please consult the EV brochure: [The Exchange Visitor Program Welcome Brochure](#)

1. Overview: J Exchange Visitor Visa Application Process—

A general overview of the visa application process is included below. The process can vary so be sure to consult the information available on the following government websites:

- Embassy/Consulate website where you will apply: [U.S. Embassies and Consulates](#)
- U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Visa information: [Exchange Visitor Visa Overview](#)

Please Note: US Embassies and Consulates are gradually resuming normal operations after closing in March 2020 due to COVID-19. Please refer to the website of the embassy or consulate where you plan to apply for a visa for details concerning visa appointments.

After receiving your CU-Boulder DS-2019(s):

- File the Form I-901, pay the associated SEVIS fee, and save the payment receipt.**
 - Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee online at: [I-901 Fee](#). The fee is \$220 beginning June 24, 2019.
 - CU Boulder's program number is P-1-00066
 - Additional information about the SEVIS fee is online at: [I-901 FAQ](#)
- Complete the DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application and print the confirmation page for you, or if applicable, your family. Please note that Canadian citizens do not need a visa.**
[DS-160: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#)
- Schedule a visa interview at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s).**
 - U.S. embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions: [U.S. Embassies and Consulates](#)
 - You can check the visa appointment waiting time online at: [Visa Appointment Wait Times](#)

Pay the non-refundable visa application fee for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s). The fee is \$160 (U.S) as of the printing of this document; please verify the current fee as it may have changed since this document was printed. The payment of the J-1 visa fee is valid for 1 year after payment.

Please review the instructions available on the website of the embassy or consulate where you will apply to learn more about fee payment. [U.S. Embassies and Consulates](#)

- Gather the required documentation for the visa appointment for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s).**
 - e.g., valid passport; original DS-2019 issued by CU Boulder; SEVIS I-901 receipt; Form DS-160 confirmation page; visa application fee payment receipt; CU-Boulder invitation letter; financial support documentation; Form DS-7002 for Interns ONLY.
 - Be sure to consult the Embassy/Consulate website where you will apply for additional requirements

Prepare for the visa interview.

- Be prepared to discuss and document your 1) purpose for traveling to the U.S.; 2) intent to depart the U.S. after your exchange visitor program; and 3) ability to pay all expenses associated with your travel and exchange visitor program.

- If your visa is approved you may need to pay the U.S. consulate the visa issuance reciprocity fee for your country and visa type (J). More information can be found at [U.S. Visa Reciprocity Fee](#)

****It is advisable that you wait until you have received your visa before you book travel to the U.S., as there is no guarantee that a visa will be issued. Please also note important travel requirements to enter the United States ([Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination](#) and Proof of [Negative COVID-19 Test](#)) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic****

2. Preparing for your Arrival in the United States

- You can enter the United States up to 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the Form DS-2019.
- Although you are unable to begin participating in the J program until your program start date, you are allowed to use this time leading up to your program start date to find housing and prepare for life in your new community. Please take note of [current vaccination requirements to enter the United States](#) prior to your attempted entry into the US. Notify ISSS and your CU-Boulder department if you are unable to begin your J-1 program on the date indicated in item 3 of your DS-2019.
- Obtain health, evacuation, and repatriation insurance that meets the Department of State requirements for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s). You must maintain sufficient insurance for the entire duration of your J exchange visitor program.
- Valid insurance is REQUIRED from when you enter the U.S. Purposefully failing to maintain sufficient insurance is a violation of status and may result in a termination from the J program.

J Exchange Visitor Insurance Requirements for all J-1 and J-2 Dependents

The J insurance must provide the following minimum coverage:

- Minimum medical benefit of \$100,000 per person per accident or illness;
- Deductible that does not exceed \$500 per accident or illness;
- Minimum repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- Minimum medical evacuation expenses in the amount of \$50,000; and
- Co-insurance paid by Exchange Visitor not to exceed 25% of covered benefits per accident or illness.

Insurance policies:

- May require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions that is reasonable as determined by current industry standards; and
- Must not unreasonably exclude coverage for the perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which you participate.

Any policy, plan, or contract secured to fill the J insurance requirements must at minimum be:

- Underwritten by an insurance corporation having:
 - An A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor Claims-paying Ability rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above; or
 - A Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A Moody's Investor Services rating of "A3" or above; or
- Be backed by the full faith and credit of the exchange visitor's home country; or
- Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or
- Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- If you will be on the CU-Boulder payroll and receive benefits through the University, please note that:
 - CU insurance does NOT include evacuation and repatriation coverage. You must purchase a separate plan with this coverage.
 - Only the CU Exclusive and Kaiser plans meet the medical insurance requirement. The CU High-Deductible Insurance Plan and the CU Extended Plan do NOT meet the J-1 medical insurance requirements.
 - Benefits take effect the first day of the month. If you do not start your employment on the first day of the month, you must purchase sufficient insurance coverage until the first day of the next month.
- ISSS will not activate your J Exchange Visitor program in SEVIS until you submit the Insurance Compliance Form certifying that you have sufficient insurance for yourself, and if applicable your J-2 dependent(s).

Additional Insurance Resources:

- J Insurance Requirement: [U.S. Medical Insurance Requirements for International Students and Scholars](#)
- J Insurance Compliance Form: [Insurance Compliance for J-1 Exchange Visitors and J-2 Dependents](#)
- J Insurance Resource List: [International Exchange Visitor Insurance Resource List](#)

Budget for your living expenses. Your minimum estimated living expenses while at CU Boulder will be:

- J-1 Visitor \$22,140/ year or \$1845/month
- J-2 Spouse: \$11,076/ year or \$923/month
- Each J-2 Child: \$10,572/year or \$881/month

Obtain housing in Colorado.

- Resources are available in the [International Scholar Handbook](#) and online at: [CU Boulder Housing Options](#)
- Please note ISSS is not able to arrange housing for scholars.

Review the U.S. Port of Entry Arrival Procedures.

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) [Travel Information for International Visitors](#)
- Carry the following documents with you in your carry-on for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s): Original DS-2019; Valid Passport (should have at least 6 months validity beyond the program end date listed on your Form DS-2019); J visa (exception: Canadian citizens); SEVIS I-901 fee receipt; proof of funding as noted on your DS-2019; and CU-Boulder department invitation letter.

3. After Arriving in the United States

When you enter the U.S., print your electronic I-94 arrival record, and if applicable, your J-2 dependent(s).

- Access your [electronic I-94 card](#) on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's website
- Enter your information as it appears on the visa or, for Canadian citizens, passport you utilized to enter the United States.
- Additional instructions are online at: [Printing Your Electronic I-94](#)
- Print the I-94 record for you, and if applicable, your dependent(s).
- If you are unable to retrieve your I-94(s), please let ISSS know.

Check-in with your CU-Boulder department and complete any required departmental procedures (e.g., trainings, I-9, benefit enrollment).

Submit your J-1 Scholar Check-in Documents to ISSS electronically via the following online form: [J-1 Scholar Check-in Documents](#)

- Be prepared to enter your Colorado address and health insurance information
- You must upload your I-94 and J-1 visa (or change of status approval notice documenting J status)
- If you have dependents with you in J-2 status, you must upload each J-2's I-94 and documentation of J-2 status (e.g., J-2 visa, approval notice)
- Please check your e-mail as an ISSS staff member will contact you in the weeks prior to your arrival to provide information and links to Exchange Visitor Check-in documents. It is helpful to expedite the check-in process if you are able to complete your Check-in documents in your first 48 hours after arriving to the U.S.

Complete your online J-1 Exchange Visitor Orientation:

- This J-1 Orientation is only offered online; there are no in-person orientations
- You will receive instructions on how to complete your J-1 Orientation AFTER you have arrived to the United States and completed your J-1 Check-in Documents
- This orientation is required in order for ISSS to validate your J-1 SEVIS Record
- You will learn important rules and regulations about your J-1 Program during your Orientation

ISSS will not activate your J program in the federal government database (SEVIS) until you submit all of the documents and information noted above to ISSS.

4. Important Information Regarding your J Exchange Visitor Program

There are several important things to know when completing your J program: You may consider ending your program early, extend your program, transfer to another institution, or apply for another immigration status. Please work with

your department to decide the most appropriate course of action and notify ISSS several weeks prior to the program end date listed on your DS-2019.

Maximum Program Participation for J-1 Exchange Visitor Categories:

- Short-Term Scholar—6 continuous months; no extension beyond 6-month total program length.
- Specialist—1 continuous year; no extension beyond 1-year total program length.
- Research Scholar—5 continuous years; no extension beyond 5-year total program length.
- Professor—5 continuous years; no extension beyond 5-year total program length.

You have a 30-day grace-period after your program end date to prepare to leave the United States.

- Although you're unable to participate in your J program after the program end date, you can use this time to prepare to depart the U.S. Please note that you may not leave and reenter the U.S. in J status during this time.

212(e): Two Year Home Country Physical Presence Residency Requirement:

A J-1 exchange visitor can become subject to the two year home residency requirement, if:

- The exchange visitor's participation the J program was financed, directly or indirectly, by funds from the U.S or a foreign government.
- The field that the exchange visitor's program is listed on the State Department Exchange Visitor Skills List for his/her "home country": [Skills List by Country](#)

The U.S. consulate typically marks whether a J exchange visitor is subject to 212 (e) on the lower left corner of the DS-2019 and the bottom of the J visa.

An exchange visitor who falls into one of these groups will continue to be subject, even if funding or field of study changes. If the principal J-1 exchange visitor is subject to the two-year residence requirement, all dependents who enter the U.S. in J-2 status are subject to it as well.

Exchange visitors who are subject to the two-year home country residence requirement must "reside and be physically present" in their country of nationality or last legal permanent residence for an aggregate of two years before being eligible for certain immigration benefits. While subject to 212(e), exchange visitors are ineligible for the following benefits:

- They are not eligible for an immigrant visa or for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident (immigrant/green card) status;
- They are not eligible for an H visa (temporary workers and dependents), or an L visa (intracompany transferees and dependents);
- They are not eligible to change their nonimmigrant status within the United States from J to any other nonimmigrant category except A (diplomatic) and G (international organization) statuses.

An exchange visitor subject to the two-year home residency requirement who later obtains citizenship or legal permanent residence in a third country is still subject to the requirement, and can only comply with it in the country of citizenship or legal permanent residence that was the basis for becoming subject.

If you are granted a waiver of 212(e), you are not eligible to extend or transfer your J-1 program. Information about applying for a waiver of 212(e) is online at: [Waiver of the Exchange Visitor Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)

12-Month and 24-Month Bars: Restrictions for J-1 Professors and Research Scholars:

- **12-Month Bar:** An exchange visitor is not able to participate as a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar if they have been in J-1 or J-2 status in the last 12 months. The only exceptions are if they were in the US as a J-1 short-term scholar or if they were in the US in J status for fewer than 6 months in the previous 12-month period.
- **24-Month Bar:** An exchange visitor cannot participate in another J-1 Professor or Research Scholar program until 24 months have passed since their previous J-1 Professor or Research Scholar program has ended.