

Exchange Visitor Pre-Arrival Guide College/University Student Category

The DS-2019

Enclosed is your form **DS-2019**, also known as a “certificate of eligibility” for a J-1 visa **Exchange Visitor Program**. The DS-2019 is used to apply for a J-1 or J-2 visa, and both the visa and the DS-2019 are required to enter the United States, and used to demonstrate eligibility for J-1 or J-2 “status”.

Cultural Goals and Components of the Program:

The Exchange Visitor Program promotes the sharing of knowledge and skills among foreign and American students and scholars. It does so by providing students and scholars the opportunity to exchange ideas with their American colleagues, participate in educational and professional programs, confer on common problems and projects, and promote professional relationships. This may be accomplished through lecturing, observing, consulting, and participating in seminars, workshops, conferences, study, professional meetings, or similar types of educational and professional activities.

There are specific objectives of an Exchange Visitor Program (EVP). In addition to facilitating an opportunity to visit the U.S. for a program of **study, research, teaching, or collaboration** in an academic setting, an equally important aspect of the program is to promote **cultural exchange** and **foreign diplomacy**. It is through this study, research, teaching, and collaboration that cultural exchange and foreign diplomacy are accomplished.

Paying the SEVIS I-901 fee:

The **I-901 fee** is required to participate in the SEVIS Immigration database, and different from the DS-160 visa application fee. The fee is currently \$220 USD, but please be aware this may change without notice. Only the J-1 exchange visitor must pay this fee, which is not required for a spouse or dependent children. Please visit the [I-901 tutorial](#) and fmjfee.com to pay the fee. Print the confirmation of your payment and bring to the visa appointment.

When paying the fee, choose **Student (College/university)** category.

Applying for a J-1 visa:

Foreign visitors, except for Canadian citizens, require a non-immigrant visa to enter the U.S. For more information, please review the Department of State’s website providing information on the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. If you have questions about the different J-1 visa categories, click [here](#).

To apply for a J visa, please complete the “**Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application**” (also known as the **DS-160**), which can be found [here](#). The visa application fee is currently **\$185**, but please be aware this may change without notice. Review the website of the US Embassy or Consulate in your home country for any additional fees. Additional information about the visa application process can be found on the website of the US Embassy or Consulate in your home country. For a list of all U.S. Embassies and Consulates, follow this [link](#).

If your spouse or minor unmarried children (under age 21) are accompanying you to the U.S., they may apply for a J-2 visa at the same time as you. Proof of the relationship will be required. Minor children 21 years of age or older are not eligible for a J-2 dependent visa. If, while in the U.S., a J-2 minor dependent turns 21, they become ineligible for J-2 status, and will either need to depart the U.S. or apply for change of visa status. If ineligible for a J-2 visa, a dependent may have other options to visit the U.S.

Each applicant must submit the following at the visa interview at a US Embassy or Consulate:

- **DS-2019** (original) - Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status
- **DS-160** - Online Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application (proof of application)
- **PASSPORT** valid for travel to the United States
- One 2x2 [passport style] **photograph**
- Travel itinerary (not required)
- **I-901 fee receipt** for proof of payment
- **Proof of funding/financial resources.**
- Any additional documentation noted on the US Embassy or Consulate website

Please note: Evidence may be asked for of **BINDING TIES TO A RESIDENCE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY** without intent to abandon that residence, and an intent to exit the United States after the temporary stay as an Exchange Visitor in the U.S. **This can include, but is not limited to:**

- Property ownership outside of the United States
- Continued employment outside of the United States
- Documentation of ties to family, social, economic, or academic connections to a country other than the United States

Travel to the USA:

When traveling to the United States, be prepared to provide the following documents to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at a U.S. port of entry (air, land, and sea).

- **PASSPORT**
- J-1 non-immigrant **VISA STAMP** (not required for Canadian citizens)
- Original form **DS-2019**
- The University of Utah Office of Admissions letter (that was given to you to demonstrate that you were accepted to the University)
- Evidence of financial resources or funding

**Remember to keep these documents with you in your carry-on luggage while on the airplane so they will be available when you arrive at a port of entry and pass through US Customs and Border Protection. You can arrive in the USA up to 30 days before the begin date on your DS-2019.

Health Insurance:

Exchange Visitors and their dependents must maintain health insurance during their entire exchange visitor program. **Degree and non-degree exchange students will be covered by the University's health plan as part of their tuition, unless they opt out.** The University of Utah health plan does meet the minimum requirements of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

Please review the information below for more details, as well as the Exchange Visitor Program Welcome Brochure and item (f), page 2 of your DS-2019. Please be aware that an EV and dependent spouse or minor child may be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

- Medical Benefits of at least **\$100,000 per accident or illness**
- Repatriation of Remains in the amount of **\$25,000**
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of **\$50,000**
- A deductible not to exceed **\$500 per accident or illness**
- A policy underwritten by an insurance carrier with:
 - an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above;
 - a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's Claims paying Ability rating of "A-" or above;
 - a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above;
 - a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of "A-" or above;
 - a Moody's Investor Services rating of "A3" or above

Click here for additional resources and an [overview of the healthcare system in the US](#) and how it relates to EVs. Failure to have health insurance that meets the minimum requirements of the US Department of State will result in TERMINATION of your visa status.

As a reminder, degree and non-degree exchange students will be covered by the University's health plan as part of their tuition, unless they opt out. The University of Utah health plan does meet the minimum requirements of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

Reporting Your On-campus Arrival Through UAtlas:

Upon entry to the U.S. for a new EV program, you must report your arrival to **International Student and Scholar Services**, which should be done within a few days of arrival, and is done online. Reporting is necessary to validate your SEVIS immigration record, giving you an ACTIVE immigration status. Please be aware that if you do not report your arrival within 30 days after the program begin date as listed on your DS-2019, your immigration status will change to NO SHOW, which is not a legal status for any type of employment based or education based program in the USA. **Please refer to the instructions included in the pre-arrival packet on how to report your arrival using [UAtlas](#).**

Please be prepared to submit the following as part of the reporting process through UAtlas:

- **PASSPORT**
- **J-1 VISA** (with “stamp” from Customs and Border Protection)
- **DS-2019** with US Consular signature
- **I-94** document. To retrieve this document, which identifies that you entered the U.S. in J visa status, go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
- Current **physical residential address** in the United States and current contact information (**e-mail address and US phone number**)

Delay in Travel:

If your travel is delayed and you will arrive in Salt Lake City after your program begin date as listed on your DS-2019, please notify both the Learning Abroad and the ISSS J-1 Exchange Visitor Program at internationalscholars@utah.edu. If given advance notice of a delay in travel, ISSS can amend (change) your program dates on your DS-2019. **You are allowed to enter the United States as early as 30 days before the program begin date listed on your DS-2019.**

Attending Orientation:

Please participate in **Orientation**, which will be provided by the **Learning Abroad** office and ISSS. The following is a sample of the information covered during orientation:

- Life, customs, and cultural activities in the US
- Community resources, such as transportation and libraries, and healthcare options
- Description of the Exchange Visitor Program and appointment disclosure information
- Information on visa regulations, sponsor (University of Utah) rules, and how to maintain your legal status in the US
- Contact information: the name and address of the J-1 advisors (RO and ARO) at the university, as well as the Office of Designation (US Department of State)
- Information about applying for a driver’s license, social security card, and bank account
- The [Wilberforce Pamphlet](#) regarding the rights and protections for temporary workers
- The Exchange Visitor Program [Welcome Brochure](#)

Final Reminders:

Please remember that it is **your responsibility** to be knowledgeable of the **rules and regulations** of your visa type. This is important in order to understand the benefits and protections you are given as visitors to the US. Much of this information will be covered at the Learning Abroad/Exchange Visitor orientation after arrival. We will also be available during your stay for one-on-one advising sessions for any visa related questions. Another helpful resource is the Department of State's [Exchange Visitor page](#).

A summary of many of the rules and regulations can be found on our website. Please review our [welcome page](#), as well as our [policy and procedure page](#) to access more information.

Finally, you are allowed to arrive in the USA **up to 30 days before** the begin date listed on your DS-2019, and allowed to stay in the USA **up to 30 days after** the end date on your DS-2019. The purpose of this “grace period” before and after the dates on the DS-2019 is to allow you to arrive early and settle in to life in the USA and on campus, as well as for travel and tourism throughout the USA before and after your semester.

International Student & Scholar Services provides support and information related to U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F and J status. We are not attorneys and any information provided by us should not be construed as legal advice. Individuals are welcome to consult a qualified immigration attorney for specific legal advice, particularly in complicated cases.