

English Proficiency Requirement for J-1 Scholars

What is English Proficiency?

The U.S. Department of State, the government agency that has oversight of the **Exchange Visitor Program**, requires an **Exchange Visitor (EV)** to have sufficient proficiency in the English language. English proficiency must be determined by an objective measure to ensure that EV's can successfully participate in their program, as well as on a day-to-day basis.

English language proficiency is a critical factor in an EV's ability to succeed in the lab or classroom, and on a **day-to-day basis**. This includes everything from negotiating rent to describing an illness to a physician. Language proficiency is essential to the health, welfare, and safety of an EV, as well as a critical tool for an EV to fully understand their rights, responsibilities, and protections during their stay in the U.S.

General Guidelines - English proficiency must be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

1) Objective, recognized English language test:

The following tests are acceptable to fulfill the English proficiency requirement:

- **TOEFL** - a score of **80** or higher on the iBT (internet based test) or **550** or higher on the PBT (paper-based exam)
- **IELTS** - an overall minimum band score of **6.5** or higher
- **CEFR**: Level of **C1** or higher

**All test dates must be within two years of receipt of the DS-2019 application to be valid.*

2) J-1 Interview conducted by English3: The "J-1 Interview" is a recorded interview completed through English3's website. The interview generally takes about 25 minutes and is evaluated within 48 hours. A score of **3.0 or higher** is required to demonstrate language proficiency. Click the following link for the [English3 step-by-step instructions](#) or go to [English3's website](#) for direct access to the interview. ***Please select the following: English Test - E3J1 (English3 J-1 Interview) for J-1 Exchange Visitors.**

3) If an EV can provide any of the following, they have satisfied the English proficiency requirements:

- An Associate, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree (completed within two years of the date the DS-2019 application) from a regionally-accredited U.S. college or university
- A Bachelor's degree or higher (completed within two years of the date the DS-2019 application) from an officially-recognized college or university in one of the following **English speaking countries**:
 - Australia, Canada (except Quebec), Ireland, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)
- **Native speakers of English** who are citizens of Australia, Canada (except Quebec), Ireland, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Please Note: This policy is for J-1 Scholars only (Research Scholar, Professor, Short-term Scholar, Student Intern, and Specialist). For J-1 student information, please refer to the [J-1 Student Policies and Forms](#).