Immigration Documents

**DS-2019**
A form **DS-2019**, also known as a **Certificate of Eligibility**, is issued to someone in order to participate in a **J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Program**. It is called a certificate of eligibility because it demonstrates that one is eligible for an academic or “work-based” appointment in the U.S., and used to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. Dependents will need their own J-2 DS-2019 to apply for a J-2 visa, and to obtain J-2 dependent “status”.

If more time is necessary to complete EV program objectives, an EV may be eligible for a **DS-2019 extension**. The length of extension is based on a recommendation of the host University department and the maximum program duration allowed by the J-1 visa category. A form DS-2019 is one of three “travel” documents (along with a visa and passport) that work together to allow entry and participation in an exchange visitor program.

**Visa**
A **visa** is used to facilitate **travel and entry** to the United States, and in most cases, required to board a flight to the US. Because it is mainly a travel document, it is not required to remain valid while **physically in the US**, or necessary to request an extension of stay, once you have been **admitted to J-1 “status”** (see the I-94 section below for more information). Although a visa does not have to be valid to legally remain in the U.S. after being admitted to J-1 status, it must be valid to **re-enter the U.S. after a departure**, in order to continue a J-1 exchange visitor program, and to **regain “J status”** at a US port of entry. **Note:** Canadian citizens do not need a non-immigrant visa to enter the US.

An exception to the valid US visa rule is called **Automatic Revalidation**, if traveling to Canada, Mexico, or to an **adjacent island** for 30 days or less. Visit the **Automatic Revalidation** website and **conduct the necessary research** to verify if this option is appropriate, and to determine eligibility, as not every person nor every situation is eligible.

**Passport**
A **passport** is both an official form of identification and a travel document, issued by a government, and required for many important activities, such as travel abroad, opening a bank account, and getting a driver’s license. U.S. Department of State regulations disclose that a passport **must be valid at the time of admission** (entry) to the U.S. and must be valid for a minimum of six months beyond the expiration of an initial period of stay, unless the country of citizenship is exempt from the **six-month rule**. If exempt, a passport must only be valid through the end of the initial period of stay, as identified on the DS-2019, not six months beyond this date.

**Note:** An **expired passport** does not put one “out of status”, but is required to be valid at all times, and can make one ineligible for certain benefits, such as an extension of stay. In most cases, application for a new passport can be done through a country’s U.S. Embassy or Consulate located in the US.

**I-94**
The **I-94 arrival/departure record** is evidence that someone has been **admitted** to the United States in “J-1 status” at a **US port of entry** (land, air, or sea) by **US Customs and Border Protection**. This document identifies the date and class of admission (J-1) to the US, as well as the expiration date of the authorized period of stay. For EVs on a J-1 visa, the period of authorized stay is identified as “**duration of status**”, also known as **D/S**, which is "stamped" on the visa foil page of a passport. D/S is not an expiration date, so check the dates on the DS-2019 to confirm an authorized period of stay in the US, and to confirm **J-1 status**.

EVs and their dependents will have a new I-94 with each new entry to the US, so all new I-94s should be kept for record keeping. Please provide the “newest” copy of the I-94 to the ISSS office, as this is the document that identifies a legal status in the US. Visit the official **I-94 website** for more information on the I-94 and how to “**get most recent I-94**” record.

Disclaimer: International Student & Scholar Services at the University of Utah provides support and information related to U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F and J status. ISSS staff are not attorneys and any information provided should not be construed as legal advice. Individuals are welcome to consult a qualified immigration attorney for specific legal advice, particularly in complicated cases.
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