

Change of a Site of Activity for a J-1 Scholars

What is a Site of Activity?

A **site of activity** (SOA) is the location where an Exchange Visitor (EV) will conduct their primary program activities. All EVs must have a primary site of activity listed in their SEVIS record and on their DS-2019. Additional sites may be added if an EV requests a change of site or will engage in activities at more than one location. A change in a site of activity must be approved in advance.

General Guidelines regarding the Site of Activity:

You must request and receive approval for a change of your site of activity (SOA) **before** moving to a different site. A change in your SOA without prior approval may have an adverse impact on your legal status. If you are found eligible for such a change, your SEVIS record will be updated, and a new DS-2019 will be issued.

Please note:

- There must be a relationship between a **site of activity** and your **original** program objectives. Failing to maintain that objective is a violation of your visa status. Generally, the **purpose** of a change of site is to facilitate a continuation of your original program objectives.
- Your primary site of activity and program objectives can be found in section #1 (**site of activity**) and section #4 (**subject/field code and remarks**) of your DS-2019. The subject/field code and remarks should always reflect your current program objectives.

Steps for a Change of Site of Activity:

- Receive an **appointment** (invitation or offer) from a host academic department to continue your program objectives at a new site of activity.
- Describe and confirm that the objective at the new site is related to, or a progression of, your original program objectives.
- Submit proof that any change in funding and/or your health insurance meets the minimum requirements of your J-1 visa status.

How to Apply for a Change to my Primary Site of Activity?

Submit a **Change of Site of Activity** E-form through [UAtlas](#). Please be prepared to submit the following:

- Description of the research/program activities conducted at your **current** SOA
- Description of the research/program activities that will be conducted at your **new** SOA
- Description of how the research/program activities at the new SOA is related to, or is a progression of the research/program activities conducted at the current SOA
- Appointment or offer letter disclosing the new location, contact information of your supervisor, as well as a brief description of the research/program activities at the new SOA

Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1. What if I have already changed my site of activity and didn't inform ISSS?**
A change of site without prior approval by ISSS may have serious consequences for your visa status. If you made a change without prior approval, please make an appointment with a J-1 Scholar Advisor to discuss your options.
- 2. What if my program objective at the new site is unrelated to my original program objective?**
If there are doubts related to the relationship between your original, and current or future objectives, please make an appointment with a J-1 Scholar Advisor. We will be happy to discuss how this may or may not impact your visa status.
- 3. Can I depart the U.S. and re-enter on a new DS-2019 for a new EV Program if I am not allowed to change my site of activity based on my current DS-2019?**
In most cases, a departure such as this may be seen as a completion of your current EV program and could **trigger a 24-month bar to a repeat participation** in the **Research Scholar** and/or **Professor** category. Please make an appointment with a J-1 Scholar Advisor before considering this option.
- 4. What if my Primary Investigator (PI) or faculty supervisor is the only change?**
A change such as this should be fine as long as there is no change in your program goals and objectives. If there is such a change, it should allow you to continue your **original** program objectives.
- 5. What if my EV program is shortened because of a loss of funding, and as a result, a change of site is the only way to remain at the U of U?**
There may be circumstances where this option is allowed. Please make an appointment with a J-1 Scholar Advisor to discuss this option.
- 6. What if there is a change to my funding related to the new site of activity?**
Along with other information related to a change to your site of activity, you must provide an update related to any change in the amount and/or source of funding. This information is necessary, listed on your DS-2019, and must be reported to ISSS within 10 calendar days of the change. Be aware that the source of funding, such as funds provided by a foreign or U.S. government for the purpose of international exchange, may subject you to the 212(e) home residency requirement.

Disclaimer: International Student & Scholar Services 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 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. For a list of local Utah attorneys please visit our website [here](#).