

Exchange Visitor Pre-Arrival Guide - Initial Visit -

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:

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 **research, teaching, or collaboration** in an academic setting, an equally important aspect of the program is to promote **cultural exchange** and **foreign diplomacy**, and through research, teaching, and collaboration that cultural exchange and foreign diplomacy are accomplished.

The Exchange Visitor Program promotes the sharing of knowledge and skills among foreign and American scholars. It does so by providing foreign 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.

Review the Online Pre-Arrival Orientation

The **Homebase on-line pre-arrive guide** provides additional information on the Exchange Visitor Program, visa regulations, and cultural aspects of the Salt Lake City and Utah community. To **create a profile**, please click the [Homebase link](#) and follow these steps:

- Select your institution: **University of Utah**
- Input the program number: 154-11-23
- Type in your name, e-mail address, date of birth, gender, and country of residence
- **Create a password** (Password must be at least 8 characters long and contain at least 1 lowercase letter, 1 uppercase letter, 1 numeric and 1 special character, such as the following: !@#\$%^&)
- Click **“Create Account”**. You will then be redirected to the University of Utah Pre-Arrival and Orientation guide

Paying the SEVIS I-901 fee:

This fee is related to the SEVIS Immigration database and different from the DS-160 visa application fee. Only the J-1 exchange visitor must pay this **\$220** fee, as it is not required for dependents. 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](#). Choose one of the following categories when paying the fee: **Professor, Research Scholar, Short Term Scholar, Specialist**, or if visiting for a student internship, choose **Student (College/university)**.

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" (DS-160), which can be found [here](#). The visa application fee is **\$160**. 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 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 another visa status. If ineligible, 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.**
- **DS-7002** - Training/Internship Placement Plan. **Only** required for **student intern programs**
- Any additional documentation noted on the US Embassy or Consulate website

Please note: Evidence 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., may be asked for. **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

- For Student Interns, a [letter from your university](#) regarding your educational objectives, status at your university, and intent to return and complete your program of study

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** (located in your passport)
- Original form **DS-2019**
- The **INVITATION** or **OFFER LETTER** from the University (that was given to you to demonstrate that you were accepted to an Exchange Visitor Program)
- 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.

Providing Proof of Health Insurance:

Exchange Visitors and their dependents must maintain health insurance during their exchange visitor program. Please review the document titled **Insurance Requirements for Exchange Visitors and Their Dependents** for more information, as well as 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.

Some EVs may be eligible for the University's health plan. Please check with the department hosting your visit to find out if you are eligible. If you are eligible for the University plan, details can be retrieved [here](#).

The University of Utah does not endorse private insurance plans, but if you are not eligible for the University's health plan and need to purchase private insurance, the following companies offer plans compliant with J visa requirements. **Please conduct your own research, and consider an option that is more comprehensive than the minimum requirements based on the health care needs of you and your family.** We've provided a list of a companies that write insurance that meets the Department of State's minimum requirements:

- ISO: www.isoa.org
- International Student Insurance: www.internationalstudentinsurance.com

Proof of insurance, such as a summary of benefits, declaration page, letter from your insurance or government provider identifying your coverage is necessary to validate your SEVIS record. Click here for additional resources and an [overview of the healthcare system in the US](#) and how it relates to EVs. If you are unable to provide proof of insurance to match the research begin date at the University of Utah, we will not be able to validate your SEVIS record. Failure to provide proof of health insurance that meets the minimum requirements of the US Department of State will result in TERMINATION of your visa status.

Housing options (on and off campus):

While the University of Utah cannot guarantee on-campus housing for exchange visitors, we have provided the following websites for housing options on campus, and around the Salt Lake metro area. Your host department may also have additional resources for housing options.

- University [on-campus housing](#)
- University [off-campus housing](#)
- List of apartments in the [Salt Lake City metro area](#)

For information on the estimated cost of living in Salt Lake City, please click [here](#), and for more information on housing in Salt Lake City, click [here](#).

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. 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 of 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>
- Proof of health insurance coverage. This should include your policy number and amount of coverage.
- 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 your host academic department and ISSS's 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 occurs twice per month via Zoom. You will have an opportunity to sign up for the orientation after you report your arrival to campus and complete the check-in procedures. 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 is covered on the **Homebase online pre-arrival guide** (see how to access this on page 1 of this document), and will be covered at the 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 on the following:

- The **212(e)** home residency requirement
- The **12 and 24-Month bar** (for Research Scholars and Professors)
- Incidental Study and Incidental Employment
- Change of a **Site of Activity**
- DS-2019 **extension of stay**
- Transfer "to or from" another College or University
- Temporary **Out of Country leave**
- Travel abroad
- J-2 **Dependent employment**
- Wilberforce Pamphlet

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.