

The Exchange Visitor Program at the University of Utah Program Goals and Objectives

Since 1951, the University of Utah has been a designated “sponsor” of a J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Program, also known as “BridgeUSA.” The EV Program was established by the U.S. Department State for the purpose of promoting the interchange of knowledge and skills among foreign and American scholars. It does so by providing foreign scholars, also known as “exchange visitors”, an opportunity to share ideas with their American colleagues, participate in educational and professional programs, confer on common problems and projects, promote professional relationships, and bring people together.

The U sponsors J-1 Exchange Visitors (EVs) in five categories: Research Scholar, Professor, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, and College/University student. EVs can have various backgrounds, such as experienced researcher or professor, medical doctor, current student, or post doc. They can also visit for various reasons, including academic appointments, internships required for graduation, and to demonstrate or learn a special skill. This “exchange” serves as both an opportunity for the U to further its mission, and at the same time to help develop a visiting scholar’s expertise and skills, something to share with colleagues in their home country upon their return. Through such an exchange, the University can have a unique role not only in shaping a visiting scholar’s career and personal experience, but also in having a positive impact beyond our borders.

As a reminder, an equally important objective of the EV Program is to promote cultural exchange and foreign diplomacy, and it is through these academic appointments that cultural exchange and foreign diplomacy can be accomplished. As participating hosts, we encourage academic departments to assist us in supporting and promoting these important objectives of the program.

Additionally, another advantage of this visa are the generous benefits provided to EV dependents (spouse or unmarried minor children) who are admitted to the U.S. in J-2 status. Dependents can study full-time or part-time, as well as seek employment, which can be located be on or off-campus. Although the employment option can be a significant benefit for dependents, it is not guaranteed. Employment authorization must be requested through USCIS and can take up to 3 months for adjudication, a benefit they are eligible to apply for only after arrival to the U.S.

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