

J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Categories

What is a Category?

The J-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa for individuals approved to participate in an **Exchange Visitor Program**. The multi-faceted Exchange Visitor Program enables foreign nationals an opportunity to visit the U.S. to teach, study, conduct research, demonstrate special skills, or receive on the job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.

The particular purpose of the visit and the credentials of the **Exchange Visitor (EV)** will help to determine the appropriate category. The University of Utah is authorized to sponsor Exchange Visitor's in five different categories: (1) **Research Scholar**, (2) **Professor**, (3) **Short-Term Scholar**, (4) **Specialist**, and (5) **College/University Student**, which includes the **Student Intern** category.

Note: It is important to choose a category that both matches the purpose of the EV's visit and their qualifications.

Visa Categories and their Requirements:

1. Research Scholar - An individual concerned primarily with research, consultation, observation, or collaboration in connection with a research project. Research Scholars are also allowed to teach, but research activities must be the primary reason to visit.

Degree Requirement: Master's degree or above

Minimum Duration: 3 Weeks

Maximum Duration: 5 Years

- Used for appointments of 3 weeks to 5 years in duration
- Allows for extensions up to a continuous, uninterrupted 5 year maximum
- Subject to a [24-Month Bar](#) on a repeat visit in the **Research Scholar or Professor category** after the completion of the program
- May be able to return to the U.S. in a different J visa category (such as Short-Term Scholar) or in another type of non-immigrant status during the 24-month period
- May be subject to the [212 \(e\) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)

2. Professor - An individual concerned primarily with teaching, lecturing, observing, or consulting. Professors may also participate in departmental research but their primary purpose is to teach. If the EV will be here primarily to conduct research, then the Research Scholar category above will be most appropriate, even if the individual is a professor in his or her home country.

Degree Requirement: Master's degree or above

Minimum Duration: 3 Weeks

Maximum Duration: 5 Years

- Used for appointments of 3 weeks to 5 years in duration
- Allows for extensions up to a continuous, uninterrupted 5 year maximum
- Subject to a [24-Month Bar](#) on a repeat visit in the **Research Scholar or Professor category** after the completion of the program
- May be able to return to the U.S. in a different J visa category (such as Short-Term Scholar) or in another type of non-immigrant status during the 24-month period
- May be subject to the [212 \(e\) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)

3. Short-Term Scholar - A professor, research scholar, or a person with similar education or accomplishments coming to the U.S. on a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, research, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills.

Degree Requirement: Bachelor's degree or above

Minimum Duration: 1 Day

Maximum Duration: 6 Months

- Used for appointments of 6 months or less in duration
- Cannot be extended beyond 6 months
- Not subject to the 24-month bar on a repeat visit (as is the case for the J-1 Research Scholar and Professor categories)
- May be subject to the [212 \(e\) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)

4. Student Intern - An individual who is currently enrolled in a **degree program abroad** to complete an internship of up to 12 months in duration to satisfy a curricular requirement or educational objective.

Please see the Student **Intern Resources** on our [Exchange Visitor Policies and Forms webpage](#) for more information and guidance on the additional paperwork required for the

Degree Requirement: None required, but the intern must be currently enrolled in and pursuing a degree at an accredited postsecondary academic institution outside the U.S. and will continue to do so during the entirety of their internship while in the U.S.

Minimum Duration: 3 Weeks

Maximum Duration: 1 Year

- Used for appointments of 3 weeks to 1 year in duration
- Allows for extensions up to the 1 year maximum
- May be subject to a [12-month bar](#) to participate in the Research Scholar and Professor categories
- May be subject to the [212 \(e\) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)

5. Specialist - An individual who lacks a post-secondary degree, but is a documented expert in a field of specialized knowledge or skill visiting the U.S. for observation, consultation, or to demonstrate special skills. Someone in the Specialist category may stay for the length of time necessary to complete their program, but not to exceed one year. This category is considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact ISSS in regards to this category before submitting a DS-2019 application.

Degree Requirement: None required, but must be a documented expert in their field

Minimum Duration: 3 weeks

Maximum Duration: 1 year

- May be subject to a [12-month bar](#) to participate in the Research Scholar and Professor categories
- May be subject to the [212 \(e\) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement](#)