

Arrival and Departure Guide

Beginning of an Exchange Program | Arrival to Campus

An Exchange Visitor (EV), along with their J-2 dependents (spouse and minor children), may be admitted to the US in J-1 or J-2 status for a period of up to **30 days before the begin date** listed on their Form DS-2019. Keep in mind that exchange visitors are allowed to arrive in the United States on or before, but no more than 30 days before, the program begin date listed in SEVIS and on their most current Form DS-2019. US **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** at a **US Port of Entry (POE)**, such as an airport, have allowed EVs to arrive **after the begin date** on their original or amended DS-2019 (or update in SEVIS), but admission at a POE is always at the discretion of CBP.

If there is a delay in arrival, both the DS-2019 and SEVIS database will be amended. In order to amend a begin date, there must be an agreement to do so between the **exchange visitor**, their **host department**, and the **Responsible Officer** in the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). If the DS-2019 is amended due to a travel delay, arrival is allowed up to 30 days before the amended start of the Exchange Program as identified on the new DS-2019 and in the SEVIS database.

Upon arrival, and EV should report to ISSS by logging in to UAtlas and providing the information requested on the [report your arrival](#) form. Once this is done, an EV will be invited to orientation, which will be conducted online through Zoom. **Please remember when travelling to the US, carry your DS-2019, passport and visa at all times.**

Travel During an Active Exchange Program | With an Intent to Return

Active exchange visitors that plan to **depart** the United States with an **intent to return** at a future time to continue their current Exchange Visitor Program, should review and complete a [travel survey](#), or submit a travel survey [e-form](#).

As a participant in a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, you are allowed to **re-enter** the U.S. after a **temporary absence of 30 days or less**, without special permission. If your absence is greater than 30 days, a **Temporary - Out of Country Absence** authorization is required to keep your SEVIS record **ACTIVE and** to facilitate re-entry. If your departure will be greater than 30 days, please submit the **Temporary - Out of Country Absence** E-form through [UAtlas](#).

When planning your travel, please make sure you have the following:

Valid passport. A valid passport is a passport that has not yet expired. When entering the U.S., your passport must be valid for 6 months beyond the end date of your program, **unless your country is exempt** from this requirement. Exempt countries, known as the six-month club, can be found [here](#).

Valid J-1 visa. A valid visa is a visa that has not yet expired. When entering the U.S., your visa must be valid **on** the date of entry. **If your visa has expired, it can only be renewed at a U.S. Embassy abroad.** If there is a need to renew your visa, we recommend that you schedule a visa appointment at a U.S. Consulate in your country of legal permanent residence or citizenship. Keep in mind that a visa is required for travel to the U.S., but allowed to expire while you are physically in the US.

Valid DS-2019. A valid DS-2019 is one that has not yet expired based on the program end date (see your DS-2019, section 3, “from and to” period of time).

Valid travel signature. A travel signature is required from ISSS on your DS-2019 in order to re-enter in **J-1 “status”**. The travel signature is valid for **one year** and must be valid on the date of re-entry to the U.S.

End of an Exchange Program | Final Departure from Campus

The Department of Homeland Security allows exchange visitors an additional period of 30 days, called the **30-day grace period**, following the **end date of their program** found on their most current Form DS-2019, in order to prepare for departure. **During the “grace period,” exchange visitors are no longer in J-1 status.** The purpose of the grace period is to allow exchange visitors an opportunity to settle their affairs, engage in travel and tourism throughout the US, and prepare to return to their home country.

During the grace period, exchange visitors are no longer permitted to continue and/or complete exchange activities, such as teaching, research, or study. Although an EV may travel throughout the United States, once an EV **departs the US during the grace period**, they will not be permitted re-entry using their J-1 or J-2 visa, since their Exchange Program will have ended. If there is a need to return to the US, for example to visit friends or attend a graduation ceremony, they can use an alternate US visa status, such as a B1/B2 tourist visa or ESTA, if eligible, to re-enter the US.

Final reminders:

- Please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to understand the visa status that is most appropriate for your visit to the US.
- If your exchange program **ends more than 15 days early**, based on the end date of the most current DS-2019, you must report this “early completion” to ISSS, submitting a “**Shorten Program**” e-form through **UAtlas**, for an accurate accounting of your stay. Once submitted, we will issue a new DS-2019 based on the early completion of your exchange program.
- If your exchange program is **terminated** due to a violation of your visa status, you are expected to leave the US immediately, and are not eligible for the 30-day grace period.
- If you apply for, and timely file for a “change of status” through USCIS, and do so before the end of the 30-day grace period, you are allowed to remain in the U.S. beyond the 30-day grace period, and during the adjudication period.

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](#).