

Student Intern Guide

J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program

(For Host Academic Departments)

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Purpose of an **Exchange Visitor Program** and of the **Student Intern Category**:

The **purpose of an Exchange Visitor Program** is to promote the sharing of knowledge and skills among foreign and American scholars. It does so by providing scholars the opportunity to exchange ideas, participate in educational and professional programs, confer on common problems and projects, and promote professional relationships. Because an important component of the program is “cultural exchange”, student interns should be exposed to and participate in local cultural activities, such as visiting museums, a farmer’s market, attend sporting events, trying new foods, hiking or camping at nearby parks, or just exploring other customs unique to the area that would be of interest to them.

The **purpose of a student internship** is to allow a student currently enrolled in, and pursuing a degree at an accredited postsecondary institution outside of the U.S., to fulfill an educational objective of their degree program abroad. Student interns on a J-1 visa are not considered University of Utah students, and are not eligible for some of the benefits afforded to students, such as housing and health insurance, although they could be eligible for housing and health insurance similar to what is available to staff, if they are visiting for a paid and benefited appointment.

The University of Utah, as a **designated sponsor** of an **Exchange Visitor** in the **Student Intern** category, should ensure that the internship program successfully exposes participants to American techniques, methodologies, and technology, as well as expands upon their existing knowledge and skills. As Sponsor, the U should ensure that all tasks assigned to a student intern are necessary for the completion of the internship program, and contribute to fulfilling the educational objectives of their current degree program abroad. **Please note:** Hospitality and Tourism student internship programs of **six months or longer** must contain at least three departmental or functional rotations, which should be outlined in the student intern’s **Training/Internship Placement Plan**, also known as the **DS-7002**.

Sponsors are required to ensure that the internship is appropriate for the student intern's field of study and degree level, and that all placements are driven by educational objectives, not by labor needs of a host department. Sponsors are responsible for distinguishing between "work-based" learning, which is permitted, and ordinary employment or unskilled labor, which is not. Student interns are specifically prohibited from being placed in unskilled or casual labor positions, and sponsors should ensure that the duties of a student intern, as outlined in the DS-7002, do not involve more than 20% clerical work.

Eligibility Requirements – the following must be met by the intern:

1. Be currently enrolled in and pursuing a degree at an accredited postsecondary academic institution outside the United States, and will remain so during the entirety of the internship in the United States. The internship **must not extend past the graduation date of the current degree program** abroad.
2. Pursue an internship to fulfill the educational objectives of the current degree program at the home institution.
3. Have measured and verifiable English language skills sufficient to function in the internship environment and on a "day-to-day" basis in the United States. Options for English proficiency assessment can be found on our [English Proficiency policy guide](#).
4. Be primarily in the United States to engage in a student internship program rather than to engage in employment or provide services to an employer.
5. Be accepted into a student internship program at the postsecondary accredited academic institution (the University of Utah) listed on the DS-2019.
6. Be in good academic standing at the home institution outside the United States.
7. Return to the academic program outside the United States to continue to pursue and obtain a degree from such academic institution after completion of the student internship program.
8. Have sufficient funding to support not only themselves, but also dependents, for the entire stay in the United States, including housing and living expenses.

Duration of Stay & Funding

1. The internship must be full-time, and consist of a minimum of 32 hours per week.
2. Student interns may participate in an internship program for a minimum of 3 weeks and up to 12 months for each degree/major. Extensions beyond 12 months are not possible.

Focus & Nature of Activity

1. The internship must fulfill the "educational objectives" for one's current degree program abroad. The internship is not required to be in the student's field of study, but must be appropriate for the field of study and degree level.
2. All tasks assigned must be necessary for the completion of the student internship program.
3. A student may participate in an internship with or without wages or other compensation, and a full-time appointment is permitted, as outlined on the student's Training/Internship Placement Plan (DS-7002). To be eligible for a paid appointment, the student must have the approval of the University's Responsible Officer (located in the ISSS office) and the student's home institution's dean or academic advisor.

4. The internship tasks may consist of no more than 20 percent clerical work.
5. The internship must expose the participant to American techniques, methodologies, and technology, expand upon the participant's existing knowledge and skills, and not duplicate the student intern's prior experience.
6. Internships **cannot** place a student intern in any position that involves the following:
 - a. Unskilled or casual labor
 - b. Child care or elder care
 - c. Aviation
 - d. Clinical positions or engaging in any other kind of work that involves patient care or contact, including any work that would require student interns to provide therapy, medication, or other clinical or medical care (e.g., sports or physical therapy, psychological counseling, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, social work, speech therapy, or early childhood education)

Distinction Between Internships and Regular Employment:

1. The internship cannot serve to fill a labor need.
2. The internship must exist solely to assist the student intern in achieving the objectives of his or her participation in an internship program.
3. The internship must consist of "work-based" learning, rather than "ordinary" employment or unskilled labor.
4. Not involve in any way a staffing/employment agency.
5. The internship cannot displace American workers (including full or part-time, temporary or permanent).

Incidental Study:

Student interns that wish to supplement their internship by taking classes must first get approval from ISSS to make sure the study is appropriate for the visa category. They must also obtain approval from their direct supervisor at the U to ensure study will not interfere or delay the internship. Keep in mind that the objective of the student intern category is meant for participation in an internship, and not for full-time or degree-seeking study in the U.S., although "incidental" or part-time study may be permitted and/or appropriate. For more information, please review our [Incidental Study policy guide](#).

Third Party Placements:

Placements with a 3rd party, such as an off-campus and/or unaffiliated lab or entity, creates additional regulatory challenges for the University, and as a result, are not allowed in most cases. Any failure by a 3rd party in **its obligation** to comply with the regulations, as well as its obligation to promote cultural exchange, and to monitor an exchange visitor's health, safety, and welfare, creates a liability for the University.

The Training Internship Placement Plan (also known as the DS-7002):

The DS-7002 describes the objectives of the internship, what skills will be learned, how cultural exchange will be incorporated into the internship, and how performance will be measured. This process helps to ensure that every participant gets valuable and relevant professional development as well as a better understanding of American culture, all goals of the Exchange Visitor Program. For helpful tips to completing the DS-7002, please review the [DS-7002 Tips Guide](#).

Application for a DS-2019 - Steps and Timeline:

Step #1:

Host Academic Department to Determine Suitability of the Student Internship

Prior to offering an appointment for an internship at the U, a host department must screen and determine a candidate's eligibility. In addition to following Human Resource protocols, as well as the needs of the host academic department, a candidate must be able to **meet the following eligibility requirements:**

- Sufficient proof of English language proficiency
- Sufficient proof of funding
- Evidence that the internship is for the purpose of fulfilling and educational objective of a degree program outside of the US (this can be done through a recommendation letter, see a link to a template below)

Step #2:

Host to Submit a DS-2019 Application and a DS-7002 (Internship Placement Plan) to ISSS. Please follow this link to the [DS-2019 Application Guide](#) for more information. All steps of the DS-2019 application process are relevant to student interns. * **It is recommended that a DS-2019 application for a student intern be submitted at least three months before the beginning of the internship.**

Support document required:

- **Host Department:**
 - Appointment/Offer letter for the student internship
 - Export Control Questionnaire (completed and signed by a faculty mentor or PI)
 - [Form DS-7002](#) (completed and signed by a faculty mentor or PI)
 - Proof of Funding - if the University of Utah host will provide any funding, please share details in the appointment letter
- **Student Intern:**

Note: the student intern should provide the following to the host, who will then submit as part of a DS-2019 application.

 - Proof of Funding - a student can provide proof of funding, which can be in the form of a grant, scholarship, or personal funds (bank statement), etc.)
 - Copy of the bio page of the passport
 - Proof of language proficiency
 - CV or resume'
 - Internship Recommendation letter. See the **Recommendation Letter template** [here](#).
 - Dependent documents (passport, birth or marriage certificate), if applicable

Step #3:

ISSS Review and Processing:

ISSS will review the submitted application, and after evaluation and screening of the candidate, determine eligibility for the Student Intern Category of the J-1 visa. Once eligibility is determined, we will:

- Issue a DS-2019 and contact the host department for a shipping preference
- Sign the DS-7002
- Provide a pre-arrival guide and pre-arrival welcome packet
- Conduct an online pre-arrival orientation

Step #4:

Candidate to Apply for a J-1 visa:

ISSS will provide a [Pre-Arrival Guide](#) to a student intern for more information.

Step #5:

Candidate Travels to the United States:

ISSS will provide a [Pre-Arrival Guide](#) to a student intern for more information.

Report Arrival to Campus and Attend Orientation:

Student interns will **report to ISSS** once they arrive on campus. After reporting their arrival, we will conduct an on-campus orientation via Zoom, which will be offered twice per month. Instructions on the reporting process will be included in the Pre-Arrival Guide.

Final and Mid-Point Evaluations:

The student intern's **direct supervisor** will be required to conduct a written evaluation of the internship at the conclusion of the program. If the internship is **more than six months** in duration, an evaluation will be required at both the **mid-point** and the **conclusion** of the internship.

ISSS will send a reminder and provide the format of the evaluation, which can be done online through UAtlas. For more information on UAtlas, please review our [E-forms Instructions](#) guide.

