

J-1 Exchange Visitor Overview & U.S. Arrival Procedures

Please review your Form DS-2019(s) (Certificate of Eligibility for the Exchange Visitor Status) to ensure all information on the document is correct. Your name should be as it appears in the machine-readable portion of your passport at the bottom of the biographical section. If any of the information is inaccurate, please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) immediately to request an updated Form DS-2019.

Purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Program

The primary purpose of the [BridgeUSA](#) (J-1 Exchange Visitor) program is to:

1. foster the exchange of ideas between Americans and foreign nationals;
2. increase mutual understanding;
3. encourage international teaching and research collaborations; and
4. cultivate connections between U.S. and foreign individuals.

For more information about the BridgeUSA program, access the [BridgeUSA website](#) and [participant brochures](#).

Next Steps After Receiving Your Form DS-2019

☐ **File the Form I-901, pay the associated SEVIS fee, and save the payment receipt.**

- Pay the J-1 SEVIS I-901 fee online at: [I-901 Fee](#)
- CU Boulder's program number is P-1-00066
- Additional information about the SEVIS fee is online at: [I-901 FAQ](#)

A general overview of the visa application process is included below.

- Canadian citizens do not require an Exchange Visitor (J-1) visa. Contact [ISSS](#) about what documents Canadian citizens need to enter the U.S.

Be sure to consult the detailed information on the following government websites:

- [U.S. Embassy and Consulate website](#) for where you will apply for your J-1 visa
- U.S. Department of State [Exchange Visitor Visa Overview](#) information

Visa Application Process

☐ **Complete the DS-160 Online [DS-160: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#) and print the confirmation page for you and any family members who will be accompanying you to the U.S.**

- Must be completed *at least two business days prior to* visa interview if one is required.
- [DS-160 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ISSS can provide limited advice about completing the DS-160. Contact the Embassy/Consulate where you will apply for your visa for assistance.

☐ **Pay the non-refundable visa application fee for you and any dependent family members.**

- The payment of the J-1 visa fee is valid for 1 year from the date of receipt.
- Read the U.S. Department of State's [Non-Immigrant Visa Application Fee website](#).

☐ **Schedule a visa interview at a [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#) for you and any dependent family member(s).**

- You can check the visa appointment waiting time online at [Visa Appointment Wait Times](#).

- ☐ **Gather the required documentation for the visa appointment for you, and any dependent family member(s).**
 - e.g., [valid passport](#); DS-2019 *printed and signed*; SEVIS I-901 receipt; Form DS-160 confirmation page; visa application fee payment receipt; CU-Boulder invitation letter; financial support documents
 - For J-1 Student Interns: Form DS-7002
 - Read the [U.S. Embassy/Consulate website](#) for additional requirements.
- ☐ **Prepare for the visa interview.**

Be ready to briefly state and document the following:

 1. purpose for traveling to the U.S. to participate in an Exchange Visitor Program (e.g., how you and CU Boulder will benefit from this collaboration);
 2. intent to depart the U.S. after your program; and
 3. ability to pay all expenses associated with your travel to and stay in the U.S.
- ☐ **Pay the [visa issuance \(reciprocity\) fee](#) for your country and visa type (J) if your visa is approved.**
- ☐ **Do NOT book airline tickets to the U.S. until your visa is approved and issued!**

Preparing for your Arrival to the U.S.

- ☐ **Enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the Form DS-2019.**
 - You cannot begin participating in your Exchange Visitor activities (e.g., research, teaching, etc.) until your program start date, but you may use this time leading up to your program start date to find housing and prepare for life in your new community.
 - Notify [ISSS](#) and your CU Boulder department if you cannot begin your Exchange Visitor program on the start date indicated in Item 3 of your DS-2019.
- ☐ **Obtain health, evacuation, and repatriation insurance that meets the U.S. Department of State requirements (below) for you and any dependent family member(s) accompanying you.**
 - You must maintain the required insurance for you and your dependents for the entire duration of your Exchange Visitor program.
 - Insurance is REQUIRED and must start *on or before* the DS-2019 program start date. If you will be arriving in the U.S. prior to your DS-2019 start date, it is highly recommended that you have insurance for the entire time that you will be present in the United States.
 - If you willfully fail to maintain the required insurance for yourself and your dependent family member(s) in the U.S., ISSS will have to terminate your Exchange Visitor visa status, and you will need to depart the U.S. immediately.

If you will be an employee of CU Boulder and will receive pay and benefits through the university:

- The insurance provided by CU Boulder does not include evacuation and repatriation coverage. You **MUST** purchase a separate plan with this coverage.
- There are two CU [medical insurance plans](#) you must choose from: **CU Health Plan Exclusive (HMO)** or the **CU Health Plan Kaiser (EPO)**. These are the **ONLY** two options for Exchange Visitors in J-1 status. The other options do NOT meet the requirements.
- Benefits take effect on the first day of the month. If you do not start your CU Boulder employment on the first day of the month, you must purchase sufficient insurance until the first day of the next month.

ISSS cannot activate your Exchange Visitor program in SEVIS, the federal government's immigration database, (i.e., make your visa status active) until you submit the *Insurance Compliance* e-form to ISSS in the Immigration Check-In.

- [U.S. Medical Insurance Requirements for International Students and Scholars](#)

Exchange Visitor Insurance Requirements for all J-1 Visa Holders and J-2 Dependent Family Member(s)

The J insurance must provide the following minimum coverage:

- Minimum medical benefit of \$100,000 per person per accident or illness;
- Deductible that does not exceed \$500 per accident or illness;
- Minimum repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- Minimum medical evacuation expenses in the amount of \$50,000; and
Co-insurance paid by Exchange Visitor not to exceed 25% of covered benefits per accident or illness.

Insurance policies:

- May require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions that is reasonable as determined by current industry standards; and
- Must not unreasonably exclude coverage for the perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which you participate.

Any policy, plan, or contract secured to fill the J insurance requirements must at minimum be:

- Underwritten by an insurance corporation having:
 - An A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor Claims-paying Ability rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above; or
 - A Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of "A-" or above; or
 - A Moody's Investor Services rating of "A3" or above; or
- Be backed by the full faith and credit of the exchange visitor's home country; or
- Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or
- Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Budget for your living expenses. Review [Exchange Visitor Funding Requirements](#) for estimated living expenses.

Obtain housing in Colorado.

- *Do this immediately.* Do not wait until you arrive in the U.S.!
- Review [CU Boulder Housing Options](#) resource online.
- ISSS is unable to arrange housing for you. Your CU Boulder host department may be able to assist you.

Review the U.S. government's arrival procedures.

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) [Travel Information for International Visitors](#)
- Carry these documents with you in your carry-on luggage for you and any dependent family member(s): DS-2019 *printed and signed*; [valid passport](#) (should have at least 6 months validity beyond the program end date listed on your Form DS-2019); J visa in passport (exception: Canadian citizens); SEVIS I-901 fee receipt; proof of funding as stated on your DS-2019; and CU Boulder department invitation letter.

Complete CU Boulder's Online Exchange Visitor Orientation.

- You must complete the *Exchange Visitor Scholar Orientation & Quiz* available in your [MyISSS portal](#) in the J-1 Scholar Services section. This orientation is only offered online. There is no in-person orientation.
- You may complete this orientation prior to your arrival to the U.S.
- It must be completed no later than 10 days after the program start date listed on your DS-2019.
- Use your [IdentiKey](#) and IdentiKey password to access the orientation in the [MyISSS portal](#).

- If you are unable to log into the Full Services MyISSS portal using your IdentiKey and IdentiKey password, try logging in to the Limited Services [MyISSS Portal](#).
- If you are unable to access the e-form, reply to this email to request assistance and include a description of the issue and screenshots of errors.

After Arriving in the U.S.

Print your electronic Form I-94 arrival record and those of any dependent family member(s) *after* you enter the U.S.

- Access your [most recent I-94](#) on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's website.
- Enter your information as it appears on your visa and/or the biographic page of your passport.
- Print the I-94 record for you and any dependent family member(s).
- If you are unable to retrieve your I-94(s), try the recommendations on the [Printing Your I-94 handout](#).

Check-in with your CU-Boulder hosting department and complete any required departmental procedures (e.g., trainings, Form I-9, benefit enrollment, etc.).

Submit your J-1 Scholar check-in documents to ISSS via the *Immigration Check-In e-forms available in your [MyISSS portal](#) in the J-1 Scholar Services section.*

- ISSS will email you additional information about the *Immigration Check-In* e-form closer to your expected program start date.
- The e-form must be completed *after* you arrive in the U.S. on your J-1 visa or after you transfer your Exchange Visitor program to CU Boulder.
- Complete the required *Immigration Check-In* e-forms within 48 hours of arriving in the U.S.
- Be prepared to enter your Colorado address and insurance information and to upload copies of your I-94 and J-1 visa.
- **ISSS cannot activate your visa status in SEVIS until you submit all the required check-in documents to us.**

Important Information Regarding Your Exchange Visitor Program

Maximum Program Participation for J-1 Exchange Visitor Categories

- Short-Term Scholar—6 continuous months; no extension beyond 6-month total program length.
- Specialist—1 continuous year; no extension beyond 1-year total program length.
- Research Scholar—5 continuous years; no extension beyond 5-year total program length.
- Professor—5 continuous years; no extension beyond 5-year total program length.

Options at End of Exchange Visitor Program

You may consider ending your Exchange Visitor program early, extending your program, transferring to another institution, or applying for another immigration status. Please work with your department and ISSS several weeks prior to the program end date listed on your DS-2019 to determine the best option for you.

30-Day Grace Period After Program Completion

- After you complete your Exchange Visitor program, you have 30 days from the program end date on your DS-2019 to prepare to leave the United States.
- Although you may not participate in your Exchange Visitor program activities (e.g., research, teaching, etc.) after the program end date, you may use this time to travel in the U.S.
- You may not leave and re-enter the U.S. on your J visa during the 30-day grace period.

212(e): Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Residency Requirement

Review the [ISSS 212e: Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement webpage](#), including how it impacts you, ways to fulfill the requirement, and how you may not be eligible for a J-1 extension and/or transfer once you receive a [waiver of the 212\(e\) requirement](#).

12-Month and 24-Month Bars: Restrictions for Exchange Visitors - Professor and Research Scholar Categories

Previous time spent in the U.S. in certain J-1 or J-2 visa categories affects when a prospective scholar is eligible for a new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor program. The specific J-1 or J-2 category previously used and the amount of time present in the U.S. in that category determine when a prospective scholar is eligible to begin a new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor program. Please review the table on the [ISSS 12 and 24-month Bars on Repeat Participation webpage](#) to determine how previous visits to the U.S. in J-1 or J-2 status may impact when you are eligible for a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program.