



◀ **REMEMBER** ▶
TO ENTER THE U.S. BRING:

- √ Passport/Visa
- √ DS-2019
- √ I-901 Fee Payment Receipt

OBTAINING A J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS

Enclosed is a SEVIS DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility (commonly called a DS-2019) issued by our office. Please begin the process to apply for your J-1 visa as soon as possible as it may take up to 3 months (to set up an appointment, go through the interview and receive your visa). If you do not wish to accept your placement, you must return the SEVIS DS-2019 to the UNCA Study Abroad office.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa: In order to participate in your exchange program, you must obtain a J-1 exchange visitor visa. This visa enables you to pursue studies in the United States. The J-1 visa indicates the last date for which entry to the United States will be allowed, as well as the number of entries which will be permitted.

Note of CAUTION: Since the events of September 11, 2001, visa applications are subject to a greater degree of scrutiny than in the past. This can result in significant delays for individuals intending to enroll in or continue studies in the U.S. Please provide yourself plenty of time to arrange your interview or other appointments at the U.S. Embassy

Up to date information can be found online from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement website:

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html#1.

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING YOUR J-1 VISA

First: You must ensure that your passport is valid for a period of six months *beyond* the end date listed on the SEVIS DS-2019. If it will expire prior to the end of this six-month period, you must first have the passport renewed.

Second: The official document you will need to apply for your J-1 visa is a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor status, a SEVIS generated DS-2019 issued by a Department of State designated sponsor. **Make an appointment with the U.S. consulate or embassy as soon as you receive this SEVIS DS-2019.** Some offices may have different procedures or forms you will need to submit, so ask your local U.S. consular officer what you need to do to get your J-1 visa. You will need to present the DS-2019 form, along with a valid passport, to a U.S. consular officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in your country. This should be done as early as possible and in person, as you will be asked about your purposes for coming to the United States.

As of October 26, 2008, all students who are issued a DS-2019 must pay a \$180 SEVIS fee **BEFORE** they go to the US embassy for their J-1 visa interview. The U.S. embassy will not process your J-1 visa or conduct the interview until this fee is paid.

The fastest way to pay the fee is through the Internet at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/students/student/help.htm> by using a credit card and completing the online Form I-901. This allows the student (or any other person paying the student's SEVIS fee) to print the SEVIS fee payment receipt from the Internet once the transaction is completed. The other alternative involves submitting a completed Form I-901 through the mail with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. Bank and payable in U.S. currency to the DHS address on the form. Students using this method must wait until they receive a receipt through the mail before they can go to the interview at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy (Express delivery service for the I-797 receipt may be requested at additional cost). Fees will not be payable at the consulate. Please note that DHS will not refund the SEVIS fee if J-1 applicants are not granted a visa or choose not to come to the U.S. after their visas are granted.

Fees must be paid at least three business days prior to the visa interview date for both electronic and mail-in submissions. Adequate processing time must be allowed for payments to be recorded in the SEVIS system prior to the scheduled visa interview. Because glitches can and do take place, we recommend allowing at least two week's time for electronic submissions and four weeks for the mail-in submissions prior to the interview date. Please remember that all students must bring the official paper receipt (I-797) or the Internet-generated receipt (I-901) to the visa interview as proof of payment, as well as have it with them upon arrival in the U.S.

Additional documents may be required to ensure that you have sufficient financial resources and that you do not intend to remain in the U.S. beyond the end of your exchange period. Once all forms are properly submitted and your interview is complete, the consular officer will issue the visa by stamping your passport. The SEVIS DS-2019 form will then be returned to you by the consular officer.

Please note, the amount listed under Program Sponsor Section 5, (Question A) is the estimated value of the benefits (tuition, room and board) that you will receive at your host institution; it is not a stipend amount which will be made available to you. You should use the amount listed under Personal Funds (Question G), along with any additional information listed in our information sheet, to estimate the amount of money that will be required for personal expenses.

Reminder: You should only enter the United States on a J-1 exchange-visitor visa using the SEVIS DS-2019 issued by UNCA. Do *not* enter as a tourist (with a B-2 visa or no visa), and F-1 student, or as a J-1 exchange visitor under another program, such as a *camp counselor or summer, work and travel program*. You will not be allowed to change your status to that of an exchange visitor under UNCA's sponsorship. If you enter the U.S. on a visa other than UNCA you will be forced to return to your country of origin to complete the process.

Third: AS YOU ARRIVE AT THE PORT OF ENTRY, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available for presentation: your passport; DS-2019, Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94); and Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059). The form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of the program. All visitors entering the United States must state their reason for wishing to enter the country. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Patrol Officer that you will be an exchange visitor. Be prepared to include the name and address of the school program where you will enroll/participate. Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will:

- Stamp your SEVIS form for duration of status ("D/S") for J visa holders with the date and port of entry
- Stamp the Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94) and staple it in the passport

Your passport will be returned to you with the DS-2019. Usually the period of stay will be marked "D/S" or "Duration of Status". This means that you are allowed to remain in the United States until the end date listed on the DS-2019. Please contact the Study Abroad office if your I-94 record indicates any visa status other than J-1. Keep your DS-2019 form in your passport at all times. Canadian participants apply for J-1 status at the port of entry of the United States, or at the airport prior to departure, by presenting the SEVIS DS-2019(for more information go to www.amcits.com/canadians.asp).

EXTENDING YOUR J-1 VISA STATUS

All extension, carry-over and continuing students have been entered into SEVIS. If you are staying in the U.S. for the remainder of your program, you do not need to take any further steps to finalize the extension of your program. However, **if you wish to travel outside the U.S. AND the visa stamp in your passport has expired you must present the extended SEVIS DS-2019 along with your valid passport to a U.S. embassy or consulate to extend your J-1 visa before reentering the U.S.** Keep in mind that some consuls do not accept visa applications from third country nationals. Before you leave the U.S. to a third country, be sure you contact the embassy or consulate to verify that you will be able to obtain an extension visa abroad, as well as make an appointment.

Exchange visitors may need to allow 2-3 weeks for usual processing and security clearance. When exchange visitors reenter the U.S. and present their passport, entry visa and the SEVIS DS-2019. The immigration inspector will issue a

new I-94 card. Please note that students may be subject to CIS Special Registration (see next page for more information) upon their return.

Additional Financial Obligations: Please be advised that you are responsible for your own expenses during the period of extension while classes are not in session. This would include the summer vacation period and the December-January period when classes are not in session.

As an exchange visitor, you must have health insurance. If you do not have health insurance from your home school, you may enroll in UNCA's health insurance policy.

SEVIS DATABASE AND LEGAL STATUS UNDER THE J-1VISA

What is SEVIS? SEVIS is an internet-based method for keeping track of international students and scholars as well as their dependents in the United States, created by the Department of Homeland Security. All U.S. colleges and universities have been required to use SEVIS since January 30, 2003 and to issue DS-2019s to J-1 students.

As a requirement of SEVIS, UNCA must also report certain personal, academic, employment-related data on international students and scholars to ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement). UNCA will need to report information on its sponsoring students electronically via the web to ICE.

UNCA will be required to report the following in SEVIS:

- Student's and dependents' names and current US Address
- Student's enrollment at the institution
- Start date of student's next term
- Student's failure to enroll
- Termination of enrollment and reason for termination
- Dropping below a full course of study without prior authorization by the Responsible Officer (UNCA)
- Sources of funding
- Student's failure to maintain status or complete program
- Change of student's or dependent's legal name or address
- If the student graduates before the program end date listed on the form DS-2019
- Any change in student's major or program, or transfer to another university
- Any disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of the student being convicted of a crime

Any change to the information above must be reported to UNCA Study Abroad office immediately. UNCA will have 21 days to report any changes in this information to ICE and the State Department via SEVIS.

How will this affect you? Initially, SEVIS requires you to become better informed of your J visa rights and responsibilities. Once SEVIS is in effect, a violation of any visa-related regulation (intentionally or unintentionally) must be reported to ICE and the State Department. Consequently, a violation could result in the loss of your J-1 visa status. And, regretfully, loss of your visa status ultimately could lead to deportation from the U.S. Failure to report a visa violation could result in a cancellation of our J-1 sponsorship. (Source: Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 95, issued May 16, 2002).

Special Registration: Effective September 11, 2002, the Department of Homeland Security implemented a rule imposing special registration requirements for persons from certain designated countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Since then, Special Registration has grown to more than 150 countries including Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Special Registration is part of the second phase of the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), being implemented by the INS to fulfill a Congressional mandate to implement a comprehensive entry-exit program by 2005.

The rule imposes new fingerprinting, photographing, and periodic reporting requirements for certain non-immigrants (which may include persons holding H-1B, L-1, O-1, F-1, J-1, and other nonimmigrant classifications). For more detailed information on how to comply with the special registration, please access the ICE website at <http://www.ice.gov>.

Background check and clearance – 26 Countries: Current and new students and scholars, who are male visa applicants between the ages of 16 and 45 and are citizens of the following countries, are subject to additional background checks:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, The United Arab emirates, and Yemen. Such applicants for visas are subject to an additional 20 business-day waiting period for visas in addition to the normal processing time.

Changes in visas application for third country nationals: Because of the mandatory 20-day waiting period being enforced by the Department of State, students from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen are not allowed to apply for a visa in Canada, Mexico, or the contiguous islands (Caribbean).

New nonimmigrant visa applicant forms: The Department of State has redesigned the standard form **DS-156** and has added two new forms: **DS-157** is now required to be completed by male nonimmigrant visa applicants between the ages of 16 and 45 years and **DS-158** is to be completed by all visa applicants.

For additional information on Department of State forms access the Department of State Visa Services Web site, at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.