

# Checklist for Hosting a J-1 Exchange Visitor

International Students and Scholar Services

<https://global.upenn.edu/isss/j1scholar>

*This checklist is intended to provide Penn schools and departments guidance for hosting a visiting scholar. It should be used to assist with every step of the invitation process, departmental onboarding, orientation to the university, and meeting all federal regulations. Updates to this document will be made on an annual basis or in the event of significant changes to policies.*

## 1. Before issuing an invitation (as soon as possible but at least 6 weeks before the program start date), verify the following:

- Length of Stay & Intended Activities:** This affects the Exchange Visitor category (e.g., short-term scholar, professor, research scholar, J-1 Student Intern) and eligibility for extensions.
- Selection:** Departments and Schools are encouraged to develop a consistent internal protocol with regard to the selection of incoming J-1 Exchange Visitors. Procedures should be put in place to determine what constitutes an invitation, what the minimum qualifications will be, services provided to the visitor, and how long appointments will last.
- Visitor Responsibilities:** Ascertain that the Exchange Visitor understands his or her responsibilities and potential obligations to pay taxes, insurance, or other fees, which vary widely from department to department. Except under the limited conditions described [here](#), Scholars may only work for Penn at the location indicated in their application.
- Funding:** The minimum funding required to host a J-1 Exchange Visitor is \$34,068 per year or \$2,839 per month, in addition to any charges imposed on them by Penn. Postdocs should be funded according to the guidelines found at: <https://postdocs.upenn.edu/resource/stipend-level/>  
An additional \$6,000 per year will be required for a dependent spouse and \$4,000 per year will be required for each dependent child. Please note whether funding source will be Penn, the home institution, personal funds, government funds, etc.
- Dependents:** If dependents will accompany the J-1 visitor, confirm with the Exchange Visitor that all J-1 dependents are subject to the same regulations, including J-2 employment guidelines and possible bars (see below).
- Do any of the bars apply:** There are certain circumstances that prevent international visitors from applying for a J1 Exchange Visitor visa. For example, if they have recently participated in another J-1 program, they may not be able to do so again until a designated amount of time has passed. In addition, Exchange visitors may be subject to certain bars on repeat participation or home residency requirements. See <https://global.upenn.edu/isss/j1scholar> and contact an ISSS advisor if you have any questions.

## 2. Before completing the eform, make sure to have:

- Letter of Invitation** from Penn department that provides start and end date, position title, funding amount and source.
- Resume/CV** of J-1 Exchange Visitor.
- Certification of English Language Proficiency:** J-1 Exchange Visitors are required to demonstrate proficiency in English, which may be done by:
  - Acceptable scores on recognized [standardized English language test](#) (TOEFL, ACTFL OPI, etc.).
  - Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) conducted by [ELP](#).

- Export Control/ Restricted Party Screening:** Penn utilizes Visual Compliance for restricted party screening. Anyone with a upenn.edu email address can register.
  - If you have not personally screened the scholar, please do so using visual compliance. This applies even if the scholar has been at Penn and is seeking an extension. **You must confirm that the scholar has been screened on the ISSS eform.**
  - If you have questions directly related to export control or restricted part screening, please email [expctrl@lists.upenn.edu](mailto:expctrl@lists.upenn.edu)
- Financial Documentation:** If the J-1 Exchange Visitor is supported by a source other than Penn, provide documentation of the source and amount of the funds.
- Passport bio page** of the J-1 Exchange Visitor and all dependents who will accompany the J-1 Exchange Visitor.
- Department Charge:** \$300 Processing Fee; \$650 for “rush fee” for cases with a start date less than 30 days from the date of submission.
- Is it timely submitted?** If the start date is within 6 weeks from the time the complete application is submitted to ISSS, the Exchange Visitor might not be able to begin on time. iPenn will not accept requests

**3. Once the DS-2019 has been generated** (within 3 weeks of submitting the application to ISSS; missing documents may increase DS-2019 processing times.)

An email will be sent to the J-1 Exchange Visitor, which includes the following:

- Signed DS-2019 forms for J-1 Exchange Visitor and all accompanying dependents.
- Instructions from Penn ISSS on how to apply for a visa at the consulate (for initial J-1 applicants only), and maintaining J-1 status.

**4. Fulfill Host Department Obligations of Hosting a J-1 Exchange Visitor:**

**Pre-Arrival**

- Confirm Arrival Date/Time – VERY IMPORTANT:** The J-1 Exchange Visitor must arrive within 14 days (before or after) of the start date listed on the DS-2019 form. Please inform ISSS if the J-1 Exchange Visitor will arrive more than 15 days after the requested start date. Additional documentation may be required by the US government for late arrivals based on the following:
  - Arriving 15 to 21 days after start date: The Penn department must complete an ISSS Late Arrival Form.
  - Arrival beyond 21 days: If more than 21 days late, a new offer letter must be issued, Late Arrival Form must be submitted to ISSS, plus a new DS-2019 must be issued **Failure to arrive within the timeline described above may result in a scholar's SEVIS program termination or designation as a “no-show”**
- Pre-Arrival Communications:** Communicate with J-1 Exchange Visitor and answer pre-arrival questions they may have about Penn, Philadelphia, the US, etc. Send any department contact lists, or other onboarding information via mail or email.
- Health Insurance:** In accordance with US government regulations, the J-1 Exchange Visitor **must** have sufficient health insurance for him/herself and all dependents. This insurance **must meet the mandatory State Department requirements**. Verify that the J-1 Exchange Visitor has the required medical insurance effective upon or within one day of arrival. For **non-post-doctoral** J-1 Exchange Visitors, the Insurance requirement can be met in one of three ways:
  - The J-1 Exchange Visitor enrolls in one of the University's pre-approved insurance plans through [Gallagher](#)
  - The J-1 Exchange Visitor already has, or purchases, an individual insurance plan, which must be [evaluated and approved by Gallagher](#) as meeting the US government requirements.

*J-1 Exchange Visitors with a Postdoctoral Appointment* should not purchase the plans referenced above, but instead consult the [Penn Post Doc Health Insurance Plan](#). Penn's postdoctoral researcher insurance plan meets the State Department required health insurance coverage requirement for both J-1 scholars and their enrolled J-2 dependents.

Please note that some Visiting Scholars who are considered University employees may be offered insurance as part of their benefits package. This insurance alone does NOT meet the Department of State requirements. Scholars who elect to accept this insurance will also need to purchase a separate rider to cover the repatriation and evacuation obligations of the Department of State. [International SOS](#) and other insurance companies provide such riders for purchase.

*The J-1 Scholar exchange visitor should make the medical insurance premium payments directly to Gallagher. The Penn department can then reimburse the individual via Penn Marketplace. These medical insurance premium payments must be processed through the marketplace because these payments are taxable benefits to the recipient (J-1 Scholar). Penn's purchasing card (Pcard) is NOT appropriate for transactions that are taxable benefits to the recipient.*

## 5. Arrival & Beyond - Plans for logistical support, orientation, and supervision

- Work Conditions:** Determine resources to be provided to the J-1 Exchange Visitor. Consider work space/office, telephone, computer, email, database, listserv and library access, [Pennkey](#), [Penn Card](#), etc.
- ISSS Orientation:** J-1 Exchange Visitors should complete the J-1 Scholar Arrival eform under the Arrival Information heading in iPenn, and watch the online J-1 Orientation available in iPenn before submitting the arrival form and uploading copies of their documents to the iPenn portal.
- School/Departmental Onboarding:** Please refer to Penn's [HR Manager's Toolkit](#) for general onboarding procedures. Also, consult your school/center HR for any appointment requirements specific to your School, department or lab. Additional resources are available [below](#).
  - **Job Class Codes & Role Descriptions:**  
J-1 Visiting Scholars may **not** be categorized as:
    - TA, GA, RA, or any kind of "student worker".
    - Staff or administrative position
    - Tenure track or other indefinitely renewable faculty appointment
- Departmental Orientation:** Provide J-1 Exchange Visitors and dependents with orientation to the department, staff, work & expected outcomes, work ethics & timelines, facilities, equipment (phones, computers, lab equipment), etc. Provide phone lists and email lists. Also provide emergency contacts and procedures and provide a greater orientation to Penn systems, facilities and opportunities for the J-1 Exchange Visitor and dependents within the greater community.
- Supervision:** Who will be in charge? Establish a point person or persons as a resource for the J-1 Exchange Visitor who will orient new arrivals and answer practical questions about the Department, School or University. Additional people should be designated to assist with handling crises and in liaising with ISSS as needed.
- Cultural Exchange:** Provide opportunities for J-1 Exchange Visitor to network with faculty and other scholars and to integrate effectively into the life of the Department, School and University.
- Monitor Activities and Program Dates:** Keep abreast of the J-1 Exchange Visitor's adjustment and activities to ensure educational and cultural exchange program goals are being met. Check in regularly

and make time for the J-1 Exchange Visitor to ask questions or raise concerns. Department representatives should take note of the end date on the J-1 Exchange Visitors DS-2019 and take care to submit any extensions in a timely manner via eform and notify ISSS via email of any early departures.

- Respond to ISSS requests for J-1 Scholar Verification.** Verifications must be performed within 30 days of the J-1 Scholars' arrival, and every 6 months thereafter. They can be accessed via the department representative's "Your iPenn Case List" in iPenn or via the reminders sent from ISSS to the administrator associated with the J-1 Scholar.
- Departure Report:** If departing their program early, be sure to notify ISSS of the J-1 Exchange Visitor's departure.

## 6. Administrative Resources

Penn Departments	Resources
Benefits	<a href="https://www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/benefits">https://www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/benefits</a>
Financial Training Department	<a href="#">Payroll/PennWorks Classes</a>
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Manager's Toolkit</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">New Hire Checklist</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Onboarding Staff</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Onboarding Checklist (domestic)</a></li> </ul>
International Student & Scholar Services: Insurance Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pre-selected Garnett-Powers Scholar Plan Portal</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Waive out of Garnett-Powers Scholar Plan</a> (evidence of comparable or better insurance coverage)</li> <li>• <a href="#">ISOS</a> evacuation and repatriation rider options Use Penn's member ID (11BSGC000012) for discounted rates</li> </ul>
Payroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Payroll Manual</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Penn Works</a></li> </ul>
Penn Postdoctoral Trainee Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Policy for Postdoctoral Trainees at Penn</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy for the Appointment of Foreign Nationals Under Postdoctoral Trainee Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs</a></li> </ul>
Tax Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Payroll Tax</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Foreign Nationals</a></li> </ul>