



Welcome to the University of Pennsylvania from International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)!

PURPOSE OF THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

The J-1 exchange visitor visa is for educational and cultural exchange programs designated by the Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Its mission, to increase mutual understanding between Americans and people of other countries, remains vital to building people-to-people connections around the world. All exchange visitors are expected to return to their home country upon completion of their program to share their exchange experiences with their fellow countrymen.

ACTION TO TAKE NOW

1. Print and review the attached Form(s) DS-2019 for yourself and any accompanying J-2 dependents.

- Report any errors to your host department who will request updates from ISSS.
- SEVIS number (N000xxxxxxx), is located in the top right corner.
- Read terms of sponsorship on page 2 and sign bottom of page 1.

2. Apply for a J Visa *

- Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee** (\$220) at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>
- Schedule a visa appointment and pay the visa application fee at a US Consulate <https://www.usembassy.gov/> or via USTRavelDocs <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/>
- The application/visa interview will require your DS-2019 form, copy of I-901 receipt and visa fee. Consult the Consulate for further items required for the application and/or interview.

***Citizens of Canada and Bermuda** are not required to obtain a U.S. visa; however, they must pay the SEVIS fee to enter the U.S.

**** J-2 Dependents** do not need to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee but must pay a visa application fee.

Please note:

If you are already in the U.S. and are eligible and plan to change your non-immigrant status from within the U.S., you should consult with an ISSS advisor. This is a lengthy process that could impact your J-1 program start date. Visit www.uscis.gov for information on the change of status process and current U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services processing times.

TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

- Review the *Prepare for Penn* link. <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/prepare#scholars>
- Do not enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date on Form DS-2019.
- Keep your immigration documents such as your passport and DS-2019 form on your person during travel. Do NOT pack them in your luggage as you will need to present them to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officers at the U.S. port-of-entry.

ARRIVAL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

- On-line Check in with ISSS.
 - Complete the J-1 Scholar Orientation and arrival form at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/ipenn>
 - Follow the instructions to upload:
 - Form I-94 (arrival/departure record) www.cbp.gov/I94
 - Copy of your J-1 visa as issued by the US Consulate (not applicable to Canadian citizens)
 - Once ISSS validates your arrival in SEVIS, a new DS-2019 with a valid travel signature will be printed. You will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule an appointment to pick up the travel validated DS-2019 form.
- Social Security Numbers: You may request a SSN letter from ISSS at the time you submit your arrival information. Further information is available at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/ssn>

MAINTENANCE OF J-1 STATUS WHILE IN THE U.S.

- **Required documents:** 1) Form DS-2019 issued by the University of Pennsylvania with future end date, 2) Form I-94 card marked *J-1, D/S*, 3) unexpired passport.
- **Program activity:** Engage only in activities for which you have been granted J-1 sponsorship as indicated on your Form DS-2019 or which have otherwise been approved by ISSS.
- **Changes in terms and conditions of your J-1 program:** Any changes in the terms and conditions of your J-1 program, should be reviewed, and approved by ISSS in advance.
- **Mandatory address reporting:** Always maintain current and active contact information in your iPenn account, including 1) a U.S. residential address, 2) an active email address and 3) a U.S. telephone number.
- **Health Insurance**

All J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents are required to purchase and maintain health insurance that meets the J-1 Federal Regulations. Further information as to the required levels of insurance is available at

<https://global.upenn.edu/iss/j1scholar> and <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/eligibility-and-fees/>

- J-1 Post Docs should consult the following website regarding the Post Doc insurance plan: <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay/postdoctoral-researchers-and-fellows>
- All other J-1 exchange visitors (i.e. Visiting Scholar, Visiting Professor, Visiting Student, etc.) must purchase or waive out of insurance coverage at <https://clients.garnett-powers.com/vs/upenn/>

GETTING SETTLED IN PHILADELPHIA

➤ **Housing**

Costs, locations and housing options vary throughout the University of Pennsylvania campus and the city of Philadelphia. Further information is available at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/housing> and <https://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/offcampusservices/>

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➤ Driver's Licenses

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) requires a J-1 exchange visitor's DS-2019 be valid for one year or more to be eligible for a Pennsylvania ID card or Driver's License. ISSS recommends obtaining a PA driver's license within your first month of arrival. <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/penndot>

➤ Banking

Information on opening a bank account and other financial services is available at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/finances>

➤ Transportation See <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/transportation>

J-1 FEDERAL REGULATIONS

- **TRAVEL:** Once you have arrived in the United States and have subsequent travel plans, make sure you have: a valid passport; a valid J-1 entry visa (except Canadian/Bermuda citizens who are visa exempt); an original Form DS-2019 signed **for travel** by an advisor at ISSS within the last twelve months. Further information is available at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/travel>
- **ABSENCE FROM UNITED STATES:** You are required to notify ISSS if you plan to be absent from the United States for 30 days or longer. Even if out of the US, the overall program activity must continue. You must submit a Notice of Absence by completing the *J-1 Scholar Notification of Absence from the US* eform under the J-1/J-2 Reporting header in [iPenn](#). **NOTE:** J-1 exchange visitors may not take a leave from their Penn program beyond 30 days. To do so is considered a discontinuation of your J-1 program and grounds for ISSS to end your J-1 sponsorship.
- **OCCASIONAL LECTURES/CONSULTATIONS:** If you plan to engage in occasional lectures or consultations you must submit a request to ISSS through iPenn at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled activity and provide the following completed and fully signed form available on the ISSS website <https://global.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/iss/J-1-Occasional-Lectures-or-Consultations.pdf> **ISSS authorization must be obtained prior to undertaking any occasional lectures or consultations.**
- **J-1 TRANSFER:** It is usually possible to transfer your J-1 sponsorship to a new institution, provided that you have been a J-1 scholar for less than the maximum time allowed for your category, and you will be continuing your research in the same field with the same program objectives.
- **CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION:** Per J-1 Federal Regulations, if you change your U.S. residential address, email address and/or U.S. phone number, you must report the change to ISSS within 10 days of the change. Follow the procedures listed at <http://global.upenn.edu/iss/address>
- **CHANGE IN J-1 ACTIVITY:** Any changes in terms and conditions of your J-1 activity at Penn must be reviewed and approved by ISSS in advance. If your funding source changes, inform ISSS immediately for review. Some minor changes might be approved; however, J-1 scholars are not allowed to change their J-1 program objectives, e.g. the subject / field code in Box 4 of your DS-2019 form.
- **EFFECT OF WAIVER OF 212 (E):** If you are subject to the two-year home residency, 212 (e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and receive a waiver recommendation of that obligation from the U.S. Department of State you are ineligible to extend or renew your J-1 sponsorship beyond your current program end date indicated on your DS-2019 form.

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- **BARS/LIMITATIONS FOR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS:** Once you complete your J-1 program as a J-1 *Research Scholar*, you will be ineligible to participate in an exchange program as a J-1 *Research Scholar* or *Professor* for at least 24 months. J-1 exchange visitors in categories other than Research Scholar are restricted to return to the US in the Research Category for 12 months. Further information is available at <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/j1scholar>
- **J-1 SHORT TERM SCHOLARS:** Per J-1 Federal Regulations, the maximum duration of stay as a Short-Term Scholar is 6 months. A short-term scholar may extend his or her stay up to the six-month maximum or transfer to another program within that period, but extensions beyond 6 months are not permitted.
- **30-DAY GRACE PERIOD:** US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allows for a 30-day grace period after the end date of your DS-2019 or program end date, whichever comes first, to depart the U.S. During this 30-day period, you may settle your affairs and prepare to return to your home country. You may no longer continue or complete exchange visitor activities, nor are you allowed to work.
- **EXTENSION OF SPONSORSHIP:** If you plan to stay longer in the U.S. to continue your J-1 stay at Penn beyond the expiration date on your current DS-2019, please ask your department to prepare and send ISSS a J-1 DS-2019 extension request to cover the renewed **appointment at least 45 days before your current DS-2019 expires**. We will prepare a new DS-2019 with your new expiration date, not exceeding the maximum stay allowed for your J-1 category.
 - *NOTE: Extension of your DS-2019 does not extend the U.S. entry visa in your passport. If you plan to travel, you must extend an expired entry visa by visiting a U.S. consulate when abroad. If you do not plan to travel, your visa is allowed to expire. The only time an individual requires a valid J visa is if they are physically outside of the US and wish to reenter the US in J visa status.*

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)** <https://global.upenn.edu/iss>
- **Life at Penn:** <https://www.upenn.edu/life-at-penn>
- **Family Center at Penn:** <https://familycenter.upenn.edu/>
- **Penn Off-Campus Services:** <https://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/offcampusservices/>
- **Health Insurance: Garnett-Powers Insurance Portal:** <https://clients.garnett-powers.com/vs/upenn/>

IMMIGRATION

- J-1 Exchange Visitor Program/Bridges USA <https://j1visa.state.gov/>
- U.S. Visas: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>
- U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs <https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau/organizational-structure/office-private-sector-exchange>
- US Department of State Welcome Brochure: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Brochure-The-Exchange-Visitor-Program.pdf>

WORKER'S INFORMATION

- Wilberforce Pamphlet: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/LegalRightsandProtections/Wilberforce/Wilberforce-ENG-100116.pdf>
- PA Workers' Compensation: <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Compensation/WC/claims/wcais/Pages/default.aspx>