



PRE AND POST  
ARRIVAL GUIDE FOR

# J-1 SCHOLARS AND STUDENT INTERNS

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



• Welcome Message	1
• Overview	2
▪ AU J-1 Categories	2
▪ Limitations of J-1 Categories	3
▪ Cultural Goals and Components of Program	4
• Pre-Arrival Information	5
▪ SEVIS Fee/Visa Application	5
▪ Travel to U.S.	6
▪ Health Insurance	7
▪ Banking/Living Expenses	8
▪ Housing	9
▪ Transportation and Arrival	9
▪ Maintaining J-1 Status	9
▪ Employment Regulations, Rights, and Laws	10
• Post-Arrival Information	12
▪ Orientation/Reporting Requirements	12
▪ Restrictions/Obligations of J-1 Status	13
▪ Health Insurance	14
▪ Work Regulations and Rights	15
▪ Taxes	16
▪ Social Security Number	16
▪ Limitations on Return in J-1 Status	17



# WELCOME MESSAGE

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Thank you for your interest in American University (AU)! This guide contains pre-arrival and post-arrival information compiled by the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) Office to assist you with your preparation, travel, and arrival to Washington, DC. Additional logistical and immigration information is available on our website at:

<https://www.american.edu/student-affairs/iss/>



# OVERVIEW

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## AU J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR CATEGORIES

AU is authorized by the U.S. Department of State to bring J-1 Exchange Visitors in the following six categories: Professor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, Student, and Student Intern. The following rules governing these categories should be given consideration prior to participation:

**Professor** or **Research Scholar**: Minimum of a Bachelor's degree with appropriate experience in the field is required. Minimum duration is 3 weeks, maximum is 5 years.

**Limitations**: If you have previously been in the U.S. in J-1 or J-2 status for 6 months or more, you cannot begin a new exchange visitor program as a Professor or Research Scholar until 12 months after the end date (or completion date) of the previous J program (see "12-month bar" under "limitations" below). Additionally, if you have been in the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for any amount of time, and that program has ended, you may not return to the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for 24 months after end date or completion date of the previous program (see "24-month bar on repeat participation" under "limitations" below).

**Short-Term Scholar**: A professor, research scholar, or someone with similar education or accomplishments, who travels to the U.S. to lecture, observe, consult, train, or demonstrate special skills. Minimum duration is 1 day, maximum is 6 months. No extension or change of category is possible.

**Specialist**: Specialists are experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skills who provide opportunities to increase the exchange of ideas with American counterparts, outside the categories of professor, research scholar, short-term scholar, and physician. Minimum duration is 3 weeks, maximum is 1 year.

**Student**: For full course of study at an accredited institution. Duration of stay is limited to the length of the program of study.

**Student Intern**: University/college students at foreign universities who intern with an AU faculty-in-residence to fulfill a requirement of their home university.



## LIMITATIONS OF J-1 VISA CATEGORIES

### **12-month bar on beginning new program as Professor or Research Scholar:**

If you were physically present in the U.S. in J-1 or J-2 status for 6 months or more, you cannot begin a new exchange visitor program as a Professor or Research Scholar until 12 months after the end date (or completion date) of the previous J program.

#### Exceptions:

- J-1 Transfers: The 12-month bar is not applicable to those who will begin a program by transferring to a new program sponsor.
- Presence in J status of less than 6 months: Anyone whose prior physical presence in J status was of less than six months duration is exempt from the 12-month bar.
- Presence in J status as a Short-Term Scholar: No time spent as a Short-Term Scholar is counted as physical presence that triggers the 12-month bar under 22.C.F.R. 62.21.

### **24-month bar on repeat participation as a Professor or Research Scholar:**

If you entered the United States under the Exchange Visitor Program as a Professor or Research Scholar, or you acquired such status while in the United States, and you have completed your J-1 program, you are not eligible for repeat participation as a Professor or Research Scholar for a period of two years following the end date of your program as identified in SEVIS.

### **Two-year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement:**

Individuals in J-1 and J-2 status are subject to the two-year home residence requirement, also known as 212(e), if any of the following apply:

- Participation in the exchange program is financed, directly or indirectly, by the U.S. government or a foreign government.
- The skills the Exchange Visitor is coming to develop or exercise are in a field which the Exchange Visitor's home government requested be included on the State Department's skills list (skills in short supply in the home country); the list is available online at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>
- The Exchange Visitor comes to the United States to receive graduate medical education or training.

Those who are subject to 212(e) must return to their home country for two years before they are eligible for immigrant-intent U.S. visa categories (H-1B temporary worker, L-1 intra-company transfer, and Legal Permanent Resident status). They are also prohibited from requesting a change in immigration status from within the United States. At the time of visa issuance, the Consular Officer will indicate whether or not a prospective J-1 or J-2 is subject to this requirement, both on the DS-2019 Form and on the visa stamp. More details on 212(e) and application for waiver can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor.html>



## CULTURAL GOALS AND COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of State has designed the J-1 exchange visitor program with the purpose of providing citizens of other countries with opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experiences. Programs are expected to promote exposure and interchange between exchange visitors and Americans so as to increase their mutual understanding of each other's society, culture, and institutions. In addition to the academic or professional goals of your program, you will be expected to take advantage of opportunities for cultural exchange within the university and the wider community.





# PRE-ARRIVAL



Please work with the J-1 Coordinator in the Dean's office of the American University school or college that interests you. You will provide the J-1 Coordinator with your application form, financial documents, CV, proof of English proficiency, and other required documents. Once the documents have been reviewed, International Student & Scholar Services will issue a DS-2019 form, which will be available for download in [iEagle](#), AU's international student and scholar portal. You will also be provided with a letter from the Dean of Academic Affairs and other paperwork detailing your expected program activities while at American University, as well as employment information if applicable.

## SEVIS FEE

After downloading the DS-2019 Form, you will need to pay a one-time SEVIS fee required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fund the operation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The SEVIS fee is in addition to the visa application fee. The SEVIS fee should be paid directly to DHS at least 3 business days prior to your visa interview. J-2 dependents are not subject to the SEVIS fee.

To pay the SEVIS fee, visit [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com) and complete Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your DS-2019 form, which should match the machine readable zone of your passport. Your SEVIS Identification Number can be found at the top right corner of your DS-2019 Form. It starts with an "N," followed by a 10-digit number. The Program Number can be found in Box 2.

- Submit your payment electronically via credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express) OR
- Mail the I-901 to the DHS address on the form with the SEVIS fee paid by check, money order, or foreign draft drawn on a financial institution in the United States and payable in U.S. dollars.

Another person may make the payment on your behalf. We recommend paying online and printing your receipt for inclusion with your visa application. When you travel to the U.S., you should carry the I-901 payment receipt with your DS-2019 Form to show to the immigration officials at the port of entry.



## VISA APPLICATION

Following payment of the SEVIS fee, you will need to schedule an appointment at the U.S. Consulate for a visa interview. You must provide the following documents to the U.S. Consulate: DS-2019 Form (student interns must also bring the DS-7002), I-901 SEVIS fee payment receipt, passport, and any correspondence received from AU regarding your stay. If you will not be financially supported by AU or if AU is only providing a portion of your financial support, you must be prepared to show the Visa Officer at the U.S. Consulate proof of your financial support in the form of original documents.

If your family members will be arriving with you, they should apply for their J-2 visas at the same time. If AU has not already issued separate DS-2019 Forms for them, please notify your departmental J-1 Coordinator as soon as possible, as your dependents must have their own DS-2019 Forms. If your dependents will arrive after you, please contact ISSS ([JIEV@american.edu](mailto:JIEV@american.edu)) to discuss having their DS-2019s issued after you arrive.

Please contact the U.S. Consulate nearest to you for information regarding the visa application procedures and fees for that post (<https://www.usembassy.gov/>). Only citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not require a J-1 visa to enter the U.S. in J-1 status and can enter the US with a valid DS-2019 form (see <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html>).

Intent to Return Home: You will not be given a J-1 visa unless you can demonstrate to the U.S. Consular Officer that you intend to return to your country of citizenship or legal permanent residence after you have completed your J-1 program. Any statements made during the visa interview with the American Consul which cast doubt on your intentions of returning home may result in the denial of the visa. Although some consulates permit applications from third party nationals, it may be difficult to prove your non-immigrant intent if you do not apply for a visa in your home country.

## TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

You may enter the United States up to 30 days prior to the start date on your DS-2019 Form. You may not enter the United States after that start date. At the U.S. port of entry, you will be asked to present your DS-2019 Form, passport, SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt, and visa to the U.S. Immigration Inspector. Carry these documents in your carry-on bag and not in your checked luggage. Be sure to examine the stamp in your passport before leaving the Immigration Inspector's desk to verify that it has been marked "J-1" and "D/S." These markings indicate that you have entered in J-1 immigration status (or J-2 immigration status for your accompanying dependents) for the duration of your status ("D/S"). If the immigration officer does not stamp your passport, you may check your [electronic I-94](#), which is your official entry record to the U.S., to make sure it is marked J-1 and D/S. You will also be asked to provide a copy of your I-94 to ISSS during immigration reporting in your early days after arrival at AU.



In addition to your immigration-related documents, we also advise that you bring certified copies of the following documents with you to the U.S.:

- Birth certificates for yourself and each member of your family if they are accompanying you
- Marriage certificate, if you are married and your spouse is accompanying you
- Copies of diplomas and/or professional licenses with English translations
- Copies of vaccination records for yourself and your family, especially for any children who will attend school, if applicable
- Another form of identification other than your passport (If you plan to apply for a Social Security Number, please note that a passport that is less than one year old will not be accepted. If you have a new passport, you will be required to provide a second source of identification (original, not a copy) such as an identification card issued in your home country or an old passport.)

## HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

Medical expenses in the United States can be extremely costly. As an exchange visitor on a J-1 visa, you (and your dependents) are required to have health insurance during the entire J-1 program, as indicated by the dates on your DS-2019. Health insurance coverage must meet the State Department's J-1 visa insurance requirements (22 CFR 62.14). Be sure to include the costs of this insurance in your budget calculations. You will be required to show proof of insurance when you arrive at the university. We recommend that you purchase insurance that covers you starting on the day that you arrive in the United States. Failure to maintain health insurance will prevent the issuance of any documents for travel, extensions, or transfer of your J-1 status. Please visit the ISSS website at the link below for information about J-1 and J-2 insurance requirements and a list of insurance companies: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/Incoming-Scholars-and-Student-Interns.cfm>.

### Insurance from Home Country:

You may use insurance coverage from your home country only if it meets all of the requirements of the U.S. Department of State. Be sure that the insurance company has a U.S. contact and telephone number and can provide you with the financial rating information required by the Department of State. You should have written documentation in English for the dates of coverage, the company's financial rating, and the benefits covered, including the amount covered per day for hospitalization as well as proof of coverage in U.S. dollars. This information may be especially important if you are hospitalized.

### Pregnancy:

If applicable, you may also wish to verify that the insurance policy covers the birth of children in the United States. If you will not be paid by AU and you or your spouse is pregnant, you are advised to purchase health insurance in your home country. Ask whether your insurance company considers pregnancy a pre-existing condition and will not cover the related expenses for anyone who is pregnant upon arrival in the United States or on the start date of the insurance policy.



### Purchasing Insurance After Arrival in the U.S.:

Insurance obtained in the United States after your arrival may not cover you right away. If you choose to purchase health insurance after your arrival at AU, it is recommended that you obtain sufficient travel insurance that meets the [Department of State insurance requirements](#) before you travel. Since you are required to have adequate insurance coverage for your entire J-1 program, we recommend the travel insurance covers your first month in the U.S. to ensure you are meeting the Department of State health insurance requirement in the case that your policy purchased after arrival does not start until after your DS-2019 begin date.

### AU Employees:

If you are to be paid by AU, you may be eligible to participate in one of the insurance plans offered by the University for its employees. Please discuss this option with the J-1 Coordinator in your host department during the process of obtaining a DS-2019.

## **BANKING AND LIVING EXPENSES**

Living Expenses: Washington, D.C. is one of the most expensive areas in the United States. Therefore, you are required to demonstrate to AU and the U.S. Embassy that you have at least \$1600/month available to support yourself PLUS an additional \$458/month for your spouse AND \$350/month for each additional dependent. Please note that these figures represent the bare minimum of funding needed to support yourself during your stay and do not allow for any luxuries.

If you do not yet have a U.S. bank account, you will need at least \$2,000 in traveler's checks or accessible using an ATM card and \$200 in cash upon arrival. This money will cover initial expenses such as taxi or bus fares, meals, overnight lodging, supplies, initial rent/security deposits, and health insurance payments. Traveler's checks are immediately available. International bank drafts are acceptable, but funds may take longer to become available. We strongly advise against carrying large amounts of cash. Foreign currency can be exchanged immediately at any of the airports in the Washington area and at most large banks. Banks in the area charge service fees for cashing foreign checks. Please ask your bank about daily limits on withdrawals by ATM.

Bank Accounts: We recommend you open a bank account as soon as you arrive. Using an international bank will facilitate the wiring of money. Service charges and interest rates vary. Foreign checks may require 4-6 weeks before funds become available at a U.S. bank. Traveler's checks are one way to make initial deposits. Two forms of identification are generally required to open an account. There are many banks within walking distance of AU's main campus, Spring Valley Building, and Washington College of Law, as well as throughout the city.

Wiring Money from Overseas: After opening a bank account in the United States, you may transfer funds to your U.S. bank account from foreign banking institutions. Wire transfers may take up to 48 hours and require a fee. Please speak with a bank representative for more detailed instructions on wiring money from overseas.



## HOUSING

Housing in Washington, DC, is some of the most expensive in the U.S. You can see our current estimate of student housing and living expenses in Washington, DC, on our [cost guides page](#). Note that these estimates are for student budgets, and expenses will be higher if you do not wish to share housing. Be sure to also consider the cost of transportation as you look at housing options. The [WMATA website](#) includes a trip planner feature where you can see the time and cost of bus and metro train transportation.

**Long-Term Housing:** Due to space limitations, AU is unfortunately not able to offer on-campus housing for scholars. We recommend that you DO NOT enter into a contract with any landlord for housing before arriving and viewing the property. However, it is helpful to begin to think about your budget and research properties before you arrive. The University maintains an Off-Campus Housing listing that may aid scholars in their search for housing. Please visit the link below for a listing of housing resources: <https://www.american.edu/student-affairs/housing/off-campus-housing-services.cfm>.

## TRANSPORTATION AND ARRIVAL

If possible, we suggest that you plan to arrive in Washington, DC, during U.S. business hours, 9:00 am–5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, when most university offices and area businesses are open. Detailed information about Washington, DC transportation options and additional arrival information is available on our website: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/Transportation.cfm>.

## MAINTAINING J-1 STATUS

Following are your responsibilities in order to maintain your J-1 status:

### **Immigration Documents:**

You are required to provide ISSS with a copy of your passport and visa upon arrival in the U.S. You must also provide ISSS a copy of your passport and visa anytime they are renewed after your initial entry. The same requirement also applies to any accompanying J-2 dependents.

### **Travel:**

If you travel outside of the U.S., you will need a travel signature from ISSS on your DS-2019 before returning. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to re-enter the United States. Travel signatures can be requested electronically in [iEagle](#), AU's international student and scholar platform. Any travel of 14 days or more requires a written request for Out of Country status that will be approved by both your department and ISSS, and you must be able to show why this travel is necessary for completion of your J-1 program. The Out of Country request form can also be submitted electronically in iEagle. Please note that J-2 dependents should not remain in the U.S. while you are approved for Out of Country. Please also note that Out of Country approval is not guaranteed and is subject to time limitations.

**Visa Renewal:**

If your J-1 visa expires, you will be responsible for getting the appropriate documents to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. the next time you travel overseas.

**Health Insurance Requirement:**

As an exchange visitor on a J-1 visa, you (and your J-2 dependents) are required to have health insurance during your program. Health insurance coverage must meet the [US Department of State's requirements](#).

**Address Changes:**

Any change in U.S. address must be reported to ISSS within 10 days in order to maintain your J-1 status. Update your address by logging on to [iEagle](#). In the left menu, click on "J-1 Scholar & Student Intern" and then select "Address and Contact Update." Complete the form and submit.

**Employment:**

Acquire appropriate work authorization from ISSS before beginning any paid or unpaid work done in the U.S. This includes conferences and other activities outside American University. Please contact ISSS with any questions regarding work authorization options (if any) in your J-1 program.

**Extension of your DS-2019:**

You must have a valid DS-2019 while in J-1 status at American University. If you wish to extend your program, please submit the Program Extension form in [iEagle](#) at least 4 weeks prior to the DS-2019 expiration date.

**Departure:**

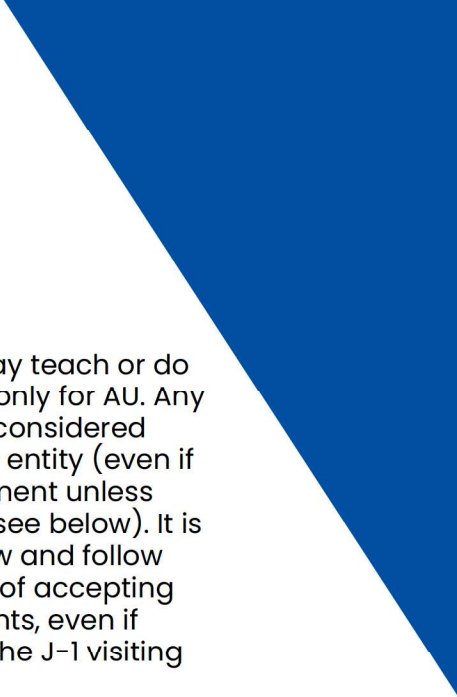
You must leave the U.S. within 30 days of the end of your DS-2019 or the program end date (whichever is earlier). Please notify your host department and ISSS immediately if you or any of your J-2 dependents leave the U.S. permanently before the program end date listed on the DS-2019 so your immigration record can be updated.

## EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS, RIGHTS, AND LAWS

All scholars in J-1 visa status sponsored by AU must understand and abide by the laws governing this particular nonimmigrant status. Working without authorization is a serious violation of J-1 status. Appropriate work authorization must be acquired from ISSS before beginning any paid or unpaid work done in the U.S. Please contact ISSS at [JIEV@american.edu](mailto:JIEV@american.edu) or 202-885-3350 for guidance any time employment opportunities arise.

In order to maintain your legal status in the United States, it is important to consult an expert on all matters of payment, reimbursement, and employment. The information listed below is only a general guide.





Non-immigrants holding a DS-2019 Form that was issued by AU may teach or do research only in the field or area listed in box 4 of the DS-2019 and only for AU. Any payment received from AU for work in an unrelated field would be considered unauthorized employment. Any payment received from an outside entity (even if the work is performed on the AU campus) is unauthorized employment unless you are granted specific, written permission from an ISSS Advisor (see below). It is the responsibility of all non-immigrants in the United States to know and follow immigration regulations related to employment. The responsibility of accepting any type of employment that does not meet regulatory requirements, even if offered by an AU department or faculty member, will fall solely on the J-1 visiting scholar.

According to the regulations governing the J-1 visa status, Professors and Research Scholars may participate in occasional lectures and short-term consultations outside of AU if allowed by the Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer of the J-1 program at AU.

If you are employed as part of your J-1 program, it is important that you understand that you have rights in the U.S. and can get help if you encounter problems. For example, if you are employed in the U.S., you have the following rights: be treated and paid fairly; not to be held in a job against your will; to keep your passport and other identification documents in your possession; to report abuse without retaliation; to request help from unions, immigrant and labor rights groups and other groups; and to seek justice in U.S. courts. The U.S. Department of State's [Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers](#) website has information in a number of languages about employee rights and protections. Please review the [Wilberforce Rights Protections and Resources Pamphlet](#), and other information regarding your rights and protections.

The American University mascot, a stylized eagle with a yellow beak and blue body, is shown in the top right corner. It is wearing a white jersey with "AMERICAN UNIVERSITY" visible. The mascot is cheering with its arms raised. The background shows a blurred crowd of people in a stadium setting.

# POST-ARRIVAL

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Welcome to American University! Following is information about your next steps to complete and information to review for a successful start to your J-1 program. Please contact ISSS at [JIEV@american.edu](mailto:JIEV@american.edu) with any questions.

## HOST DEPARTMENT ORIENTATION

To meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of State (DOS), when you first arrive, please meet first with the J-1 Coordinator in your host department:

- Meet the J-1 coordinator in your host department/school. The coordinator will help you set up your account in the AU portal and update your U.S. address and insurance information in the university's records.
- The host department will also provide your orientation in the following areas (as required by the Department of State):
  - Library
  - Technology
  - Cultural adjustment
  - Other University Resources

## ISSS ORIENTATION

ISSS must confirm your arrival with Immigration within 30 days of the start date of your DS-2019 in order for you to remain legally in the United States. If your J-1 program is shorter than 30 days, we must confirm your arrival immediately after you arrive.



Please complete your immigration check-in forms in [iEagle](#) as soon as possible after you have arrived. You will need the below to complete the forms:

- Your U.S. Address
- The processed DS-2019 Form
- Passport with J-1 visa
- [I-94](#)
- Proof of health insurance
- All of the above for any dependents

Failure to complete your immigration check-in in iEagle may jeopardize your immigration status. ISSS advisors are always available by phone, email, or in-person to assist you with these forms.

## RESTRICTIONS/OBLIGATIONS OF J-1 STATUS

Following is a reminder of your responsibilities in order to maintain your J-1 status:

### **Immigration Documents:**

You are required to provide ISSS a copy of your passport and visa anytime they are renewed after your initial entry. The same requirement also applies to the accompanying J-2 dependents. Submit these documents by logging on to [iEagle](#). In the left menu, click on “J-1 Scholar & Student Intern” and then select “Passport & Visa Update.” Complete the form and submit.

### **Travel:**

If you travel outside of the U.S., you will need a travel signature from ISSS on your DS-2019 before returning. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to re-enter the United States. Travel signatures can be requested electronically in [iEagle](#), AU's international student and scholar platform. Any travel of 14 days or more requires a written request for Out of Country status that will be approved by both your department and ISSS, and you must be able to show why this travel is necessary for completion of your J-1 program. The Out of Country request form can also be submitted electronically in iEagle. Please note that J-2 dependents should not remain in the U.S. while you are approved for Out of Country. Please also note that Out of Country approval is not guaranteed and is subject to time limitations.

### **Visa Renewal:**

If your J-1 visa expires, you will be responsible for getting the appropriate documents to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. the next time you travel overseas.

### **Health Insurance Requirement:**

As an exchange visitor on a J-1 visa, you (and your J-2 dependents) are required to have health insurance for the entire duration of your J-1 Program. Health insurance coverage must meet the [US Department of State's requirements](#).

**Address Changes:**

Any change in U.S. address must be reported to ISSS in [iEagle](#) within 10 days in order to maintain your J-1 status.

**Inform ISSS of Changes in Funding or Program:**

By entering the country in J-1 visa status, you accept the responsibility of meeting the terms and conditions stated on the DS-2019 Form. Your admission into the United States is for the sole purpose stated in section 4 of the DS-2019. Please notify ISSS of any change in the source of your funding, the nature of your work or research, or your sponsoring institution. Failure to notify ISSS of any of these changes may jeopardize your immigration status.

**Employment Opportunities Outside AU:**

Acquire appropriate work authorization from ISSS before beginning any paid or unpaid work done in the U.S. or opportunities like conferences and presentations outside AU. Please contact ISSS with any questions regarding work authorization options (if any) in your J-1 Program.

**Extension of DS-2019:**

You must have a valid DS-2019 while in J-1 status at American University. If you wish to extend your program, please submit the Program Extension form in [iEagle](#) at least 4 weeks prior to the DS-2019 expiration date.

**DEPARTURE:**

You must leave the U.S. within 30 days of the end of your DS-2019 or the program end date (whichever is earlier). Please notify your host department and ISSS immediately if you or any of your J-2 dependents leave the U.S. permanently before the program end date listed on the DS-2019 so your immigration record can be updated. You must also notify ISSS if you complete your program earlier than the date listed on your DS-2019.

## MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

U.S. Federal regulations require Exchange Visitors to obtain health insurance for themselves and any J-2 dependents for the entire length of stay in the United States. AU requires all scholars to provide proof of insurance coverage upon arrival in the United States. The requirements are outlined, along with links to several insurance companies, on the ISSS website at:

<http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/Current-Scholars-and-Student-Interns.cfm>.

Failure to maintain health insurance will prevent the issuance of any documents for travel, extensions, or transfer of your J-1 status.



## WORK REGULATIONS & RIGHTS

All scholars in J-1 visa status sponsored by AU must understand and abide by the laws governing this particular nonimmigrant status. Working without authorization is a serious violation of J-1 status. Appropriate work authorization must be acquired from ISSS before beginning any paid or unpaid work done in the U.S. Please contact ISSS at [JIEV@american.edu](mailto:JIEV@american.edu) or 202-885-3350 for guidance any time employment opportunities arise.

In order to maintain your legal status in the United States, it is important to consult an expert on all matters of payment, reimbursement, and employment. The information listed below is only a general guide.

Non-immigrants holding a DS-2019 Form that was issued by AU may teach or do research only in the field or area listed in box 4 of the DS-2019 and only for AU. Any payment received from AU for work in an unrelated field would be considered unauthorized employment. Any payment received from an outside entity (even if the work is performed on the AU campus) is unauthorized employment unless you are granted specific, written permission from an ISSS Advisor (see below). It is the responsibility of all non-immigrants in the United States to know and follow immigration regulations related to employment. The responsibility of accepting any type of employment that does not meet regulatory requirements, even if offered by an AU department or faculty member, will fall solely on the J-1 visiting scholar.

According to the regulations governing the J-1 visa status, Professors and Research Scholars may participate in occasional lectures and short-term consultations outside of AU if allowed by the Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer of the J-1 program at AU.

If you are employed as part of your J-1 program, it is important that you understand that you have rights in the U.S. and can get help if you encounter problems. For example, if you are employed in the U.S., you have the following rights: be treated and paid fairly; not to be held in a job against your will; to keep your passport and other identification documents in your possession; to report abuse without retaliation; to request help from unions, immigrant and labor rights groups and other groups; and to seek justice in U.S. courts. The U.S. Department of State's [Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers website](#) has information in a number of languages about employee rights and protections. Please review the [Wilberforce Rights Protections and Resources Pamphlet](#) and other information regarding your rights and protections.

## TAXES

All J-1 scholars will be required to complete at least one tax form by April of the next year, whether or not they have received U.S. source income. Visit the [ISSS website](#) in mid-February for details and access to free tax software.

U.S. tax laws require that approximately 30% of the U.S.-based income of a foreign national be withheld in the form of taxes. You may, however, reduce this tax burden by taking advantage of certain tax benefits to which your J-1 status may entitle you.

Tax Treaties: The United States has negotiated income tax treaties with some countries which may exempt you from paying U.S. income tax altogether. Your eligibility for tax treaty benefits will depend upon the following factors:

- The existence of a tax treaty with your country;
- Your activity in the United States;
- The length of time you may have already been in the United States, if any.

Social Security Taxes: Generally, J-1 status holders are exempt from paying U.S. Social Security taxes for two calendar years. Please be sure to note that these are calendar years, not years counted from the date of arrival. For example, a scholar who arrived on December 30, 2014 was exempt from Social Security taxes only in 2014 and 2015, even though s/he was only in the United States for two days in 2014.

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

In order to work in the United States, you must apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). All individuals in J-1 status are eligible to apply for a Social Security Number even if they are not currently employed in the United States. This number serves as your unique taxpayer identification number. Please wait until 10 days have passed after your arrival in the United States and completion of clearance with the ISSS office to apply for a Social Security Number to ensure timely processing of your application. To obtain a Social Security Number, you must:

1. Submit an application to the Social Security Administration (SSA) in person. Copies of the related application form (SS-5) are available at the Social Security Administration and [online](#). When completing the SS-5, in Question 3 ("Citizenship"), mark that you are a "Legal Alien Allowed to Work."
2. Bring your passport, I-94, DS-2019 Form and job offer letter (if applicable). Please note: The Social Security Administration will not issue a Social Security Number if your passport is less than one year old. If you have a new passport, you must also bring a second source of identification (identification card issued in your home country, old passport, etc.).



Processing Time: The Social Security Administration may take two weeks to three months to process the application. The Social Security card will be sent to the address written on your application form. After accepting your application, the Social Security Administration should give you a receipt notice.

Social Security Numbers for Family Members: J-2 dependents are eligible for employment in the United States. A J-2 dependent who intends to seek employment in the United States must first apply for work permission from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). After receiving the work permit, s/he can then apply for a Social Security Number. The J-2 dependent is not eligible for a Social Security Number until s/he has received the work permit.

SSA Office Locations: The Social Security Administration office closest to AU is located at: 2100 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. and is open 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. While the M Street office is the closest to AU, there are other Social Security Administration offices that may be more convenient for you. More local Social Security Administration office addresses are available on the Social Security Administration website: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

## LIMITATIONS ON RETURN IN J-1 STATUS

### **12-month bar on beginning new program as Professor or Research Scholar:**

If you were physically present in the U.S. in J-1 or J-2 status for 6 months or more, you cannot begin a new exchange visitor program as a Professor or Research Scholar until 12 months after the end date (or completion date) of the previous J program.

Exceptions:

- J-1 Transfers: The 12-month bar is not applicable to those who will begin a program by transferring to a new program sponsor.
- Presence in J status of less than 6 months: Anyone whose prior physical presence in J status was of less than six months duration is exempt from the 12-month bar.
- Presence in J status as a Short-Term Scholar: No time spent as a Short-Term Scholar under 22.C.F.R. 62.21 is counted as physical presence that triggers the 12-month bar.

### **24-month bar on repeat participation as a Professor or Research Scholar:**

If you entered the United States under the Exchange Visitor Program as a Professor or Research Scholar, or you acquired such status while in the United States, and you have completed your J-1 program, you are not eligible for repeat participation as a Professor or Research Scholar for a period of two years following the end date of your program as identified in SEVIS.

### **Two-year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement:**

Individuals in J-1 and J-2 status are subject to the two-year home residence requirement, also known as 212(e), if any of the following apply:

- Participation in the exchange program is financed, directly or indirectly, by the U.S. government or a foreign government.
- The skills the Exchange Visitor is coming to develop or exercise are in a field which the Exchange Visitor's home government requested be included on the State Department's skills list (skills in short supply in the home country); the list is available online at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>
- The Exchange Visitor comes to the United States to receive graduate medical education or training.

Those who are subject to 212(e) must return to their home country for two years before they are eligible for immigrant-intent visa categories (H-1B temporary worker, L-1 intra-company transfer, and Legal Permanent Resident status). They are also prohibited from requesting a change in immigration status from within the United States. At the time of the visa issuance, the Consular Officer will indicate whether or not a prospective J-1 or J-2 is subject to this requirement, both on the DS-2019 Form and on the visa stamp.

More details on 212(e) and application for waiver can be found at the link below: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor.html>

We are happy to host you at AU! Should you have any questions or concerns during your J-1 program, please contact ISSS at [Jlev@american.edu](mailto:Jlev@american.edu) or 202-885-3350.





