Print

Human Resources: J-1 Exchange Visitor Program: Procedures

J Visa Application Procedures

To apply for a J-1 visa, you will need to submit the following documents to the embassy or consulate:

- A completed From DS-2019 issued in SEVIS
- SEVIS Fee receipt
- A passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least six months beyond your intended period of stay in the United States. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must make an application.
- Machine Readable Visa (MRV) fee
- Form DS-156 and Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign a Form DS-157. See DOS for forms http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/forms/.
- Photographs http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1287.html

The Form DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status and SEVIS Fee payment receipt are issued by the program sponsors' Responsible Officer or an Alternate Responsible Officer after determining that you meet certain eligibility requirements.

Apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa by submitting the Form DS-2019, SEVIS Fee to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. You may apply at an U.S. consular office outside your home country if the consular office has agreed to process visa applications for third country nationals. However, it may take longer or be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside your country of permanent residence mainly because a consular officer must evaluate your ties to your residence abroad. Please check with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will apply for your visa for specific procedures and processing times. NOTE: We encourage you to not make an appointment until you have received your form DS-2019 and SEVIS fee payment receipt so you are sure that you have the documents in time for your appointment.

To obtain the J-1 visa, the consular officer will review your documents and interview you to determine eligibility for the J-1 visa. You must demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to cover expenses; possess English skills that are sufficient to participate in your program; and that you have a residence abroad that you do not intend to abandon after completing your program. If the consular officer approves the visa, a J-1 visa will be affixed in your passport.

Consular officers are required to inform you whether you are subject to the two-year home residency requirement, 212 (e), make the notation on your form DS-2019 as well as discuss the effects with you prior to issuing the J-1 visa. A full description of 212(e) regulations are also on your copy of the form DS-2019.

You are encouraged to apply for your visa early to provide plenty of time for visa processing. Note that Embassies and Consulates are able to issue your visa 90 days or less in advance of your program start date.

http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8643 is a helpful resource for applying for a nonimmigrant visa from the NAFSA Association of International Educators.

Entering the United States as a J-1 Exchange Visitor

Upon arrival at the U.S. port of entry present your passport, visa, DS-2019 and SEVIS Fee payment receipt and request to be admitted in J-1 status. If your admission is approved, the immigration officer will stamp your Form DS-2019 and validate your Form I-94, Record of Arrival-Departure, which notes the permitted duration of your stay.

Exchange Visitors can enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the program start date on the Form DS-2019. Your SEVIS record must be validated no later than 30 days after the program begin date by your program sponsor or the SEVIS system will automatically cancel your program. If you are aware that your program will be delayed, your program begin date can be amended in the SEVIS system to indicate a later start date by contacting your program sponsor.

A photograph and two digital fingerprints will also be taken as part of the US-VISIT Program when you enter the U.S. in J status.

Extension of J-1 Exchange Visitor

The Foreign National Office will issue a new form DS-2019 to extend your exchange visitor program upon request from your WHOI sponsoring department indicating an extension of your appointment and funding for the requested period of extension. The extension cannot exceed the regulatory limitation for the maximum period of stay in your particular category.

The request for a program extension must be requested prior to the expiration date on the current form DS-2019. Failure to extend

documents prior to the expiration date is a serious offense and is not easily corrected.

SEVIS is updated with the extended program information including the new end date and financial information. The revised form DS-2019 is printed, signed and given to you to maintain.

Transfer of J-1 Exchange Visitor

An exchange visitor may transfer to a new program if the purpose of the transfer is to complete the objective which he/she was admitted to exchange visitor status.

After being notified of your intent to transfer programs, the Foreign National Office must first determine that the WHOI sponsor hosting you concurs with the transfer out; the transfer is consistent with the goals of the exchange visitor program; that you are currently in valid program status; the transfer will not extend your stay beyond the permissible time for your particular category; communicate with the receiving program sponsor to ensure an uninterrupted transfer and proper change of address.

The date that the transfer will be effective, the transfer-in program number and transfer-in program sponsor is entered in SEVIS.

The receiving program sponsor verifies and updates the information in SEVIS, prints and signs the new form DS-2019 and provides it to you and any accompanying dependents.

The transfer effective date becomes the program begin date for the transfer-in program. If you fail to validate your program participation with your new program sponsor within 30 days after the transfer effective date, your SEVIS record will automatically be terminated by the system as a "No-Show."

An exchange visitor also has the option to leave the U.S. and return to the U.S. in a new exchange visitor program.

Last updated: October 3, 2014

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