



J-1 Scholars: IMPORTANT Instructions and Information Regarding Your J-1 Program

Congratulations, you have been selected to participate in a J-1 scholar program at The University of Chicago. The J-1 program is designed to create opportunities for residents of other countries to come to the United State, participate in cultural and educational exchanges, and return home to share their experiences. As a J-1 scholar at the University of Chicago, you are expected to engage in the research and/or teaching duties you have arranged with your sponsoring department at the University. In addition to your research and/or teaching responsibilities we encourage you to participate in the various activities and events offered by the Office of International Affairs, your sponsoring department, and the University. For up-to-date information on OIA-sponsored events, visit OIA's Events Calendar: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/events> and for events across campus, please review the University's Events Calendar: <http://events.uchicago.edu/cal/main/showMainEnd.rdo>

Form DS-2019

The enclosed Form DS-2019 is your certificate of eligibility for J-1 status in the United States as an Exchange Visitor (J-1) in either the "Professor," "Research Scholar," or "Short-Term Scholar" category, at the University of Chicago. This handout explains the steps you must take to comply with laws and regulations pertaining to J-1 status. Not doing so will jeopardize your status and could result in you having to leave the U.S.

Please safeguard your Form DS-2019 carefully, as it is required for re-entry into the U.S. after a trip abroad. You should **keep all original copies** of your Form DS-2019 **permanently**. It is also advisable, after your arrival, to photocopy the identification pages of your passport, your visa stamp, admission stamp and Form DS-2019 and keep the photocopies separately from the originals, for use in applying for replacements if the originals should be lost or stolen.

SEVIS Fee

To enter the United States as a J-1 Visiting Professor, Research Scholar, or Short-Term Scholar under the sponsorship of the University of Chicago, **you must** have a valid J-1 visa stamp in your passport. To apply for your visa, you must first pay the visa fee and the \$220 SEVIS fee. You will not be eligible to receive a J-1 visa unless these fees have been paid. **Please note:** J-2 dependents do not pay a SEVIS Fee.

The quickest way to pay the SEVIS fee is to process your payment online with a credit card by going to: <https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html> If you are paying the SEVIS fee online, you must print out on the online payment confirmation and bring this to the visa interview. The fee can also be paid through Western Union or through the mail. However, it will take longer if you pay by mail rather than online by credit card or through Western Union. **Please note:** citizens of Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Kenya and Cameroon can only pay the SEVIS fee via check, money order, or Western Union. For all methods of payment, you will need information from your Form DS-2019.

Entry Visa

In the meantime, visit the website of the United States consulate or embassy nearest you and carefully study the information about J-1 visa application procedures. To find the nearest embassy visit: <https://www.usembassy.gov/> There you will find information on how to pay the DS-160 visa fee. You will have to schedule an appointment; the lead time to the interview can range from a few days to several weeks. Please follow the instructions of the Embassy or Consulate carefully when preparing for your visa interview. **Important:** the Embassy or Consulate will require you to fill out additional paperwork, including form DS-160, which is the "Online Non-Immigrant Visa Application." Please refer to the website of the Embassy or Consulate where you will apply to obtain the most recent information.

When you apply for your visa, be sure to take your passport, the enclosed Form DS-2019, and receipt of SEVIS fee payment with you. The Consular Officer may ask you to document funding that does not come directly from the University; you may be asked to present a letter of award or support, a bank statement, proof of income, etc. You may also be asked to present proof of payment of the visa application fee. (Please refer to the US Embassy or Consulate for more information on the payment of this application fee.) If your dependents will be accompanying you to the U.S., they will need J-2 visas, and you should take their passports and individual Forms DS-2019 with you to the consulate and be prepared to show proof of marriage to your spouse and proof of parenthood of each child. Your spouse will have to appear in person, and the same may be true of your children. For additional information on obtaining a visa please visit: <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/obtaining-initial-or-renewal-visa>

Be aware that when applying for a visa there could be delays. To limit the potential for delays, apply early, make sure you have all required documentation with you, and be sure you can establish nonimmigrant intent and prove that you have ties to your home country. If your visa application was selected for *administrative processing* please remain patient. Additional information on visa processing can be found: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>

If you are already in the United States as an Exchange Visitor in a category other than “Professor,” “Research Scholar,” or “Short-Term Scholar” (see item #4 on your current Form DS-2019), or if you hold any immigration status other than J-1, such as F-1 or H-1B, please e-mail OIA at international-affairs@uchicago.edu for additional instructions.

J-2 Dependents

Dependents of J-1 scholars include spouses and dependent children under the age of 21. Domestic partners are not eligible for J-2 status and must obtain their own status in the U.S. J-2 dependents are added to the J-1’s SEVIS record and given their own DS-2019 form. The dependents use the form DS-2019 to apply for a J-2 visa at an embassy or consulate abroad before entering the U.S., similar to the J-1 scholar. Dependents may stay in the U.S. in J-2 status for the duration of the J-1 scholar's program. J-2 dependents are allowed to study part-time or full-time and can request U.S. employment authorization. Employment authorization for J-2 spouses can only be requested once the J-1 scholar and J-2 dependent have arrived to the U.S. For information on the process, please visit this page of our website: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/j2workauth>. Practical information for your J-2 dependents can be found on this page our website: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/spouses-and-partners-international-students-scholars-and-employees>.

Two special notes:

(1) Canadian citizens do not need visa stamps to enter the United States, but they do have to show Form DS-2019 and proof of SEVIS fee payment at the port of entry to obtain status as a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar, or Short-Term Scholar.

(2) Citizens of a number of countries (other than Canada) in the Visa Waiver Program may enter the United States without visas, but only as tourists for a maximum stay of 90 days. **Please do not enter in this category**, as it would render you ineligible to be at the University of Chicago for the purpose for which you are planning to come here. You would have to leave the U.S. and begin the process again.

Entrance to the U.S.

When you arrive in the United States, a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officer at the airport (or sea or land port, depending on your mode of travel) will endorse your Form DS-2019. You will not be able to access your checked luggage before meeting with the DHS office, so please be sure to carry your DS-2019 form, J-1 visa sticker and passport with you in your carry-on luggage.

For more information on the J-1 program, please refer to the U.S. Department of State website: <http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/>

Form I-94

The officer will create your electronic I-94 record, which indicates your non-immigrant status, authorized duration of stay, and serves as evidence of lawful status in the United States. You will receive an admission stamp in your passport noting the '*date of admission*', the '*status admitted in*', and the '*admitted until*' date. To print your Form I-94 visit: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> The Form I-94 will be required when applying for immigration or public benefits, such as a driver's license or Social Security Number.

Before you step away from the counter, please take a moment to review the stamp and information recorded in your passport. It should read: J-1 D/S for you and J-2 D/S for your J-2 dependents. If you notice a mistake, politely inform the officer. Checking your admission stamp before leaving the inspection area can prevent future problems and delays.

Arriving to UChicago

Checking in with OIA (<https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/content/j-1-scholar-check>)

As soon as you arrive at the University of Chicago, **you must check in electronically with OIA**. Check in requires electronic copies of your Form DS-2019, visa stamp, admission stamp and your residential address in Chicago. The check in process cannot be completed without these documents. If you do not have access to a scanner, please check with your Department Administrator for information regarding on-campus resources, or, if you have a Smartphone, try downloading a free app such as [CamScanner](#) for [Android](#) or [iPhone](#). If you do not have a way to scan your documents, you can check in with our front desk during our regular [office hours](#) (M-F, 9-4pm). If you have dependents here with you, please submit their immigration documents as well.

If you fail to check in, your SEVIS record will automatically be invalidated by the SEVIS system. This means that you will not be allowed to continue your program at the University and must return home.

Social Security Number

As a J-1 Scholar, you are eligible for a Social Security Number (SSN), which serves as a tax identification number. Even if you do not receive any pay from a U.S. organization, having a SSN is very helpful as the number is used as a de facto identification number that is used in many different circumstances. If you already have a SSN, you can continue to use it; it is yours for life. Before you can apply for a Social Security Number, it is essential that you complete the electronic check in with OIA so we can update your SEVIS record. Please wait 10 days after checking in with OIA before visiting a local Social Security Administration (SSA) office. If your SEVIS record is not up to date, SSA may not accept your SSN application and you may need to re-apply. For more information on the SSN and the application process, please visit: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/social-security-numbers-itins>

Local Address Requirement

The University of Chicago is legally required to have your current U.S. residential address on file at all times during your program here. Please be prepared to provide us with your residential (not office or departmental) address when you first check-in at our office. If you move to a new residence during your time here in the United States, **you must complete our J-1 Scholar Change of Address Form within ten days of the move:**

<https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/content/j-1-scholar-change-address-form>

Housing

The Office of International Affairs cannot provide assistance with housing for your visit, however, we do offer helpful housing resources on our website: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/living-hyde-park#housing>. The cost

of housing varies, but average rent in the Hyde Park area is between \$1,000 per month and \$2,000 per month, depending on the location and size of the apartment/house.

Orientation

The Office of International Affairs regularly offers orientation sessions for all new J-1 scholars in all categories at the University. These sessions cover essential information for your stay, so it is important that you come to one of these orientation sessions as early as possible during your stay at the University of Chicago. Dates for upcoming sessions can be found here: <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/jhorientation>

Required Health Insurance

Federal regulations make health insurance a condition of Exchange Visitor (J) status in the United States and specify the types and levels of coverage. The requirement applies to **all exchange visitors and J-2 dependents for the entire stay in the U.S.** Please see the chart at the end of this handout for a complete overview of the insurance requirements.

If you fail to carry the required insurance for yourself or your J-2 dependents, the University must terminate your participation in its Exchange Visitor program and report that termination to SEVIS. Termination would end your lawful presence in the U.S. and therefore your affiliation with the University. Additionally, J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents may be subject to the requirements set forth by the Affordable Care Act:

<http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43628>.

Compliance is **your responsibility**. The monthly cost of health insurance ranges per month depending on the policy's coverage, your age, and the number of J-2 dependents you have. Please contact the insurance company to obtain an estimate of your cost.

Most individuals in J-1 status who are affiliated with the University for more than 30 days qualify for coverage under the University's Postdoctoral Researcher Benefits Plan (PRBP) offered through Garnett Powers & Associates (GPA). Employees of the University of Chicago, such as Visiting Professors, do not qualify for GPA insurance; they qualify for the standard University of Chicago benefits plan, which includes health insurance that meets the minimum requirements.

If you are not sure whether you are considered an "employee," please contact your Human Resource or Academic Affairs administrator in your department at the University of Chicago. He or she will be able to clarify this.

You are not required to obtain health insurance from UChicago. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that the coverage you obtain meets the requirements. For a list of companies that provide J-1 Health Insurance visit:

<https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/insurance-postdoctoral-researchers-and-visiting-scholars-0>

Your Status with the University of Chicago and Insurance Coverage Overview

If you are:	Your insurance will come from:
A Postdoctoral Researcher in J Status	The Postdoctoral Researcher Benefits Plan (unless you apply for a waiver) offered through Garnett Powers & Associates
An employee of the University (e.g. Visiting Professor)	the University's employee benefits plan
A Visiting Scholar coming under an Appointment or an Agreement for more than 30 days	The Postdoctoral Researcher Benefits Plan (unless you apply for a waiver) offered through Garnett Powers & Associates
A Visiting Scholar coming under an Appointment or an Agreement for 30 days or less	Insurance you already carry or will obtain on your own (except for the medical evacuation and repatriation of remains segment)
A Scholar whose title does not contain the word "visiting" or "postdoc" and will not be an employee of the University (e.g. Guest Scientist)	Insurance you already carry or will obtain on your own, including medical evacuation and repatriation of remains

Some J-1 visitors will not qualify for insurance through the University's PRBP or other programs. If you are not eligible for University of Chicago health insurance, you are **required** to provide your own health insurance. If you do qualify for health insurance from Garnett-Powers, but choose to buy your own insurance, you must obtain a waiver from Garnett-Powers. Garnett-Powers will determine whether your personal insurance meets the minimum requirements (as indicated in the schedule below). Your already existing insurance, possibly through your national health plan, may meet the requirements.

If you are unsure whether your insurance meets the minimum requirements, please contact Garnett-Powers and Associates via e-mail (prbp@garnett-powers.com), phone (800-261-7109) or fax (949-583-2929). You may do so in advance of coming to the U.S.

It is important to realize that any insurance that you will receive through the University of Chicago will only cover you during your official time with the University. You will also need the appropriate insurance while you are in your grace period (see below) before the start date and after the end date on your Form DS-2019. You must provide your own insurance that meets the minimum requirements as outlined above.

In addition, should you elect to waive the insurance provided through the University of Chicago, you must have the appropriate insurance coverage for the entire period that you are at the University of Chicago – including the grace periods mentioned above. The need for insurance during your entire visit may mean that you will have several insurance policies: one to cover you upon your arrival, one to cover you during your stay at the University of Chicago and one to cover you during your grace period at the end of your stay. It is, of course, possible to have one policy during your entire stay in the U.S., but you will most likely need to obtain a waiver of the Garnett-Powers insurance (if you are eligible for GPA insurance).

NOTE

► **Federal regulations make health insurance a condition of Exchange Visitor (J) status in the United States and specify the types and levels of coverage. The requirement applies to all exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents for their entire stay in the U.S. Please see the schedule at the end of this document for a complete overview of the insurance requirements.**

► **Without the appropriate insurance coverage, the university will be forced to terminate your J-1 status. This means you must stop your activities at the university and leave the U.S. Compliance is your responsibility. Extending your permission to stay in the United States**

Program End

Once the end date on your Form DS-2019 is reached, you must discontinue your program activities here. (Please see item #3 in your Form DS-2019.) However, you may remain in the U.S. for up to 30 days beyond that date, during which time you **may not** be employed, conduct research, etc. If an extension is necessary, be sure to start arranging it **at least 30 days before the expiration date** of your Form DS-2019 by asking your department or institute to renew your appointment at the University and to send a request for extension to OIA. Please note that your Form DS-2019 **cannot** be extended after the expiration date has been reached!

Transferring to another institution in the United States

You may transfer your J-1 sponsorship from the University of Chicago to another institution. This involves transferring your SEVIS record to the new institution and must be done **before** you move from the University of Chicago to your new program sponsor. Make sure you communicate directly with both OIA and the international office at the new institution to determine the exact date of the transfer. You will not be able to start at the new institution until OIA releases your record. Once the date of the transfer is reached, and after OIA releases your SEVIS record to the new institution, your new sponsor will issue a new DS-2019 for your program there. Please access the J-1 Transfer-Out Request Form on our website at: <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/transfer-tofrom-another-institution-0>.

Short trips out of the U.S.

To come back into the United States in J-1 status after a trip abroad, you must have the original Form DS-2019 endorsed by OIA confirming both your affiliation with the University of Chicago and the continuing availability of your financial support. It is critical you obtain this "travel signature" before you travel. Please come to OIA with your valid DS-2019 to have it endorsed for travel. No appointment is necessary. In most circumstances, you also need a valid visa stamp in your passport to re-enter the U.S. If your visa has expired, you have to apply for a new one at a United States consulate or embassy abroad (see "Entry Visa" in Part I of this sheet). At the consulate/embassy you have to present your Form DS-2019 and should contact OIA several weeks before your trip to arrange for the issuance of a new document, if your current document will expire before your return to the U.S. If your visa stamp has expired, please contact OIA to ascertain whether a new visa will be needed to travel.

Time Limits

The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors in the "Professor" and "Research Scholar" categories is limited to five years. (Your category is indicated on your DS-2019 form in box # 4.) Extensions beyond that time are not possible. If you are now in the United States in your fifth year and you have questions regarding future status options, please contact OIA.

The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors is six months in the "Short-Term Scholar," category. Extensions beyond that time are not possible.

Grace period

Exchange Visitors may enter the U.S. as early as 30 days prior to the start date and leave up to 30 days past the end date indicated on the Form DS-2019. During these 30-day periods, you may **not** start/continue your program activities with the University (teach, research, etc.). All your activities, including any training, should take place between the start and end dates as indicated on the DS-2019 form.

The two-year home-country physical-presence requirement, 212(e)

Not all Exchange Visitors are subject to this requirement. Those who are, must return to their home country and spend at least two years there before being able to come to the U.S. in H-1B, K, or L status, become a Legal Permanent Resident or to change to one of those statuses as well as most other statuses, from within the U.S.. (For the terms of the requirement please see item 1(a) on page 2 of Form DS-2019.) Both your Form DS-2019 and your visa stamp should indicate whether you are subject to this requirement, which is usually referred to as “212(e)” (for example, “Not subject to 212(e)” as a notation on your visa). If you have questions about the requirement, please raise them with the Consular Officer when you apply for your visa, or direct them to OIA.

The two-year repeat participation bar for “Research Scholars” and “Professors”

The U.S. Department of State instituted the two-year repeat participation bar for those who are in the United States in the “Research Scholar” or “Professor” categories. The effect of this regulation is that Exchange Visitors who have completed their stays in the United States in either the “Research Scholar” or “Professor” category are barred/unable to apply for a stay in the United States in either the “Research Scholar” or “Professor” category for two years. This bar goes into effect when you either complete or leave the J-1 program, whichever is earlier. At this time, your SEVIS record becomes inactive in SEVIS; OIA will not be able to reactivate it.

This regulation applies to the “Research Scholar” and “Professor” categories only and has no effect on eligibility for any other visa category or status. It does not apply to individuals in the J-1 “Short-Term Scholar” category. However, this bar does apply to the J-2 dependents of individuals in the “Research Scholar” and “Professor” categories. This regulation is not indicated on the visa stamp or DS-2019 form.

More Information

Please visit our website <http://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/dailylife> for more information on housing, life in Chicago as well as many other practical matters to help you prepare for your stay.

Questions?

Should you have any questions pertaining to your immigration status, please contact the office of international affairs at international-affairs@uchicago.edu or +1-773-702-7752

Minimum Insurance Requirements

Minimum coverage shall provide

- (1) Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness;
- (2) Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- (3) Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000; and
- (4) A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

An insurance policy secured to fulfill the requirements of this section:

- (1) May require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions which is reasonable as determined by current industry standards
- (2) May include provision for co-insurance under the terms of which the exchange visitor may be required to pay up to 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness; and
- (3) Shall not unreasonably exclude coverage for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which the exchange visitor participates.

Any policy, plan, or contract secured to fulfill the above requirements must, at a minimum, be:

- (1) Underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A. M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-i" or above, a Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of "A-" or above, a Weiss Research, Inc rating of B+ or above, or such other rating as the Agency may from time to time specify; or
- (2) Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country; or
- (3) Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or
- (4) Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) or eligible Competitive Medical Plan (CMP) as determined by the Health Care Financing Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.