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How to Enter the United States as a J-1 Exchange Visitor:

1. **Complete the DS-2019.** Sign the "certification" at the bottom of page one.

2. **Pay the $180 SEVIS I-901 fee.** J-1 scholars must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee at least three business days before submitting a visa application to a US consulate and undergoing the visa interview. Canadian citizens must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee at least three business days before entering the United States. **J-2 family members (“dependents”) are not required to pay SEVIS fees.**

   SEVIS fee payment instructions: [http://www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com)

   Print and bring the SEVIS fee payment receipt with you to the U.S. Consulate when you apply for the visa stamp. It should also be carried with you and shown to immigration officials when you arrive in the United States (airport or border).

   Go to the website of the U.S. Consulate at which you plan to apply for your visa stamp ([http://www.usembassy.gov/](http://www.usembassy.gov/)). Consultate-specific instructions can usually be found in the “Nonimmigrant Visas” section of the website. You will need to complete the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-160); pay the visa application fee and reciprocity fee, if any; schedule an appointment; and submit Form DS-2019, SEVIS I-901 fee receipt, and other required documents. Scholars in J-1 Research Scholar, Professor, Short Term Scholar, and Specialist categories do NOT complete or submit DS-7002.

   Note: Canadian citizens are not required to obtain a visa stamp from a US Consulate. However, they are admitted in a specific visa classification and must present the DS-2019 and SEVIS I-901 fee receipt at the border or port of entry in order to be admitted in J-1 status and be given a Form I-94 or arrival stamp with the correct notations. Canadians are typically asked to pay a $7 border-crossing fee related to the Form I-94.

3. **When you arrive at the US airport or border show your DS-2019, SEVIS I-901 fee receipt and passport with J-1 visa stamp to the immigration inspector, and request to be admitted in J-1 status.**

   a. **If you arrive in the United States at an airport (or seaport),** the U.S. immigration inspector will place an admission stamp in your passport, marked with the notations "J-1" and "D/S" (duration of status). You will also be instructed to print/download a copy of your electronic "Form I-94" admission record from [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home). Do this as soon as you have access to a computer.

   b. **If you enter the United States through a land border crossing from Canada or Mexico,** you will complete a paper Form I-94 Arrival/Departure record*. Form I-94 is a small, white card that will be marked with the notations "J-1" and "D/S" (duration of status), and stapled into your passport when you enter the United States. Please write your name on the I-94 exactly as it appears in your passport and on Form DS-2019.
Travel Outside the U.S.:

Do not leave the United States without the immigration documents required for your return. You must have a valid J-1 entry visa stamp in your passport and a valid DS-2019, signed by an IPO staff member.

We are happy to assist with questions about your documents. If your visa stamp has expired or will expire soon, please check with the IPO to get the proper instructions for applying for a new one. It is not possible to renew a U.S. visa stamp inside the United States.

Special regulations apply to visits to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands. This is called Automatic Revalidation.

Visa requirements and immigration regulations are complex and they do change. Please do not hesitate to consult the IPO's website, call or e-mail us, or visit our office at any time.

Department of State (DOS) program information and requirements

J-1 Visa - Exchange Visitor Program website

Download the Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program Participant Welcome Brochure

Early Departure or Change in Plans: The IPO is required to report in SEVIS if you do not come to UMass Amherst or if you leave before the end date on your DS-2019. Please tell us when you intend to leave UMass Amherst, if you cancel your plans to come to UMass Amherst, or if your start date will be delayed.

Health Insurance: All J-1 scholars and J-2 dependents must have health insurance that meets specific requirements. We must notify DOS if you fail to meet the requirements.

Employment Authorization: The J-1 authorizes your work at UMass Amherst as described on the DS-2019; it does not permit you to work elsewhere. If you have questions regarding other employment in the United States, please contact the IPO.

J-1 Visa Categories:

Research Scholar: UMass Amherst brings most international scholars in this category. It is for scholars whose appointments are expected to be longer than six months. Research Scholars are primarily expected to conduct research, but may also teach.

Professor: International scholars whose duties will primarily be teaching and whose stays are expected to be longer than six months are brought to UMass Amherst in this category. Research duties are also permitted.

Upon completion of the J-1 program, the Research Scholar or Professor and his/her dependents will become subject to a regulatory 24-month bar on repeat J-1 program participation (see below).

Short-Term Scholar: For scholars coming to the United States for no longer than six months. Extensions are not possible. This category is appropriate for scholars whose visits will be short and will not exceed six months, or for scholars who may come and go periodically to UMass Amherst. Repeat or back-to-back, 6-month short-term scholar documents/programs may not be permitted.
**Specialist**: UMass Amherst brings scholars to the US in this category under special circumstances and for certain types of appointments only. The maximum limit for a J-1 program in the Specialist category is one year.

**Student Bachelors/Masters/Doctorate/Non-Degree**: For students who participate in a designated exchange visitor program either degree seeking or non-degree seeking with a full course schedule. Cannot have the majority of funding be personally or family funded. Degree seeking students may study for a full degree length; non-degree seeking students cannot exceed 24 months of an exchange program.

**Two-Year Home Country Residency Requirement [INA 212(e)])**:

Be sure to read page two of your DS-2019. You and your J-2 dependents will be subject to this requirement if your J-1 program is funded by either your government or the US government, involves specialized knowledge or skills deemed necessary by your home country, or if you come to the US for graduate medical training. If this requirement applies to you, you must return to your home country for a cumulative total of two years at the end of your J-1 program. You are not prohibited from traveling to the US but you may not benefit from certain employment-based or family-based visas until the requirement is satisfied.

**24 Month Bar**:

If you are coming to UMass Amherst as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor, you and your J-2 dependents will become subject to the 24-month bar if: (1) you complete a full five years of J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program participation with one or more J-1 program sponsors; or (2) you completed a particular J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program of ANY LENGTH, and your SEVIS record becomes inactive BEFORE the full five-year period is over. **You must then wait at least 24 months before you may begin a new J-1 program in the Research Scholar or Professor category.**

**12 Month Bar**:

If you are coming to UMass Amherst as a Degree Student/Non-Degree Student, you and your J-2 dependents may become subject to the 12 month bar. If applicable, you must wait 12 months before applying for another visa in any J category.
Extending Your Stay, Changing Status, and Future Appointments

Some scholars may extend their permission to stay and work at UMass Amherst. You are permitted to remain in the United States until the end date shown on your visa document (such as the Form DS-2019 or I-797) or on the most recent admission stamp in your passport or paper Form I-94. The expiration date of your visa stamp is not relevant in this respect. If you seek a longer affiliation, discuss this with your supervisor or department headquarters several months in advance. Scholars sponsored by UMass Amherst are entered into the IPO's database and the IPO sends a reminder to you in advance of the expiration of current your document end date. It is important for you or your department to follow up as we need processing time to complete extensions or changes in current status.

If you are in J-1 visa status, refer to the end date of your Form DS-2019 rather than your admission stamp or Form I-94. Permission to work at UMass Amherst and to leave and reenter the United States in J-1 status ends as of the end date on your DS-2019 or the last date of your appointment, whichever is earlier. This date is followed by an automatic 30-day grace period during which you may remain in the United States. Applications for extension of stay must be submitted before your authorized stay expires.

Pre-Baccalaureate student scholars are only eligible for Short Term scholar category (maximum 6 month appointment)

How to Extend your J-1 Status:

The department/lab/center will need to initiate this if you are on UMass Amherst J-1 sponsorship. When you receive the notice that your DS-2019 is ending soon, please start the conversation early.

IPO takes approximately 10 business days to issue a new DS-2019. Departments will need to refer to the instructions provided on the IPO webpage to complete the request.

If you think you may wish to remain on appointment at UMass Amherst for longer than the limit that is allowed in your current nonimmigrant status, it is crucial for you to talk with an IPO staff member well before your authorized stay expires. A change of status may be possible, but requires careful advanced planning. Those in J-1 status should inquire about options more than one year in advance.
**Maintaining your J Status**

It is important for you to maintain valid visa status while in the United States and at UMass Amherst. Please contact the International Programs Office (IPO) if you have any questions or concerns. We can guide you and help ensure your compliance with regulations. Please do your part to make sure the IPO always has the most accurate, up-to-date information about you, and inform the IPO of the following in advance:

- Plans to travel outside the United States. Always check with the IPO several weeks before traveling to make sure you have all necessary documents and signatures.
- Change of residential address within 10 days
- Change of UMass Amherst department, lab, or center
- Change in funding (source and/or amount)
- Change of appointment percentage or title
- Change in work location or additional work location
- Leave of absence
- Leaving the U.S. for an extended period of time
- Early departure from UMass Amherst/Termination of appointment

Always pursue your teaching and/or research activities. Do not engage in activities not authorized under your nonimmigrant visa program. If you are not sure if an activity would be permitted, check with the IPO in advance.

Failure to maintain your J status could result in immigration enforcement.

**J-2 Work Permission**

Dependents (spouse, children 15-21) of J1-holders are eligible to work with special permission. [J2 Employment Application](#). The IPO cannot advise on J-2 applications as they are personal application.