

J-1 Program Overview

General Immigration Background Info

Within the U.S. immigration system, there are many different types of visas and immigration statuses, each with a different purpose and set of regulations which must be followed.

J-1 History and Purpose

The J-1 immigration status was created when the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program was established under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act in order to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the US and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.” Thus, the purpose of the J-1 program is **exchange** and program participants are known as “exchange visitors” (EVs).

J-1 Designation and Administration

The Department of State designates various organizations as **program sponsors** & individuals within those organizations as **responsible officers** to administer the J-1 program. Each program sponsor is also designated for specific J-1 **categories** which it is allowed to sponsor. OIS Advisors are the Responsible Officers for NC State’s J-1 Program. Program sponsors are required to use the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (**SEVIS**) in the administration of their J-1 programs. **SEVIS** is the Department of Homeland Security’s **database** which houses electronic records for F, J, & M status visitors to the U.S.

Form DS-2019

The Form DS-2019, also known as the “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status” is an official immigration document generated by SEVIS which shows a person has been accepted into a sponsor’s J program. The DS-2019 contains the EV’s biographical and programmatic information and is used to obtain a J visa, enter the U.S. in J status, and document the terms of the EV’s exchange program.

Advantages of the J-1

- Relatively quick, easy, and inexpensive to issue DS-2019 and make changes to program.
- Relatively easy to transfer between academic institutions.
- Program funding can be from variety of sources; does not have to be paid by sponsor.
- J-1s are allowed to engage in (and get paid for) incidental employment with pre-authorization from their J-1 Program Sponsor.
- J-2 dependents may apply for work authorization and if USCIS approves (90 day process) may work/volunteer anywhere.

Disadvantages of the J-1

- May affect eligibility for future J-1 program in Research Scholar/Professor category.
- May affect eligibility for future H visa/status, L visa/status, green card, and change of status process within the US.
- Cannot be used for permanent positions or clinical activities.

Common J-1 Terms and Acronyms

ARG!!!: The feeling you get when you are informed that a faculty member wants to bring in a visiting scholar... next week.

(A)RO: (Alternate) Responsible Officer. An employee or officer of a J-1 program sponsor who has been nominated by the sponsor, and approved by the Department of State, to carry out the duties of the J-1 program.

CBP: Customs and Border Protection. A DHS agency which controls the flow of goods and people into the U.S. Most often encountered when arriving at a U.S. Port of Entry from abroad.

DHS: Department of Homeland Security – Cabinet department of the U.S. Government charged with protecting the U.S. from internal threats to national security i.e. terrorism, domestic emergencies, natural disasters, etc.

DOS: Department of State. A federal agency that issues visas at U.S. consulates and embassies, and manages the J visa programs within the United States.

DS-160: Online Visa Application Form. Completed form is used to schedule a visa interview appointment at a US Embassy/Consulate abroad and pay the visa application processing fee.

DS-2019: The basic document used in administering the exchange visitor program. It is issued by the J-1 Program Sponsor to the Exchange Visitor, displays biographical and programmatic information, and is used to apply for a J visa and enter the US in J status. AKA "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status."

EAD: Employment Authorization Document. A card issued by USCIS to authorize a foreign national to work in the US temporarily subject to certain restrictions. A J-2 spouse or J-2 child over 16 is eligible to apply.

EV: Exchange Visitor. A nonimmigrant in J-1 visa status participating in an exchange program in the U.S.

Grace Period: A 30 day period of stay following an exchange visitor's program completion date during which s/he is allowed to settle affairs, travel the U.S., and prepare to return home. During this time, the individual is not in J status but rather under the jurisdiction of USCIS.

I-901 SEVIS Fee: A fee required of all international students and exchange visitors which funds SEVP and SEVIS.

I-94: Admission Record. The record of an individual's legal entry into the U.S., immigration classification & length of stay.

ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The immigration police. A DHS agency which acts as to enforce federal laws related to border control, customs, trade, & immigration.

J-1: A visa and immigration classification for individuals approved to participate in work- and study-based exchange visitor programs. All J-1s are sponsored by an organization that is designated by the DOS.

J-1 Visiting Scholar: Collective term referring to exchange visitors who come under the Research Scholar, Professor, or Short Term Scholar categories.

J-2: Dependent of a J-1. Spouse and unmarried children under 21 are eligible.

Program Sponsor: An organization designated by the Department of State to administer a J-1 program.

SEVIS: Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. An online database used by school officials, DOS, and other government agencies to monitor and track schools, exchange visitors, and students.

SEVP: Student and Exchange Visitor Program – Program within ICE which manages and monitors schools, F-1 and M-1 students, and their dependents. Also responsible for managing/administering SEVIS.

USCIS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. A DHS agency which processes various immigration petitions and applications and authorizes benefits for students and exchange visitors.

212(e): Refers to the 2 year home residency requirement to which some exchange visitors may be subject.