

J-1 EXCHANGE STUDENT ADMISSION

(INFORMATION FOR FACULTY & STAFF)

International Student and Scholar Services
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*Hosting a J-1 Exchange Student in your department makes you a participant in the United States Department of State Exchange Visitor Program at Georgia State University. The Exchange Visitor Program is for the purpose of educational and cultural exchange, **NOT EMPLOYMENT**, although many participating in the program may be paid by Georgia State University. Participation as hosts entails rights and responsibilities stipulated in the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 [Public Law 87-0256] and all subsequent amendments. Prior to reading the instructions and completing the **J-1 Exchange Student Application**, read the information below to confirm that the J-1 visa is consistent with the sponsoring department's intentions with regard to the visiting student at Georgia State University.*

International Student and Scholar Services (International Services) is responsible for administering the Exchange Visitor Program at Georgia State University, and for approving and signing all documentation connected with the Exchange Visitor Program (P-1-03559).

Definition of the Exchange Visitor Status

The Exchange Visitor Program brings qualified students, professors, research scholars and short-term scholars to the United States for a variety of educational purposes. The exchange visitor is under the sponsorship of an agency, institution, or organization that has been approved by the USDHS. The Georgia State University Exchange Visitor program is defined as "a program to provide courses of study, lecturing, and research opportunities, in the various fields of instruction and research conducted by Georgia State University for foreign students, professors, research scholars and short-term scholars to promote the general interest of international educational and cultural exchange."

Eligibility Requirements

Prior to issuing the DS-2019 form, it must be verified that the prospective exchange visitor:

- is eligible, qualified and accepted in the program which s/he will participate;
- possesses English language proficiency;
- possesses adequate resources (for self/dependents) to complete his/her program;
- has not been in the U.S. in exchange visitor status (J-1) for more than 6 months during the 12 months immediately preceding the start of current program request.

Issuing Form DS-2019

ISSS will issue a Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status) upon receipt of a properly completed J-1 Exchange Student Packet signed by the Georgia State University program coordinator requesting the exchange visitor. The official DS-2019 form and pre-arrival information will be sent to the requesting department to be mailed directly to the prospective exchange visitor.

Obtaining the J-1 Visa

When the exchange visitor receives the form DS-2019 they should contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to make an appointment to apply for a J-1 visa. At least 3 days prior to the visa interview, the student must pay the SEVIS Processing Fee of \$180. If the Consular Office determines that the person is a bona fide exchange visitor, the visa will be granted and the person may come to the United States on the J-1 visa. It should be noted that the Consular Officer is required to determine the intent of the applicant, and the Consular Officer's determination and decision regarding the issuance of a visa are not subject to appeal of any kind. Citizens of Canada, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands; British subjects who reside in Bermuda, the Bahamas or Canada; and citizens of Commonwealth Countries who reside in Canada or Bermuda are not required to obtain a J-1 visa stamp in their passport before entering the United States.

The Two-Year Home Residency Requirement

Upon completion of an Exchange Visitor Program in the United States, certain J-1 exchange visitors are required to live in their home country for a period of two years before they are eligible to apply for immigrant status or for another non-immigrant status. The two-year home country residence requirement applies to those exchange visitors who (1) are financially supported by the U.S. government or their home government; or (2) have skills which are needed in their home country, as specified on the Exchange Visitor Skills List; or (3) are medical doctors who have graduated from a foreign medical school and have come to the United States to study or work in the field of medicine. The purpose of the home country residence requirement is to enforce the return of exchange visitors in order to carry out the educational exchange objectives of the program. Waiver of the residence requirement can be granted under certain circumstances, but such waivers are difficult to obtain.

J-1 Processing and Timelines

A department should begin the J-1 process at least three months prior to the intended start date in order to allow time for unanticipated delays in government processing and visa stamp issuance. The Form DS-2019 may be completed in as little as five business days if all required documents are provided to ISSS in a timely manner.

Required Forms:

- **Exchange Student Application:** This form should be completed by exchange student and must be accompanied by original financial documents and a copy of the exchange visitor's passport
- **Exchange Program Information Form:** This form should be completed by the Exchange Program Coordinator and submitted to ISSS with the Exchange Student Application form.

Other Related Issues

Extensions: It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are legally present in the U.S. and all extensions are filed in a timely manner. If the exchange visitor wishes to extend their program (and the host department approves), the department must send a letter to ISSS requesting an extension no later than 15 days before the end date on the DS-2019.

Transfers: A J-1 exchange student may transfer to another institution within the three-year limit. The current sponsor must release the student's SEVIS record in order for the next institution to issue a DS-2019. Many programs have strict restrictions and may not permit a transfer to another program sponsor's institution; consult with the J-1 Student Advisor to discuss specific cases.

Departure: Prior to the exchange student's return home International Services should be notified in writing; the exchange student must complete the "Notice of Departure" form. This information is required to complete the student's record in SEVIS.

Insurance

Exchange visitors are required to have accident and sickness insurance in effect for themselves and any dependents in J-1 dependent status for the duration of their program. Students that purchase insurance from their home country are eligible to receive a waiver if the insurance meets the following requirements: (1) medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains and expenses associated with medical evacuation. The waiver requirements are subject to change.

Students that do not purchase insurance coverage from their home country are required to enroll in the mandatory health insurance program at Georgia State University. The current rates of insurance can be found at: http://www.gsu.edu/studentaccounts/health_insurance.html.

Exchange Program Summary Form

The purpose of the Exchange Program Summary is to compile accurate data that is necessary when processing applications for exchange students, processing initial immigration documentation (DS-2019s), provide necessary program information for advising purposes, etc. The form will be distributed on a yearly basis to all program directors and/or coordinators (please note that after the initial form is complete future forms will only need to be updated as necessary). After the form is completed it should be returned to International Services by simply clicking the "Submit by Email to International Services". Any questions regarding the form should be addressed to the International Admissions Coordinator.