



# **Participant Guide for Exchange Visitors**

*SUNY J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Consortium*

# WELCOME!

We are delighted that you will be participating in the exchange visitor program with the State University of New York! The Office of International Programs (OIP) and your SUNY campus are committed to providing you with the support necessary to ease your transition. Your campus has an Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) that will be your primary contact during your exchange activity. Your sponsoring department is also likely to assist you while you are in the U.S.; however, your EVA is the only individual on campus able to assist you with immigration regulations and maintenance of your J-1 status. It is essential that you report to them upon arrival for your exchange visitor orientation and discussion of status requirements.

This guide was developed to help answer many of your questions and provide you with basic information prior to your arrival. Your individual campuses will be providing additional information regarding your exchange visitor activity and preparation for your arrival to campus. You should contact your campus directly for additional information and to plan your arrival.

We hope you enjoy your program at the State University of New York and find it both educationally and culturally rewarding. On behalf of The State University of New York System Administration and our campuses, we look forward to your arrival!

Office of International Programs  
SUNY System Administration  
State University Plaza, 353 Broadway  
Albany, New York 12246 USA



# ABOUT SUNY

SUNY and its 64 campuses have a long history of internationalization, achieved through campus-specific programs and planning, as well as system-level initiatives and leadership. Our campuses together comprise one of the most diverse learning communities in the world.

The SUNY J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) Consortium was approved by the U.S. Department of State on January 14, 2013 and currently consists of 34 SUNY campuses and System Administration. The SUNY J-1 EVP Consortium includes community colleges, technology colleges, university colleges, and university centers and doctoral degree granting institutions and will offer a diverse range of educational environments and geographic locations to best suit our exchange visitors. The consortium provides the opportunity for consortium campuses to increase educational and cultural exchange between our campuses and international partners.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

The State University of New York is committed to assisting you throughout your exchange program. While your sponsoring department will be assisting you with your program, it is essential that you work directly with your Exchange Visitor Advisor at your host campus in regards to all your immigration related needs. They are best prepared to assist you with navigating immigration regulations to ensure that you maintain your legal status in the United States. A complete list of the Exchange Visitor Advisors in the SUNY J-1 EVP Consortium is provided on the following page. Although your primary contact should be with your Exchange Visitor Advisor, we have provided the contact information for the Consortium's Responsible Office, the Office of International Programs, and the Department of State below for your convenience.

Our exchange visitor website is an important resource during your participation in the exchange program. It provides a current contact list for all consortium Exchange Visitor Advisors, preparation materials, web resources and important forms related to your status.

**Exchange Visitor Website:** <http://system.suny.edu/global/iss/evp/>

### **The State University of New York**

Office of International Programs  
International Student and Scholar Services Manager  
State University Plaza, 353 Broadway, Albany, New York USA  
Email: [iss@suny.edu](mailto:iss@suny.edu) Phone: 518-320-1410

### **U.S. Department of State**

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Academic & Government Programs Division  
Email: [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov) Website: <http://j1visa.state.gov>

### **SUNY Campuses – Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) Contact List**

A detailed contact list for each campus is provided on the Contact Information page of the Exchange Visitor website:

<http://system.suny.edu/global/iss/evp/contact-information/>

*\*Please contact the EVA for your campus ONLY as they can assist you with specific issues related to your exchange program and your campus. Your EVA will provide you with emergency contact information.*

# PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

This list is designed to assist you with your preparations for your exchange visitor program. If you need additional assistance, please contact your academic department and/or Exchange Visitor Advisor at your host campus. There may be additional preparations depending on your specific program and campus.

- Passport:** Obtain a new passport through your government's passport agency, or, if you already have a passport, check the expiration date to verify it will be valid for at least six months beyond your expected departure from the United States.
- Prepare for U.S. Visa Application:** Make an appointment to apply for a U.S. entry visa (J-1) through the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The following checklist will assist you in preparing for your J-1 visa interview:

- 1) Contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy to ask about how to apply for a J-1 visa. A list of Consulates and Embassies can be found at <http://usembassy.gov/>
- 2) After you receive the DS-2019 form from SUNY, verify the information on your DS-2019 is correct. If there are any errors, please contact your Exchange Visitor Advisor immediately before proceeding with preparations.
- 3) Pay the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) fee. This is NOT a campus fee. You must bring the receipt of fee payment with you to the interview. For more information on the SEVIS fee and to make payment, visit <https://www.fmjfee.com>. Please hold onto this receipt as it is an important immigration document and you will not be able to request additional copies.

If you are unable to pay the SEVIS fee online, you have the option of paying by mail or western union. Mailing the SEVIS fee does not constitute payment. The fee is processed when it is received by Department of Homeland Security. If you mail your payment, it can take a considerable amount of time for payment to be received and for you to receive a receipt by return mail. Some countries are not allowed to make credit card payments so please plan accordingly. More information on how to pay the SEVIS fee is available on their website ([www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)).

If you are applying for a J-2 dependent visa or have paid this fee and been denied a visa within the last twelve months, you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee. Talk to your Exchange Visitor Advisor for more information if you are re-applying after a denial.

Please note: If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.

- 4) Follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate's instructions to schedule an interview for your J-1 visa. It is important to apply for your visa as far in advance as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made no more than 90 days from the intended date of travel, but some can make earlier arrangements for interviews. Remember you are allowed to enter the U.S. up to one month before the start date on your DS-2019. The college on the DS-2019 and visa must match on initial entry into the United States.
- 5) Complete the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application, Form DS 160. More information is available online at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms\\_4230.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms_4230.html)

As part of the online application, you will need to pay the visa application fee by following instructions on your local U.S. embassy or consulate's web site. You will need to bring the receipt showing payment of the fee to the visa interview

- Apply for Your U.S. Visa:** Please prepare and bring the following items to your visa interview.

- (1) A passport valid for at least six months;
- (2) Original DS-2019 signed by exchange visitor;
- (3) Official Acceptance/Appointment letter;

- (4) Completed DS-160 visa application (confirmation page with barcode/application ID number listed);
- (5) MRV fee receipt (visa application fee receipt);
- (6) Receipt for the SEVIS fee (Form I-797);
- (7) Visa Reciprocity Fee (if applicable) ([http://travel.state.gov/visa/fees/fees\\_3272.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/fees/fees_3272.html));
- (8) Two passport style photograph (for information on photo requirements visit the following website: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreg/visaphotoreg\\_5334.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreg/visaphotoreg_5334.html));
- (9) Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your program of activity (less than 6 months old);
- (10) Official transcript and/or diploma (if applicable);
- (11) Official test scores such as TOEFL, IELTS, etc. (if applicable); and
- (12) Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your program in the U.S. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

- You may be asked to provide additional supporting information regarding your program of activity and qualifications as well. Please check your nearest embassy/consulate's website for other required documents that you may have to provide.
- Remain calm and answer all the Visa Officer's questions to you openly and honestly.
- The visa officer may ask you several questions to determine the authenticity of your application. These questions should be easy to answer. Questions could include:
  - What are you studying/teaching/researching?
  - Why have you chosen to participate in this exchange program?
  - How do you plan to use this experience when you return to your home country?
  - What are your ties to your home country?

You should be able to explain how you came to this decision to study and why you chose this program specifically. Most importantly, be confident and prepared but do not memorize answers to possible questions-just speak honestly.

- For more information about the exchange visitor (J-1) visa process, visit the U.S. Department of State website at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1267.html#12](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html#12).

**Note for Canadian citizens:** You do not need an entry visa; however, you must present the appropriate documents when you cross through the port of entry into the United States. These documents include passport, DS-2019, program acceptance/appointment letter, and copies of financial documents.

If you are denied your J-1 visa, please contact your Exchange Visitor Advisor immediately with the reason for denial and the date/time/location of interview. There may be an opportunity to provide additional information or clarification in a timely manner to still allow you to participate in your program of activity.

- Arrange your travel and inform the Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) at your host campus of your travel plans:** When making your travel plans, please take into consideration that you must arrive BEFORE your DS-2019 start date and are NOT allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date on the DS-2019. Your host campus will be able to provide additional assistance in your arrival preparations so contact your EVA before finalizing your travel plans including the best options for travelling to your host campus.
- Arrange your housing:** Your host campus will provide guidance and assistance with selecting your housing during your program of activity. Please contact your Exchange Visitor Advisor on your host campus for guidance.
- Complete required medical forms:** Please send your completed the Medical Attestation Form included with this packet to your Exchange Visitor Advisor with any required documentation if using a non-SUNY health insurance plan. Your Exchange Visitor Advisor will assist with ensuring proper coverage. Proper health insurance coverage is required of all exchange visitors by the Department of State. More information is included on the Medical Attestation Form.

# THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN TRAVELLING

- ❖ **Do not pack your immigration documents in your checked luggage!** Keep your immigration documents (DS-2019, passport, visa, financial documents, etc.) easily accessible when travelling. At the port of entry you will receive record of your arrival (e.g. admission stamp in your passport or a paper Form I-94 card). If you receive the admission stamp, you will need to print out your electronic Form I-94 via [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). Your Form I-94 is an important record and should be kept in a safe location (e.g. stapled in your passport). Be sure to check your immigration documents before leaving the Port of Entry to ensure that you have all your documents and that your entry stamp/I-94 is properly annotated (e.g. "J-1 D/S").
- ❖ Keep your items with you at all times. Do not leave your luggage especially your purse, wallet or immigration documents where someone could take it. These should be with you at ALL times even in the bathrooms.
- ❖ Do not carry large amounts of cash when you travel. Credit cards and/or traveler's checks are ideal for purchases both during travel and once you arrive. Your host campus will provide information on how to open a U.S. bank account, if needed, during orientation.
- ❖ Report to school as soon as possible when you arrive. Please confirm your arrival with the campus BEFORE leaving to confirm arrival instructions especially for evening and weekend arrivals.

## ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

This list is designed to assist you with your preparations for your exchange visitor program. If you need additional assistance, please contact your academic department and/or Exchange Visitor Advisor at your host campus. There may be additional preparations depending on your specific program and campus.

- Please report to Exchange Visitor Advisor. You will need to bring your passports, DS-2019s, visas, and proof of health insurance for you and any dependents. This is required of your immigration status. Your EVA will make copies of your immigration documents for your file, assist with your immigration and health insurance needs, and help you adjust to living in your new community.
- Orientation: All exchange visitors must participate in an exchange visitor orientation program. This orientation will cover your immigration status rights and responsibilities as well as other important aspects of your program activity. This orientation is provided by your Exchange Visitor Advisor. During orientation, your EVA will address issues concerning acclimation to the local area, housing, health insurance, money matters, cultural adjustment and more.
- Report to Department: In addition to reporting to your Exchange Visitor Advisor upon arrival, it is essential that you check in with your academic department. Your academic department may have additional orientation programming required prior to the start of your program of activity. This may include course registration for students, course assignments for professors, etc.
- Obtain Campus Identification (ID) Card. This ID card will be a useful tool throughout campus and often the local community. It is also used as another form of identification when opening bank accounts and establishing other local services.
- Familiarize yourself with resources. It is important to identify resources that you may need to utilize both on and off campus. These could include health services, counseling services, bookstore, library, banks, grocery stores, department stores, transportation, etc. Your Exchange Visitor Advisor can assist with identifying the proper resources for your needs during your stay.

## THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU

- ❖ Appropriate clothing – If you are arriving in January (spring semester), you will want to purchase a winter jacket, boots, hat, and gloves BEFORE you arrive in the US. It will be cold when you arrive so be prepared.
- ❖ Pictures of family/friends for comfort
- ❖ Cultural Items/Cultural Clothing to participate in cultural activities/festivals on campus
- ❖ Cell Phone/Calling Card - You will need to communicate with home and possibly the school so having a calling card or cell phone can be very helpful. You can purchase these when you arrive but it can also be helpful before you get settled at your campus.
- ❖ Laptop/Computer - This can be a way for you to communicate (via email) with family, the campus, and your Exchange Visitor Advisor. The college has free internet so you can use a laptop at campus for free. A laptop/computer may be cheaper to buy in the US after you arrive.
- ❖ Translation Guide - This could be electronic or paper dictionary for non native English speakers to help translate English to your native language. This may help especially during your first few weeks getting settled in the area.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS

The Exchange Visitor Program was developed based on the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hayes Act) of 1961. The program “fosters global understanding through educational and cultural exchanges” through work-and study-based programs. The Department of State (DoS) issues J-Visas and establishes and administers the federal regulations and policies governing the Exchange Visitor Program. There is an expectation of reciprocity with the Exchange Visitor Program. The SUNY Office of International Programs (OIP), an administrative unit within SUNY System Administration Office of Global Affairs, has been designated by the DoS as an exchange visitor sponsor on behalf of the SUNY J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Consortium. This designation authorizes SUNY OIP to issue the DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility forms on behalf of consortium member campuses to invite exchange visitors to the US for educational and cultural exchange.

Upon your arrival to your host campus, your Exchange Visitor Advisor will provide you with an orientation. This orientation will include both an orientation to the immigration regulations related to the Exchange Visitor Program as well as information regarding the campus and local community. Your academic departments may also have additional orientation programming for your specific program of activity; however, you are REQUIRED to participate in the Exchange Visitor Orientation regardless of departmental orientations. The information provided in this guide is designed to assist exchange visitors in understanding their J-1 status including requirements and benefits.

Special Note: All the forms referenced in this document can be obtained from the Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) on your campus. Contact information is available at the beginning of this guide.

### CATEGORIES OF EXCHANGE VISITORS & TIME LIMITATIONS

The SUNY J-1 Exchange Visitor Consortium is designated to sponsor the following categories of exchange visitors: student, student intern, professor, research scholar, short-term scholars, and specialist. Each category permits specific kinds of activities and has its own maintenance of status requirements, limitations of stay and employment options. Here are the categories approved for SUNY:

**Student** – A college or university student who is studying in the US at a post-secondary accredited educational institution as

- a full course of study degree-seeking student,
- a prescribed post-secondary course of study student,
- a full-time non-degree student (of up to 24 months in duration),
- a student in post-secondary English language training, or
- a student participating in authorized Academic Training.

Students have a minimum stay of 3 weeks and there is no limit to the maximum stay. Academic Training is a benefit that allows J-1 degree and non-degree seeking students the opportunity for employment experience directly related to their field of study. Authorization must be received PRIOR to any work. Please refer to the handout “*Academic Training Application for J-1 Students*” for more information.

**Professor** – An individual primarily teaching, lecturing, observing or consulting at post-secondary accredited educational institution or similar types of institutions. A professor may also conduct research if approved by the campus. Professors have a minimum stay in the U.S. of 3 weeks and a maximum stay of up to 5 years. J-1 Professors may not hold or be candidates for tenure. Limitations include 12 and 24 month bars, described below.

**Research Scholar** – An individual who is primarily conducting research, observing or consulting in connection with a research project at a research institution, post-secondary educational institutions or similar types of institutions. A Research Scholar may also lecture if approved by the campus. This category also has a minimum stay of 3 weeks and a maximum stay up to 5 years. J-1 Research Scholars may not hold or be candidates for tenure. Limitations include 12 and 24 month bars.

**Short-term Scholar (STS)** – An individual who is a professor, research scholar, specialist or person with similar education or accomplishments coming to the U.S. on a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills at a post-secondary educational institution or similar types of institutions. There is no minimum stay requirement. The maximum duration of stay is limited to 6 months. Short-term Scholars are not subject to the 12 and 24 month bars.

*NOTE:* Short-term Scholars are expected to complete their J-1 program objective within the 6-month limit. Any repeated, “revolving door” use of multiple STS visits for the same scholar is inappropriate and contradictory to purpose of U.S. DoS Exchange Visitor Program. In order to ensure the integrity of SUNY J-1 EVP Consortium, SUNY OIP will carefully evaluate multiple STS requests for the same J-1 scholar. For such requests, the sponsoring department must provide a detailed written justification regarding how a single program objective is accomplished through multiple STS visits may be required.

**Specialist** – An individual who is an expert in a field of specialized knowledge and skills coming to the U.S. for the purpose of observing, consulting, or demonstrating their special skills. This category is not intended for experts covered by the other exchange visitor categories. This category has a minimum stay of 3 weeks and a maximum stay of up to one year.

**J-2 Dependent** – A family member is classified as a dependent only if they are coming into the country on a J-2 visa. A J-2 is defined as an accompanying spouse or unmarried child under the age of 21. A family member who is or will be coming into the U.S. on another type of visa is not considered a dependent and should not be included in the DS-2019 Request. J-2 dependents may enter with or after the J-1 exchange visitor but never before. Each J-2 spouse/dependent will be issued his/her own SEVIS ID # and DS-2019. Each dependent should sign his/her own dependent DS-2019 unless the dependent is under the age of 14 in which case the J-1 exchange visitor should sign the dependent’s DS-2019. Their status in the U.S. is dependent on the J-1 so they can remain in the U.S. during temporary J-1 departures. Generally, a “temporary departure” is less than 30 days for scholars and as long as the J-1 is maintaining full time enrollment for students. The J-2 is eligible to attend classes or be admitted to a full-time degree program. J-2 dependents are usually able to obtain permission to work from USCIS. Work authorization requires a separate application process that can be initiated after the J-2 has arrived in the U.S. and must be approved by USCIS before beginning any employment. For more information, see “*J-2 Employment: Information Sheet & Checklist*” and consult with your campus Exchange Visitor Advisor.



## **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to specific campus and program selection criteria, there are a few basic requirements that are required of all exchange visitors:

- 1) Intent to pursue appropriate activity (e.g. pursue studies, research or teaching)
- 2) Intent to return to home country, as this is a non-immigrant visa (to be determined by consular officer in home country at time of visa application)
- 3) Sufficient funding for program
- 4) Appropriate background for program activity
- 5) Adequate English proficiency

Students must also meet one of the following four criteria at some point during their studies:

- Student or program is financed directly or indirectly by U.S. Government, student's home country government, or an international organization;
- Program is an agreement between the U.S. government and a foreign government;
- Program is pursuant to a written agreement between American & foreign educational institutions, American education institution & a foreign government, or a U.S. state or local government & foreign government; OR
- Student is support substantially by funding from any source other than personal or family funds

Scholar categories (e.g. Research Scholar and Professor) are expected to have the appropriate academic or similar credentials for the exchange activity. This is generally expected to be a minimum of a bachelor's degree with the appropriate experience in the field of activity. Scholars cannot hold a tenure track position.

## **TWO-YEAR HOME-COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT**

The intent of the Exchange Visitor Program is for the home country to benefit from the Exchange Visitor's experiences in the United States. Accordingly, the J-1 Exchange Visitors and their accompanying J-1 dependents may be subject to a two-year home-country physical presence residence requirement based on Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act and Title 22 Part 40 and Part 41 in the Code of Federal Regulations. The J visa stamp in the Exchange Visitor's passport and/or the DS-2019 form should specify if they are subject with the phrase: "Bearer (is/is not) subject to 212(e). Two-year rule (does/does not) apply."

If subject, they are required to return to their home country (foreign residence) for two years before being eligible for H, L or immigrant status or they must request a waiver of residency requirement. The two-year home-country physical presence requirement is usually assigned based on government funding, graduate medical education or training, or specialized knowledge or skills according to the Exchange Visitor Skills List. Exchange Visitors are eligible to subsequently return to the U.S. in other non-immigrant visa categories for which they qualify, even if subject to the two-year requirement. However, those subject to the requirement are not eligible to return in H, L or immigrant status until the two-year residency is met in the aggregate. Waivers of the two-year requirement may be granted by the Department of State's Waiver Review Division under special conditions.

For more information regarding the two-year home-country physical presence requirement, please visit the Department of State website at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1267.html#15](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html#15).

## **12 AND 24 MONTH BARS**

The 12/24 Month Bars are NOT the same as the two-year home-country physical presence requirement. The 12 and 24 month bars may impact an exchange visitor's eligibility to enter the U.S. in either J-1 Research Scholar or J-1 Professor status depending on recent periods of J status.

**The 12-Month Bar:** Individuals who have been in the United States in J status for more than six months in the previous 12 months are not eligible to enter the United States as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for a 12-month period from last U.S. departure. Time spent in the J-1 Short-term Scholar category does not count towards the 12-month bar. The 12-month bar applies to both the J-1 principal and any J-2 dependents. The 12-month bar does not prevent individuals from returning to the United States in another visa type. Official determination of whether an individual is subject to 12 month

bar will be determined by the Responsible Officer/Alternate Responsible Officer (RO/ARO) for the SUNY J-1 EVP Consortium through consultation with the Exchange Visitor Advisor.

**The 24-Month Bar:** Any individual who participates in an Exchange Visitor program in the Researcher Scholar or Professor category on or after 11/18/06 is subject to a 24-month bar on "repeat participation" in those categories. Scholars subject to the 24-month bar may not return to the United States as a J-1 scholar in the Research Scholar or Professor category for the 24-month period. This bar also applies to J-2 dependents. The 24-month bar is not the same as the Two Year Home Residence Requirement. The 24-month bar does not prevent individuals from returning to the United States in another visa type.

When a scholar either concludes or leaves a J-1 program, whichever happens earlier, the scholar's record becomes inactive in SEVIS; thus making it impossible for SUNY to reactivate it. At that point, the 24-month bar time starts to accrue. Therefore, it is extremely important for your International Office to be informed of a scholar's departure from their campus and his/her future plans, so that the scholar's SEVIS record can be properly maintained to facilitate his/her possible return to the United States.

## **MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS**

It is your responsibility as an exchange visitor to maintain their J-1 status according to the pertinent immigration regulations.

You must:

- Check in with the campus's Exchange Visitor Advisor within 30 days of the start date of the DS-2019. NOTE: This is required for anyone with a new DS-2019, including exchange visitors returning on a new program in order to properly verify status in SEVIS.
- Maintain valid immigration documents including: a valid, unexpired passport; an I-94 card marked "D/S" (Duration of Status); and a valid and accurate DS-2019. Please be aware of the DS-2019 end date. Extensions must be requested BEFORE the DS-2019 expires.
- Participate in the activity as specified on the DS-2019 and at the campus sponsoring the DS-2019.
- Not work without proper employment authorization. Student and Scholars are different restrictions regarding employment. It is important to consult with your Exchange Visitor Advisor before accepting or beginning any employment.
- Maintain adequate health insurance for the exchange visitor and any accompanying dependents. The DoS requires that coverage includes at least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness, a deductible no greater than \$500 per accident or illness, repatriation coverage of at least \$25,000, and medical evacuation coverage of at least \$50,000. Non U.S. policies must be backed by the full faith and credit of the home country government, or the company providing the insurance must meet minimum rating requirements as state in DoS regulations. Please note that you, and any accompanying dependents, also may be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act. Consult with your EVA for more information on campus and SUNY policies regarding health insurance.
- Notify the Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) of any change in your U.S. or Foreign address within 10 days of the move. The EVA will then notify the program administrator, the Office of International Programs at SUNY System Administration, who will notify the Department of Homeland Security as required by law.
- Students Only: Maintain full course of study as defined by the host campus. Any exceptions must be authorized in advance by the campus's Exchange Visitor Advisor.
- Make sure that the travel endorsement on Page 1 of the DS-2019 is valid before travel. You must have your DS-2019s signed yearly.
- Understand the "grace period" at the completion of the program. Exchange visitors have a 30-day grace period following the completion of their program to "travel" in the United States. During this time, you may decide to either: 1) depart the U.S., 2) change to another non-immigrant status (if eligible), or 3) transfer to another institution (if eligible).
- Obtain permission before withdrawing from their program or transferring to another program at another institution.

It is important that you notify the proper offices when you complete your program. This includes completion of the “Exchange Visitor Departure Form” as it may impact your ability to return to the U.S. in the future. This is especially true for the scholar categories.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Employment is defined as any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, or other compensation. Please note that employment is not only limited to paid experiences but include unpaid experiences as well. USCIS has strict regulations regarding the ability to work for both students and scholars so it is essential that you consult your Exchange Visitor Advisor BEFORE accepting any employment offers – paid or unpaid.

### ***STUDENTS***

Students must received approval for employment in advance and in writing before they begin any work and approval may be valid up to 12 months at a time. They must be maintaining their status and all employment is limited to no more than 20 hours per week except during official school breaks and annual vacation. There are three general categories of J-1 employment for students:

- **On-Campus Employment:** Work on campus includes assistantships, fellowships, scholarships or any work that occurs on the college campus. Students must submit a completed “*Employment Authorization Request for J-1 Students*” form and a letter of employment offer from the campus office/department for each employer.
- **Off-Campus Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship:** Students who experience a serious, unforeseen economic hardship which occurs after arrival to the US may be eligible to apply for this special off-campus employment authorization. Students experiencing this type of hardship should speak to their Exchange Visitor Advisor.
- **Academic Training:** Academic training is work experience directly related to the student’s major field of study. It is available before or after completion of the program of study. See “*Academic Training Application for J-1 Students*” and “*Academic Training Advisor Recommendation*” for more information on applying for Academic Training.

### ***SCHOLARS***

Scholars must obtain written authorization before accepting any additional employment outside their program objectives and DS-2019 authorization. J-1 Exchange visitors in Short-Term Scholar and Research Scholar/Professor categories may participate in occasional lectures and short-term consultations at off-campus locations; however, they must obtain prior written approval. These additional lectures/consultations should not interfere with the activities of the exchange visitor’s program of activity at the SUNY sponsor campus. See “*Incidental Employment for J-1 Scholars*” for more information.

### ***SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND TAXES***

Once you receive your work authorization, you must apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). You must be validated in SEVIS when you arrive prior to applying for a social security card. Take your passport, Form I-94, your Form DS-2019, and your EAD to your local Social Security Administration offices. After you complete and hand in the SSN application form, you will receive notification of your SSN in the mail. The process can take four to eight weeks so plan accordingly. You may call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or visit the Social Security Administration website (<http://www.ssa.gov/>) with any questions. Income earned is subject to federal and state income taxes as well as Social Security and Medicare taxes (FICA). Exchange visitors must file forms with the US Internal Revenue Service for each year they are present in the US, regardless of whether US income was received. Every year, tax return forms must be filed by April 15<sup>th</sup>. More information about tax forms and filing taxes is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or speak with your Exchange Visitor Advisor for additional resources.

## **TRAVEL**

There are a variety of considerations regarding travel outside of the U.S., so it is important that you consult with your Exchange Visitor Advisor (EVA) prior to any travel outside of the U.S. to ensure that you are prepared for re-entry. The following documents are required for re-entry into the U.S.:

- A valid passport (unless exempt from passport requirement)
- A valid visa (unless exempt from the visa requirement or eligible for automatic revalidation)
- A valid DS-2019, **signed for re-entry by the RO/ARO**

## **EXTENSIONS**

You must always maintain a valid DS-2019 during your stay in the US. J-1 regulations require that you finish the program of study (students) or program of activity (scholars) by the end date on your DS-2019. If additional time will be needed beyond that date, an extension of stay must be requested **at least one month BEFORE the expiration date on the current DS-2019**.

Please note that submitting an application for extension of stay does not guarantee that the extension will be approved. There must be sufficient reason to justify the extension. Please refer to the handout "*Extension of Stay for J-1 Students & Scholars*" for more information regarding extensions and to obtain the required form(s).

## **TRANSFERS**

You are allowed to change schools or employers, if the purpose of the transfer is to complete your original program objective. However, there are considerations and procedures that must be followed to ensure that immigration regulations are being maintained. The transfer process involves transferring the SEVIS record from the current program sponsor to the future program sponsor.

To process a transfer INTO a SUNY campus, the following items must be provided:

- Exchange Visitor Request Form (and any related documentation)
- Proof of acceptance into the new program of activity (degree program or employment position)
- Current financial documentation
- "*Transfer In Form for J-1 Scholars*" or "*Transfer In Form for J-1 Students*"

To process a transfer OUT of a SUNY campus, the following items must be provided:

- "*Exchange Visitor Departure Form*"
- "*Transfer Out Form for J-1 Scholars*" or "*Transfer Out Form for J-1 Students*"

At the completion of your program of activity, including any authorized post-completion Academic Training for students, you are given an additional 30-day grace period to:

- Depart the U.S.;
- Apply for a change of status to another immigration status via the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, if not subject to the two-year rule; OR
- Transfer to another educational institution if your J-1 category allows for additional time for your stay.

## **EXPORT CONTROL**

The U.S. Government has strict export control laws. If you will be traveling abroad, you should consult with the head of the department or laboratory before sending or taking any materials related to your work. The U.S. Government may require a license to export such items.