J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS

International Scholars Operations
January 24, 2024
TODAY’S TOPICS

• Introduction to J-1
• UW sponsorship requirements
  • Appointment details
  • Funding
• J-1 eligibility requirements
  • English proficiency requirement
  • Health insurance requirement
  • Cultural exchange requirement
• J-1 procedures
• Q&A
INTRODUCTION TO J-1 VISAS
What is The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program?

Key Aspects
• Established in 1961
• Around 300,000 participants every year
• Administered by U.S. Department of State
• Uses the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

Mission
To increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges, thereby strengthening the ties between the nations.
Details of J-1 Status

- Sponsor-, activity-, and location-specific
- Full-time activity only
- Temporary appointments only
- Period of stay can be a few days up to five years
- 12 & 24 month bars on certain categories
- Two-year home residence requirement (possible)
- Can be paid for outside “occasional lectures and short-term consultations” (only if authorized by ISO in advance)
Permitted Activities

J-1 exchange visitors may engage in:

- Research
- Observation
- Consultation
- Limited teaching
- Demonstrating special skills

The J visa is not a work permit.
J-1 Categories Sponsored by ISO

- *Research Scholar/Professor*
  Up to 5 years *but* 12- and 24-month bars on repeat participation

- *Short-Term Scholar*
  Up to 6 months

- *Specialist*
  Up to 12 months; by exception only
1. True or False: J visas can only be used for people engaging in full time program activities.

Answer: **True**. J visas holders must be appointed for full time.

2. True or False: The J visa is considered a work permit for international scholars.

Answer: **False**. It is not considered a work permit. It is meant for educational and cultural exchange.
REVIEW QUESTIONS

3. What is the maximum amount of time a J visa holder in the Research Scholar/Professor category can stay in the U.S. on the program?

A. 6 months
B. 1 year
C. 5 years
D. There is no time limit as long as they are reappointed.

Answer: C; They can stay up to 5 years but there are 12- and 24-month bars on repeat participation.
UW SPONSORSHIP REQUIREMENTS
Appointment Details

UW sponsors the following titles for J-1 status:
• Visiting titles
• Postdoctoral Scholar
• Acting Instructor
• Artist in Residence

> Appointments must be **full-time** and have **regular** UW faculty sponsor **supervision**.

> UW cannot sponsor **tenured or tenure-track faculty** as J-1 exchange visitors.
Funding requirements

There are two funding requirements:

- UW J-1 funding minimum
- UW salary minimum

Meeting the J-1 **Funding Minimum**
Scholar has enough money to support themselves and their family in the U.S.

Meeting the **Salary Minimum**
UW or another source is compensating the scholar at an appropriate level for the appointment title
J-1 Funding Minimum

UW Funding Minimum (applies regardless of title or salary source)

- $2,100/month for the J-1 exchange visitor
- $1,200/month for the J-2 spouse
- $600/month for each J-2 child

Funding Source

At least 50% of funding minimum must come from a source other than personal or family funds.
UW Salary Schedule

For most titles, the J-1 will also have to show outside funding equivalent to the UW salary minimum for their title and rank.

Outside funding can include one or more government, employer, UW, or third-party sources. Personal or family funds do not count.

As courtesy titles, visiting scholars are not subject to the UW salary minimum. However, they still have to meet the J-1 funding minimum.
## Funding and Salary Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Visiting Scholar</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Scholar</td>
<td>Visiting Associate Professor (nine-month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(experience level 0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spouse?</strong></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children?</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual J-1 Funding Minimum</strong></td>
<td>$61,200</td>
<td>$25,200</td>
<td>$46,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Salary Minimum</strong></td>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>$68,460</td>
<td>$56,484</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How to document funding

Funding documentation must:
• Come from the funding source
• Be signed and on letterhead
• Be written in English
• Include the scholar’s name
• Include the sponsorship dates
• Include the exact funding amount in U.S. dollars

ISO will review funding documentation and contact you if it does not match or otherwise meet these requirements. Feel free to reach out to us with questions!
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. True or False: UW cannot sponsor tenured or tenure-track faculty as J-1 exchange visitors.

   Answer: **True**; UW cannot sponsor tenured or tenure-track positions on a J-1 visa.

2. Each of the following funding sources can be used to help meet the UW salary minimum requirement EXCEPT:
   1. Government
   2. Employer
   3. UW
   4. Third-party entities
   5. Personal or family funds

   Answer: **E**: Outside funding equivalent source cannot be personal or family funds.
3. What information must be included in funding documentation?

   A. Funding source
   B. Signed and on letterhead
   C. Written in English
   D. Scholar’s name
   E. Sponsorship dates
   F. Exact funding amount in U.S. dollars
   G. All of the above

   Answer: G; it must include all of the information listed.
J-1 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- English proficiency
- Health insurance
- Cultural exchange
J-1 English Proficiency

J-1 Exchange Program sponsors are required to confirm that prospective scholars have “sufficient proficiency in the English language [...] to successfully participate in his or her program and to function on a day-to-day basis.”

> That proficiency must be determined by an *objective measurement* of English language.
**Objective English Proficiency Measurements**

> Acceptable methods for documenting *English proficiency*:
  
  - A recognized English language test
  - Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school
  - A documented interview conducted by the sponsor

> Units must use one of these three methods to confirm proficiency *before* submitting the visa request.
Recognized English language test

Units should retain a test result copy with exchange visitor’s name.

• Pass/fail test: Exchange visitor must have passed. (E.g.: Cambridge English)
• Scored test: The unit can decide necessary score. (E.g.: TOEFL)

Online or informal tests are not acceptable.

Units may choose to use the UW Admissions requirements for English proficiency.
Academic Institution or English Language School Requirements

Units should retain a signed document on school/institutional letterhead including:

• The exchange visitor’s name
• Their proficiency level
• Dates of attendance
• Basis for proficiency assessment (e.g. completion of English coursework)
Documented English Proficiency Interview

How and when can the interview take place?

- Must be in-person or video if possible
- If neither is possible, a phone interview may be used
- The interview must be conducted before the J-1 visa request is submitted to ISO

The interview must be conducted by a UW employee, preferably the faculty sponsor or the unit administrator, who is proficient in English.
Proficiency Interview (continued)

Resulting documentation should include:

- Participant names
- Interview date, time, and method
- What was discussed
- Assessment method (e.g. was a rubric or scoring method used)
- Statement that scholar is sufficiently proficient in English
- Signed and dated by interviewer

ISO is happy to review your interview documentation templates!
Informal assessment: The interviewer can discuss life in the U.S., e.g.:

- Where do you think you’ll want to live?
- What support services are you interested in?
- Tell me about what you like to do outside of work.
- What do you think will be most challenging about living and working in the U.S.?

If the visitor can’t answer these questions clearly and completely, they’re probably not proficient enough for daily life in the U.S.

Formal assessment: The interviewer can use the TOEFL Scoring Rubric or another proficiency rubric of their choice.
Insurance Requirement

J-1 exchange visitors must obtain and maintain the following insurance requirements throughout their stay:

- Health insurance
- Medical repatriation
- Evacuation insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Required amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical benefits</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductible per accident or illness</td>
<td>$500 maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repatriation of remains</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical evacuation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISO collects the Insurance Compliance Form at check-in and with all J-1 extensions.
Cultural exchange requirement

All sponsors must have cultural exchange plans in place for the J-1 and J-2(s)

For possible activities, see:

• [Our cultural exchange page](#)
• [CIRCLE](#)
• [The Whole U](#)
• [FIUTS](#)
• [Visiting Seattle](#) (City of Seattle website)
• [Experience Washington](#) (commercial website)
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is NOT an acceptable method for documenting English proficiency?
   A. A recognized English language test
   B. Letting ISO know the scholar is from an English speaking country
   C. Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school
   D. A documented interview conducted by the sponsor

Answer: B; Even if the scholar is from an English speaking country, ISO still needs proof of English language proficiency.

2. True or False: It is optional for J-1 exchange visitors to obtain and maintain health insurance for the duration of their program.

Answer: False; it is a federal requirement the scholars obtain and maintain health insurance throughout their program.
3. Who is responsible for providing cultural exchange opportunities and activities for J visa holding scholars?

   A. The sponsoring unit
   B. ISO
   C. The Whole U
   D. The scholar

Answer: A; the sponsoring unit is responsible for creating or directing scholars to opportunities for cultural exchange and activities.
J-1 Procedures
Preparing the J Visa Request

- Start at least **three months** before the start date
- Review [How to Sponsor a J-1 Exchange Visitor](#) page
- Collect scholar information using [J Visa Intake Form](#)
- Verify and retain evidence of **funding** from all sources
- Document scholar’s **English proficiency**
- Plan **cultural exchange activities** for the scholar and their family
Submitting the J Visa Request

• Submit [J Visa Request](#) to ISO and pay CTI fee(s)
  • Note: **Units may NOT recover the CTI fees for a J-1 from postdoctoral scholars**
• Provide signed visa request, with supporting documentation, to ISO
• Submit a [J1 Amendment Form](#) for any changes in:
  • Sponsorship dates
  • Biographical information
  • Other changes
Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation includes but is not limited to:

- Copies of passport biographic pages for J-1 and all J-2 dependents
- The offer, invitation, or reappointment letter
- Funding documentation
- Documentation of English proficiency
- Patient care letter for foreign medical graduates

See [J-1 Required Documents](#) for more detail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO sends host department Form DS-2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department forwards DS-2019 to exchange visitor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange visitor uses DS-2019 to apply for J visa at consulate and enters U.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let ISO know if arrival is delayed by using our [Amendment Form](#) and we can amend the dates on the DS-2019.
Exchange Visitor Responsibilities

• Pay **$220 SEVIS fee** and other visa application fees
  • But note: **units must reimburse the $220 SEVIS fee for postdoctoral scholars**
• **Submit remote check-in request form** at ISO within 30 days of start date
• Maintain **health insurance** in compliance with federal law
• Avoid unauthorized employment
• Seek permission from ISO **before** engaging in “occasional lectures and consultations”
• Leave the U.S. within the 30-day grace period
J-1 exchange visitors **must report** changes to ISO:

- Late arrival in U.S. (unit admins please use our [Amendment Form](#))
- Changes in address or contact information (scholars use this [form](#))
- Early departure of either J-1 or J-2 (by emailing [acadvisa@uw.edu](mailto:acadvisa@uw.edu))
Sponsor responsibilities (POST-arrival)

- Make sure scholar **does not start work before start date on DS-2019**
- Help scholar **settle in** (Husky card, NetID, housing...)
- Ensure the scholar completes [Mandatory Remote J-1 Check-In](#) requirement
- Provide **cultural exchange opportunities**
- Email acadvisa@uw.edu *in advance* of: early departures, changes in worksite, title, funding, research focus or duties, leave of absence, resignation, etc.
- Notify ISO *immediately* of any **significant incidents** involving the scholar: injuries, deaths, lawsuits, arrests, investigations, document loss or theft, etc.
- **Extend** the scholar’s stay in a timely manner
Reporting Requirements - J-1 Incidents

UW must report the following incidents to the Department of State:

- Death, disappearance, or serious injury or illness of the exchange visitor
- Incidents involving the criminal justice system, or sexually-related incidents or abuse
- Serious behavioral problems or mental health concerns surrounding the exchange visitor
- Incidents involving child protective services
- Fraud (e.g., visa, immigration, or financial fraud or scam)

Please report any such incidents to ISO at acadvisa@uw.edu as soon as possible.
Reporting Requirements - J-1 Incidents (continued)

UW must report the following incidents to the Department of State:

- Unsuitable host/work conditions (e.g., incident or allegation involving workplace bullying, harassment, discrimination, hostile work environment, or work hours and/or wage-related issues)
- Negative press involving the J-1 program, or incidents where a foreign government has become involved
- Lost or stolen immigration documents
- Theft of intellectual property, or violation of export controls
- Other situations impacting exchange visitor safety

Please report any such incidents to ISO at acadvisa@uw.edu as soon as possible.
Absences from U.S. of 30+ days should be reported to ISO if scholar has:
- Approved International Remote Work Request from UW Tax Office, or
- Approved protected leave request from OAP

All changes and/or incidents can be emailed to ISO at acadvisa@uw.edu.
Transfer Procedures

Transferring to UW:
- Unit must submit a new J Visa Request and a copy or scan of the exchange visitor’s current DS-2019
- ISO will contact the current program sponsor to arrange the transfer

Transferring from UW:
- Exchange visitor must submit a Transfer Verification Form to ISO
- ISO will contact the new program sponsor to arrange the transfer
Leaving the U.S.

Grace period
• Exchange visitors have up to 30 days after the DS-2019 end date to leave the U.S.
• If they leave during the grace period, **no notice to ISO is necessary.**

Leaving before DS-2019 end date
• Report departure to ISO so that the DS-2019 can be updated.

Please encourage your exchange visitors to complete our [J-1 Scholar Exit Interview](#) form before leaving the U.S.!
1. At minimum, how far in advance of the start date should you start preparing a J visa request?
   1. 1 year
   2. 6 months
   3. 3 months
   4. 1 month

   Answer: **C**; at least 3 months in advance (but can be earlier).

2. True or False: The scholar can start work before the start date listed on the DS-2019 if they arrive in the U.S. early.

   Answer: **False**; the scholar should not start work prior to the start date listed on the DS-2019.
3. How long of an absence needs to be reported to ISO if a scholar will be out of the U.S. for international work or on protected leave?

A. 15 days or more  
B. 30 days or more  
C. 3 months or more  
D. It does not need to be reported to ISO if their request is approved

Answer: B; Approved absences of 30 days or more should be reported to the ISO
Any questions?

Contact us: acadvisa@uw.edu

For more resources, visit: https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/visas/admin-resources/j1/
Question & Answer Section

> **Question:** What does an extension entail? What if they are coming from another UW department is that process different?

  > **Answer:** The process is largely the same for either. Units must submit another [J visa request];
  >  > For an extension, list “Purpose of Form: Extend an Ongoing Program”
  >  > For a change of unit or title, list “Purpose of Form: Change of Unit or Title”
  >  > ISO can extend them at the same time as the change of unit request, based on one visa request. See Required Documents for a change of unit or title at: [https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/visas/admin-resources/j1/how-to-sponsor-a-j1-visa/required-documents/](https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/visas/admin-resources/j1/how-to-sponsor-a-j1-visa/required-documents/)