**J-1 Classification**

In general, the J-1 classification is authorized for those who intend to participate in an approved exchange program for the purpose of teaching, instructing or lecturing, studying, observing, conducting research, consulting, demonstrating special skills, receiving special training, or receiving graduate medical education or training.

J-1 non-immigrants are sponsored by an exchange program that has been designated as such by the US Department of State. These programs are designed to promote the interchange of persons, knowledge, and skills in the fields of education, arts, and science.

UNL is authorized to sponsor international scholars in the following J-1 categories: Short Term Scholar, Research Scholar, or Professor. International students may be sponsored as either a J-1 Student (degree-seeking) or as a J-1 Non-degree Research Student.

The J-1 visitor’s spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible for J-2 classification. Although a person in J-2 status who is old enough to work may apply for employment authorization, the income may not be used to support the J-1 visitor.

**J-1 Exchange Visitor Categories**

**International Scholars**

**Short Term Scholar:** a special visitor category that allows a qualified visitor (professor or research scholar) to come into the United States on a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills.

- appointments up to 6 months in length
- is not eligible for extension beyond 6 months

- is not subject to the 24 month bar to repeat participation as a J-1 research scholar

**Research Scholar:** an individual who is concerned primarily with conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project. They are also allowed to teach.

- appointments of 3 weeks to 5 years
- allows for extensions up to the 5 year maximum
- is subject to the 24 month bar to repeat participation as a J-1 research scholar at the end of the stay

**Professor:** an individual who is concerned primarily with teaching but is also allowed to conduct research, observe, or consult in connection with a research project.

- appointments of 3 weeks to 5 years
- allows for extensions up to the 5 year maximum
- is subject to the 24 month bar to repeat participation as a J-1 research scholar at the end of the stay
International Students

J-1 Student: an individual who is here to undertake a formal program of study at an academic institution under the auspices of the United States Information Agency and a designated program sponsor. Typically, an international student will be in J-1 status instead of F-1 if he has funding from a government or international organization or if he is here as part of an established exchange agreement between UNL and a university in the student’s home country.

- requires full time enrollment for each Fall and Spring semester until program completion and satisfactory progress in their program of study (but not summer?)
- allows extensions of stay if necessary to complete program of study
- may not obtain employment (on or off campus) without prior approval – the ISSO can provide authorization only if UNL is the program sponsor

J-1 Non-degree Research Student: an individual who is here as an exchange student to engage in research but is not seeking a degree from UNL.

- unless there is an agreement between UNL and their institution the student cannot be primarily on personal funding – they must have either home government funding or US government funding or another form of third party sponsorship such as a scholarship or UNL providing support and the support must be substantial, i.e., they could not participate in the program without it
- requires admittance as a student and must enroll in a course – a non-credit course is acceptable
- may not obtain employment (on or off campus) without prior approval – the ISSO can provide authorization only if UNL is the program sponsor

Documentation of financial support

We are required to document the source and amount\(^1\) of financial support for a J-1 visitor. This information is provided by the department or academic unit on the DS-2019 Request Form. Minimum levels of support (as of September 2015) are listed below – this may consist of personal funds, a stipend from UNL, support from some other government or agency, or a combination of sources.

- Primary visitor $1730 per month
- PLUS $559 per month for an accompanying spouse
- PLUS $326 per month for each dependent child

Documentation might include:

- An offer letter from UNL if they are to be paid from a source here
- Official notice of support from a government or other agency
- If using personal funds a statement to that effect accompanied by a bank statement OR a letter from a current employer regarding pay while they are visiting UNL

\(^1\)Stated amounts are subject to change by the U.S. government at any time
**English Proficiency Requirement**

US regulations require all new faculty, researchers, post-doctoral scholars (and some students) in J-1 immigration status to demonstrate proficiency in English. One of the following pieces of documentation must be submitted with your request to the ISSO.

**Option 1: The result of a recognized English language test.**

The scholar must have taken the test within the last five years and meet or exceed the following:

- 70 on the TOEFL iBT
- 523 on TOEFL paper-based
- 6.0 on IELTS
- a comparable score on another recognized English language test

**Option 2: Diploma from English-speaking country**

Scholars must have graduated in the last 10 years with a bachelor’s or graduate degree in residence from a recognized institution of higher learning in the United States or another country where English is the first official language.

**Option 3: English language proficiency interview**

Hosting units can document a scholar’s language proficiency by recording a personal interview with the scholar, either in-person or by video conference.

- the interviewee’s face must be visible in the video recording
- the spoken words of both interviewer and interviewee must be audible
- questions asked and answers provided must be in English
- any video recording format is acceptable; we recommend Adobe Connect or Skype to record video interviews

Report the assessment of the scholar’s language proficiency on the English Language Proficiency form and provide a video recording of the interview to the ISSO. The ISSO does not review recordings to assess proficiency but simply verifies that the interview was conducted in English.

**Health Insurance Requirement**

All J-1 exchange visitors are required to maintain health insurance for themselves and their J-2 dependents and will need to provide evidence upon arrival and at the point of any request for extension of stay. The insurance must meet the minimum requirements noted below.

- medical benefits of at least $100,000 per illness or accident; AND
- deductible not to exceed $500 per illness or accident; AND
- medical evacuation benefit in the amount of $50,000; AND

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2 Stated amounts are subject to change by the U.S. Government at any time.
• payment for repatriation of remains in the event of death in the amount $25,000

The insurance corporation underwriting the policy must meet or exceed the following ratings:

• an A.M. Best rating of A-; OR
• an Insurance Solvency International, LTD (ISI) rating of A-i; OR
• a Standard & Poore’s claims paying ability rating of A-; OR
• a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+

J-1 exchange visitors should always be mindful of the requirements indicated above when choosing insurance options.

International scholars who are employed at UNL in a benefits eligible position will be able to participate in UNL’s group plan for insurance coverage; HOWEVER, the group plan does NOT cover medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. That coverage must be purchased separately.

International students are automatically enrolled in the UNL Healthy Option Student Insurance Plan which meets the requirements above.

There is a second student insurance plan available (StudentBlue Student Health Insurance) which does NOT include the coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Should a J-1 Student waive automatic enrollment in UNL Healthy Option Student Insurance Plan in favor of StudentBlue Student Health Insurance the coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains must be purchased separately.

**INA 212(e) or 2-year home country physical presence requirement**

If subject to this requirement the J-1 Exchange Visitor and their J-2 dependents must, at the conclusion of their J-1 program, return to their home country and reside there for two years (or be granted a waiver from the US Department of State) before returning. Being subject to this regulation does not prohibit a visitor from returning to the US in another status (except H-1B or permanent resident).

J-1 Exchange Visitors and their accompanying dependents are subject to INA 212(e) if:

• their exchange program was funded in whole or in part by a US government agency, their home country’s government, or an international organization that received funding from either government; OR
• their program involves an area of study or skill listed on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for his or her home country

The ISSO will help visiting scholars determine if they are subject to INA 212(e) but does not assist with the preparation of a waiver application.

**12 and 24 Month Bars On J-1 Repeat Participation**

New or repeat participation in exchange programs as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor is restricted by a period of ineligibility (or bar). Depending on the previous J category, the period of ineligibility is either
12 or 24 months. Eligibility for participation in J-1 categories other than Research Scholar or Professor is not affected by these barring periods.

The 24 month bar does not apply if a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor is transferring from one institution to another and continuing as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREVIOUS J-STATUS</th>
<th>DURATION OF STAY IN PREVIOUS J-STATUS</th>
<th>ELIGIBILITY TO BEGIN A NEW PROGRAM AS A RESEARCH SCHOLAR OR PROFESSOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any J-1 category other than Research Scholar or Professor</td>
<td>6 months or less</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any J-1 category other than Research Scholar or Professor</td>
<td>More than 6 months</td>
<td>12 months AFTER the previous program’s end date or effective date of completion*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-2 dependent** of any J-1 category other than Research Scholar or Professor</td>
<td>6 months or less</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-2 dependent** of any J-1 category other than Research Scholar or Professor</td>
<td>More than 6 months</td>
<td>12 months AFTER the previous program’s end date or effective date of completion*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Research Scholar or Professor or J-2 dependent** of same</td>
<td>Any length of time</td>
<td>24 months AFTER the previous program’s end date or effective date of completion*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The US State Department defines “completion of program” as no longer actively participating in the activities of a Professor or Research Scholar. The barring period begins the day after the status of the exchange visitor’s SEVIS record becomes “Inactive” or “Terminated”.

** J-2 dependents are subject to the same bars as the principal J-1 exchange visitor.

Obtaining the J-1 Status – Scholars

The J-1 visa classification is usually the most appropriate visa for a visiting international scholar. Contact the individual responsible for facilitating visa paperwork in your unit and refer to the classification table included in this manual PRIOR TO extending any kind of invitation. Contact an ISS Specialist at 472-0324 with any questions you may still have regarding visa status.

Faculty seeking to bring an international scholar to UNL are encouraged to inform their supervisors of their intent in order to provide ample time for the steps below to be completed.

The Export Control office may request additional information for the DS-2019 Request to complete the export control review.
At least 3 months in advance of the scholar’s desired arrival date the hosting unit will:

- Define the terms of the exchange visitor’s project
- Determine their English language proficiency using one of the acceptable options discussed earlier. Typically the faculty partner will administer this interview which is then reviewed by the unit head.

At least 2 months in advance of the desired arrival date the hosting unit will:

- Submit a completed DS-2019 Request Packet to the ISSO along with evidence of the scholar’s English language proficiency
- Prepare an invitation letter to the scholar

Within approximately 5 business days the ISSO will:

- Prepare a Welcome Packet for the scholar, including form DS-2019 and notify the unit when the paperwork is ready

As soon as possible the hosting unit will then:

- Send the Welcome Packet to the scholar along with their invitation letter and may also want to include information about UNL, Nebraska, academic culture, etc.
- Prior to the scholar’s arrival provide information regarding housing options and transportation to campus from the airport. This is typically done by the faculty partner.

After receiving the Welcome Packet the scholar will:

- Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee of $180\(^3\) at [http://www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- Print proof of payment and include it with the visa application
- Make an appointment at a US embassy or consulate for a J-1 visa
- Make arrangements to arrive in the US no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the DS-2019 (and must leave the country no more than 30 days after the program end date on the DS-2019)
- Notify the department if their arrival will be delayed more than 30 days after the program start date on the DS-2019 so the department is able to notify the ISSO. This will allow the ISSO to defer the start date in the SEVIS record to keep it from going invalid

When the scholar arrives

The ISSO holds an orientation and check-in for J-1 Exchange Visitors every Monday at 4:00 p.m. If the university is closed on a Monday the orientation is held on Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.

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\(^3\) Amount is subject to change by U.S. Government at any time.
The scholar must bring all immigration documents (passport and DS-2019) and be prepared to provide local contact information. **Failure to check-in with the ISSO will invalidate the scholar’s immigration status.**

If the scholar is to be appointed to a paid position they must complete the necessary hiring paperwork and obtain a Social Security Number (see Payroll section). The scholar should wait at least 10 business days from date of entry to the US and 5 business days from the date of check-in with the ISSO before visiting the Social Security Administration office.

Hosting units should provide ongoing support for the scholar. The most meaningful part of any scholar’s experience is substantive academic and cultural interaction with the campus and community. Consider inviting the scholar to be a guest in a classroom, prepare a presentation for your department, engage in social events, attend professional meetings, etc.

**Obtaining the J-1 Status- Students**

**International Students – Degree Seeking**

It is important to note that most international students will attend UNL in F-1 status; however, that status is covered in another section of this manual. The information that follows pertains to those coming as a degree seeking student on a J-1 visa.

- After the student is admitted to UNL the Admissions office will send a DS-2019
- The student pays the SEVIS I-901 fee of $1804[^1] at [http://www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- Print proof of payment and include it with the visa application
- The student makes an appointment at a US Embassy or Consulate to apply for a J-1 visa
- With that visa the student will then travel to UNL and check in at the ISSO with all immigration documents

**International Students – Non-Degree Seeking**

The following information applies to those coming as a non-degree seeking research student in J-1 status. Please confirm the student’s eligibility to visit in this category with the ISSO.

- Having confirmed the students eligibility, the department sends an email to the ISSO requesting an application packet for a J-1 Non-degree Research Student and will receive:
  - Instructions
  - Student Application
  - Financial documentation
  - Request for DS-2019
  - Prescribed Course of Study Document
  - Academic Training Request (completed after arrival IF they wish to work)

[^1]: Amount is subject to change by U.S. Government at any time.
• The student completes the Student Application and the Financial documentation and returns both to the hosting department
• The department completes the Request for a DS-2019 and the Prescribed Course of Study Documentation
• The department sends all completed forms with the required documentation back to the ISSO for processing
• The ISSO sends the Welcome Packet and DS-2019 to the department and they, in turn, send this information to the student
• The student pays the SEVIS I-901 fee of $180 at http://www.fmjfee.com
• The student prints proof of payment and includes it with the visa application
• The student makes an appointment at a US Embassy or Consulate to apply for a J-1 visa
• With that visa the student will then travel to UNL and check in at the ISSO with all immigration documents

Maintaining Status

International Scholars

• Maintain a valid unexpired passport – the passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future
• Perform employment only as specified on the DS-2019
  
  o Obtain authorization from the ISSO (or the program sponsor if other than UNL) before doing any work outside UNL or participating in lectures at another institution

• Maintain required health insurance
• If necessary, request an extension at least 30 days in advance of the program’s expiration date
• Update address within 10 days of moving
• Must have a Social Security Number to work in the United States

International Students

• Degree seeking students must not drop below full-time enrollment for any reason without prior approval from the ISSO. (12+ credit hours if an undergraduate student, 9+ credit hours if a graduate student)
• Must not obtain employment without prior approval from the ISSO
• Must obtain a Social Security Number to work in the United States
• Request a new DS-2019 when:
  
  o changing degree programs at UNL
  o officially changing a major or minor with an academic adviser
  o needing to add dependents
  o experiencing a significant change in financial support

• If necessary, extend their DS-2019 at least 2 weeks before its expiration date
• Maintain a valid unexpired passport. The passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future
• Maintain required health insurance
• Update address within 10 days of moving

Academic Training for J-1 Students (off-campus work authorization)

Academic Training (AT) in the student’s field of study is available both during and after completion of studies. Each month in J-1 student status makes a student eligible for one month of AT up to a maximum of 18 months. If a J-1 graduate student obtains a Ph.D. they are eligible for an additional 18 months of AT.

To apply for AT the student needs to:

• have Academic Adviser complete and sign the J-1 Academic Training Recommendation Form
• obtain a letter from the prospective employer indicating:
  o Position title
  o Employment dates and location
  o Annual salary
  o Hours per week (more than 20 hours is considered full-time)
  o A description of the goals and objectives of the training program
  o Name and address of the supervisor

The student must apply before completion of their degree program and must begin work no later than 30 days after completion of studies

Travel

Initial Travel to the United States

A valid passport, visa, and supporting documentation are required to enter the US. Details regarding the documents required are available at the embassy or consulate where the visitor applies for their visa. The visitor will be subject to a secondary inspection at the US port of entry during which officials will confirm that their SEVIS record is active. They should allow 1-3 hours to get through immigration.

(see also: OBTAINING THE J-1 VISA and note the bullet list under After Receiving the Welcome Packet the Scholar will...)

Within the United States

Whenever traveling within the US the exchange visitor should carry his/her original passport, I-94 and current DS-2019.

Leaving/Reentering the United States

The exchange visitor should always notify the ISSO before traveling outside the United States.

Reentry into the United States will require:
• valid passport (must be valid 6 months into the future)
• valid DS-2019;
  o with travel signature obtained from the program sponsor within the past 6 months
    ▪ ISSO can NOT provide a travel signature unless UNL is the program sponsor
  o for the J-1 visitor and each J-2 dependent
• valid J-1 visa in passport

If the J-1 visa in the passport is expired it will have to be renewed before returning to the United States. The following documents will be required at the US Consulate or Embassy as part of the J-1 visa application:

• valid passport (must be valid 6 months in the future)
• valid form DS-2019 and all previous DS-2019s so as to document initial and continuous stay in the US;
  o with travel signature obtained from the program sponsor within the past 6 months
    ▪ ISSO can NOT provide a travel signature unless UNL is the program sponsor
  o for the J-1 visitor and each J-2 dependent
• offer letter, invitation letter, or a verification of employment from the department
• current proof of financial support

**Travel to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands other than Cuba**

If traveling to Canada, Mexico or an adjacent island other than Cuba with an expired visa, the visitor should speak with an ISS Specialist before leaving regarding Automatic Visa Revalidation.

Upon returning to the United States, the visitor should provide ISSO with a copy of the new I-94 and the new J-1 visa in the passport (if applicable).

**J-1 Responsible Parties**

1. The department will identify the terms of the exchange visitor’s project, confirm faculty mentor and complete the necessary paperwork including the English Proficiency Interview (if required). The Export Control office may request additional information for the DS-2019 Request to complete the export control review.

2. The host department submits the Request for a DS-2019 Form to ISSO at least 2 months in advance of the visitor’s desired arrival date to give the visitor sufficient time to obtain a visa. ISSO will prepare a Welcome Packet for the visitor, including a DS-2019 form, and notify the host department when the paperwork is ready. Allow at least 5 business days for form preparation.
3. The host department mails the ISSO Welcome Packet to the visitor. The host department might also want to include information about working at UNL, living in Nebraska, U.S. academic culture, etc. The visitor should receive these documents as quickly as possible to begin the visa process and make travel arrangements.

4. If the visitor is currently a J-1 Exchange Visitor at another U.S. school and wishes to transfer visa sponsorship to UNL to pursue the same objectives, they will need to visit with an international advisor/specialist at the current school.

5. After receiving the DS-2019, the visitor pays the SEVIS I-901 fee and then makes an appointment at a US embassy or consulate for a J-1 visa. Please notify ISSO if the visa is denied or if the visitor decides not to come to UNL.

6. The visitor may enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the DS-2019, and must leave the country within 30 days of the program end date listed on the DS-2019. Securing housing and transportation is the responsibility of the visitor.

7. Host institutions are required by law to provide an orientation to J-1 visa holders. ISSO holds an orientation and check-in for J-1 Exchange Visitors every Monday at 4:00 p.m. During weeks when the university is closed on a Monday, orientation is Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. The visitor must bring all immigration documents (passport and DS-2019) and be prepared to provide local contact information. Failure to check-in with ISSO will cancel the visitor's immigration status.

8. To receive payment from a US source, the visitor needs a Social Security number (SSN). To obtain one, the visitor must visit the Social Security Administration (SSA) office and present a copy of the invitation letter from the host department and original immigration documents (passport, DS-2019, I-94 card). The visitor should wait at least 10 business days from date of entry to the U.S. and 5 business days from date of check-in with ISSO before visiting the SSA office.

9. The host department should complete new hire paperwork with the visitor and submit all necessary documents to payroll.

To Extend the Visitor’s stay:

If necessary, the host department may request an extension no later than 30 days before the end date of the DS-2019.