



**Hartford**  
SEMINARY

*Exploring Differences, Deepening Faith*

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# **J-1 EXCHANGE PROGRAM HANDBOOK PRE-ARRIVAL ORIENTATION INFORMATION**

A GUIDE TO IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS  
FOR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS – RESEARCH SCHOLARS

Hartford Seminary  
Coordinator of International Student and Scholar Services  
77 Sherman Street  
Hartford, CT 06105

Hartford Seminary has accepted you as a Research Scholar under the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. The J-1 Program is administered by the United States Department of State. Hartford Seminary has been authorized to sponsor J-1 Exchange Visitors. Our Exchange Visitor Program allows eligible individuals an opportunity to conduct research, observe, or consult in connection with a research project at Hartford Seminary. This program establishes long-lasting ties between the U.S. and other countries, resulting in a better understanding of American values and institutions, through the exchange of ideas and experiences.

**Contact Information for Program Sponsor:**

(Primary Contact) Responsible Officer for J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (RO)/Coordinator of International Student and Scholar Services (CISSS): Lorraine Browne, (860) 509-9502; [lbrowne@hartsem.edu](mailto:lbrowne@hartsem.edu)  
Alternate Responsible Officer: Michael Sandner, 860-509-9525; [msandner@hartsem.edu](mailto:msandner@hartsem.edu)  
Housing Related Issues: Ann Crawford, Interim Director of Administration and Facilities, (860) 509-9501; [acrawford@hartsem.edu](mailto:acrawford@hartsem.edu)

**Department of State:**

Please email: [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov) to communicate directly with the Department of State concerning your exchange program and J-1 Visa. For emergency situations, please call the J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline at 1-866-283-9090. Duty officers are available 24 hours a day.

United States Department of State  
Office of Designation Academic and Government Programs Division  
ECA/EC/D, SA-44, Room 668  
301 4th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20547

This handbook contains information about the rules and regulations which apply to J-1 Visa holders in an approved Exchange Visitor Program in the United States. Please read this handbook carefully before you arrive in the United States. Also, please travel with it so that you have it as a reference while you are here.

Within 24 hours of your arrival in the United States, please email the CISSS at [lbrowne@hartsem.edu](mailto:lbrowne@hartsem.edu) to confirm your arrival (along with your dependents if applicable). In your email, be sure to include your address, telephone number, and email address (include each dependent email address). Upon receipt of your arrival email, you will be notified of your orientation date, time, and location.

Welcome to Hartford Seminary. We look forward to having you as part of our Seminary Community and hope that your experience here is rewarding!

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## ABBREVIATIONS, IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS, ETC.

### Abbreviations

**RO** - Responsible Officer

**ARO** -Alternate Responsible Officer

**CBP** - United States Customs and Border Protection

**CISSS** - Coordinator of International Student and Scholar Services

**DHS** - Department of Homeland Security

**DoS** - Department of State

**USCIS** - United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

**SEVIS** - Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

**SSN** - Social Security Number

### Important Documents

**Passport:** You must have a valid passport during your entire program at Hartford Seminary and in most cases your passport must be valid for at least six months longer than the end date on your Form DS-2019 when you enter the United States. The same applies to your dependents. Keep your passport on your person while traveling and keep it in a safe place once you arrive in the United States.

**Form DS-2019:** Please note that your Sevis Form DS-2019 indicates that we have created a record on your behalf in Sevis. Your Sevis ID number is found in the upper right hand corner of page 1 of DS-2019. If any information on this form is incorrect, please contact me immediately. Please be sure to read page 1 and page 2 of the form carefully. If all of the information on the form is correct, sign your name in the appropriate space on the form as indicated on page 1. If you have dependents (husband or wife, children under the age of 21) that will be traveling with you, they will receive their own Form DS-2019 to assist with their application for a J-2 Visa. You will have to sign their Form DS-2019 as the principle visa holder. Please contact me if your dependents will accompany you to the U.S. and you have not received separate documentation for them.

**Please Note:** The spelling of your name and your date of birth must be *exactly as they appear* on your passport. The same is true for your dependents. If your name and/or date of birth on Form DS-2019 are not *exactly* as the information appears on your passport, please request a corrected DS-2019 from the CISSS. Form DS-2019 is only a “certificate of eligibility” for J-1 status. Issuing the form alone does not grant J-1 status. You must acquire a J-1 Visa after being issued Form DS-2019.

Please refer to the start date in item number 3 of DS-2019 to make sure that it is accurate. Note that entry into the U.S. in J-1 status or J-2 dependent status is permitted **up to 30 days before** and **no later than 30 days after** the start date.

Form DS-2019 is a document that designates you as a J-1 Exchange Visitor. The form also lists your sponsor, program number, exchange visitor category, and the dates of your visit. This document is required for your visa interview. Please keep this document on your person while traveling and in a safe place when you are in the United States. Also, keep all copies of Form DS-2019 that you receive during and after your visit for your records. The same applies for all dependents.

**J-1 Visa:** You (and all dependents that will be accompanying you or joining you at a later time) must obtain a J-1 Visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate. Your Visa will have an expiration date. Keep your Visa on your person while traveling and keep it in a safe place once you arrive in the United States.

**I-94 Arrival/Departure Record:** This record will be updated electronically. You will most likely be admitted to the U.S. for D/S (Duration of Status) and your I-94 Arrival /Departure Record will be automated by the CBP. You will

have access to your electronic Form I-94 at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) once the form is automated. Please print your electronic Form I-94 as soon as you can. You will need it to apply for immigration or public benefits, such as a driver's license or a Social Security number. Keep this form with you at all times. CBP will continue issuing paper Form I-94s at the land border ports of entry as well as to certain classes of aliens, such as refugees, certain asylees and parolees, and whenever CBP determines the issuance of a paper form is appropriate.

**Sevis:** (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). This database monitors all students and exchange visitors in the United States. Program Sponsors are responsible for updating any information related to you and your J-1 Program.

**Social Security Number:** Please complete a Form SS-5, "Application for a Social Security Card," at your local Social Security Administration office and show evidence that you will be using the card for employment reasons, your age, and your identity. Once assigned, your SSN becomes a unique identifying number that belongs to you for the rest of your life. You should take steps to protect it and guard against identity theft.

Hartford Social Security Office

2nd Floor

960 Main Street

Hartford, CT 06103

Phone: 1-877-619-2851

Application for a Social Security Card: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

Social Security Administration: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/>

**Wilberforce Pamphlet on the Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers:** Please read the attached pamphlet on your rights as an exchange visitor in the United States. Please keep this document in a safe place and note the telephone numbers to call if your rights are violated.

**Connecticut State ID:** You must be a research scholar in valid status to apply for a Connecticut state ID. <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=805&q=490078>

**Connecticut Driver's License:** You must be a research scholar in valid status to apply for a Connecticut Driver's License. <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=805&Q=244732&dmvPNavCtr=|28069|#28074>

## **Your Activities as a J-1 Exchange Visitor**

**Category:** Your Exchange Visitor *category* appears in item number 4 of Form DS-2019. It will indicate *Research Scholar*. You are not ordinarily allowed to change your category once you have entered the United States in J-1 status. Any change in category must be clearly consistent with and closely related to your original exchange objective and necessary due to unusual or exceptional circumstances. The program objective cannot change and must remain the same.

## **Time Limits to Remain in the United States**

**Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement – 212(e):** Upon your completion of a J-1 program in the U.S., you may be required to spend two years in your home country, or country of last legal residence, before you will be allowed to return to the U.S. in certain types of immigration classifications. You may be subject to this requirement if the following applies:

Individuals are subject to 212(e) if:

- 
- Your J-1 program is a government-financed exchange program **OR**
  - You are participating in graduate medical education or training **OR**

- If you are acquiring a skill that is in short supply in your home country, according to the U.S. government "Exchange Visitor Skills List." (<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>)

In limited circumstances, exchange visitors who are subject to the two-year home residency requirement may apply for a waiver directly from the Department of State if they meet certain conditions. To request a waiver of this requirement please visit: <https://j1visawaiverrecommendation.state.gov/>

**Extensions:** You may teach, lecture, observe, and consult at Hartford Seminary until you complete your activities or until the end date in item number 3 of Form DS-2019, whichever occurs first. If you need more time than allowed by the end date on your Form DS-2019, you must contact the CISSS at least 30 days prior to the end date to request an extension. All requests for extensions must be submitted in writing and are reviewed by the President. It is important to know that each category under the J-1 Visa has a specific time limitation; Research Scholars are limited to five years maximum, with a minimum of three weeks.

## **Health Insurance**

**Healthcare System in the United States:** Please view the following video designed to educate international students and scholars on the healthcare system in the United States:

<http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explored/us-healthcare-system-video.php>.

**Health Insurance Requirement and Compliance:** As an exchange visitor, you are required by regulation to have adequate health care insurance that covers you (and your spouse and/or children if they are in the U.S. in J-2 status) while you are a research scholar at Hartford Seminary. Insurance coverage is for sickness, accidents, and medical evacuation and repatriation. Minimum coverage must meet both DoS requirements. The *Patriot Exchange Program* offers a health insurance plan that meets the following requirements:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness;
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- Expenses associated with medical evacuation to your home country in the amount of \$50,000;
- The deductible should not exceed \$500 per accident or illness

## **Recommended Health Plan:**

**Patriot Exchange Program Insurance** - <https://www.insubuy.com/patriot-exchange-program-insurance/>

Health care insurance designed for students studying abroad or participants of cultural exchange programs. Coverage is designed to meet the U.S. J-1 Visa travel insurance requirements.

### Highlights:

Two short-term travel medical plan designs

Coverage for students, their spouses and unmarried dependent children traveling with them

Plan Maximums up to \$500,000

Renewable up to 48 months if minimum of three months is purchased

Freedom to seek treatment with hospital or doctor of your choice

Universal Rx pharmacy discount savings

24-hour secure access from anywhere in the world to manage your account at any time

Student Health Center \$5 co-pay per visit

No coinsurance

Optional add-on coverage available for high school sports, personal sports and legal assistance

Pre-existing conditions coverage available to U.S. and non-U.S. citizens - see specific plan design for benefit information overview

Please see the attached plan brochure

*The Patriot Exchange Program* meets the required "A" rating as stated in 22 CFR 62.14.

**Please Note:** Not all pre-existing conditions are covered under this plan. Please read the brochure carefully for the pre-existing conditions that are covered.

If you choose to not enroll in the Patriot Exchange Program and wish to enroll in an insurance plan of your choice, please see me to verify that the plan meets J-1 Visa regulations prior to enrolling in the plan. Keep in mind that the insurance policy you choose, must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of “A-” or above, an Insurance Solvency International, LTD (ISI) rating of “A-I” or above, a Standard and Poor’s Claims Paying Ability rating of “A-” or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above. In addition, the policy must be backed by the full faith and credit of the government of your home country.

**Please Note:** Acquiring medical insurance and keeping coverage for your entire program for you (and your dependents if applicable) is required. You must submit proof of enrollment in an approved health insurance plan for you and your dependents to the CISSS. Willful failure to do so is a direct violation of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations and your DS-2019 is subject to termination. In addition, any misrepresentation on your part or your dependents regarding your insurance coverage is also in direct violation of the health insurance requirement. You will be required to obtain medical insurance upon your arrival at Hartford Seminary.

Program regulations also discuss coverage through HMOs and self-insurance of the above requirements by federal, state or local government agencies, state colleges and universities, and public community colleges, if permitted by law. Refer to [22 CFR 62.14-<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div8&node=22:1.0.1.7.35.1.1.14>] for additional information.

*Please Note: Acquiring medical insurance is required; failure to do so is a direct violation of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations and your Form DS-2019 is subject to termination and you will have to return home immediately.*

## **Medical Care**

### **Major hospitals in the Hartford area:**

Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, 282 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106; 860-545-9000;  
<http://www.connecticutchildrens.org/>

Hartford Hospital, 80 Seymour Street, Hartford, CT; 860-545-5000; <http://www.harthosp.org/>

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, 114 Woodland Street, Hartford, CT 06105-1208;  
860-714-4000; <http://www.stfranciscare.org/>

### **For non-emergency issues:**

As with most U.S. health insurance plans, there can still be considerable out-of-pocket costs, your least expensive option will be to go to the Minute Clinic in CVS pharmacy in Avon. They charge \$45 per visit which is considerably less than a regular doctor’s office. Avon is about 15-20 minutes away by car from Hartford Seminary.

Another option is University of Connecticut (UConn) Health Center, 263 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, CT, 06030; 860-679-2000; <http://www.uchc.edu/>

### **Community Clinics:**

The clinics listed below are located in Hartford (except for the satellite offices) and provide all services on a sliding scale basis. These clinics also provide either free samples of prescriptions, or in the case of Community Health Services, an in-house pharmacy.

#### **Charter Oak Health Center Inc.**

Main Location: 21 Grand Street, Hartford, CT 06106; 860-550-7500

Satellite Location: 401 New Britain Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106; 860-241-0712;

<http://www.thecharteroak.org/> to reach the Grand Street location

#### **Community Health Services**



Main Location: 500 Albany Avenue, Hartford, CT 06120 (also has a pharmacy on site); 860-249-9625;  
<http://www.chshartford.org/>

Satellite Office: 503 Windsor Avenue, Unit 511, Windsor, CT 06095; 860-297-8600

As with most U.S. health insurance plans, there can still be considerable out-of-pocket costs, your least expensive option will be to go to the Minute Clinic in CVS pharmacy in Avon. They charge \$45 per visit which is considerably less than a regular doctor's office. Avon is about 15-20 minutes away by car from Hartford Seminary.

## **Mental Health Care Services**

There are several hospitals, agencies, and professionals in the Hartford area that provide mental health care services. Below is a list of important phone numbers/service providers and referral sources:

Crisis/Suicide Hotline; 1-800-784-2433; [www.suicidehotlines.com](http://www.suicidehotlines.com)

INFOLINE Dial 211; <http://www.infoline.org/>

Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services; 860-418-7000;  
<http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/site/default.asp>

Hartford Hospital; 860-545-5000; <http://www.harthosp.org/>

The Institute of Living; 860-545-7200; <http://www.harthosp.org/>

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; 860-714-4000; <http://www.stfranciscare.org/>

University of Connecticut Health Center; 860-679-2000; <http://www.uchc.edu/>

The Village for Families and Children, Inc.; 860-236-451; <http://thevillage.org/>

## **Cultural Goals and Components of Exchange Visitor Program**

As a research scholar in Hartford Seminary's exchange visitor program, the DoS requires that you participate in cross cultural activities during stay in the United States. You will receive our weekly e-newsletter (*The Exchange*). Please read it, it will inform you of various events taking place on campus and we strongly encourage you to attend. You will also be invited to student activities taking place on and off campus. You and your family are welcomed and strongly encouraged to attend as many events as possible. Hartford Seminary offers many educational outreach events throughout the academic year ranging from book signings to concerts, to public lectures. To view a listing of events, please visit the following webpage: <http://ww2.hartsem.edu/about/news-events/>. Note that many of the events requires you to pre-register. I encourage you to follow Hartford Seminary on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/hartsem>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/HartSem>). As your program sponsor our goal is to enhance your experience as a research scholar and to promote mutual exchange through various cross-cultural activities.

## **Steps to Obtain a J-1 Visa**

**Pay the Sevis I-901 Fee:** DHS requires proof of payment of a one-time Sevis I-901 fee of \$220 from prospective J-1 Exchange Visitors with "begin new program" DS-2019s who are applying for an initial J-1 Visa from outside of the United States. While immigration regulations indicate that the fee should be paid prior to your visa application at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, we suggest that you pay the fee as soon as you receive your Form DS-2019. This will allow sufficient time for DHS to update your fee payment in your electronic Sevis record.

The Sevis fee is **NOT** required if you are currently in valid J-1 immigration status. Similarly, if you are transferring to a new J-1 sponsor, a Sevis fee is not required. Also, J-2 dependents are not required to pay the Sevis fee. Individuals from a very limited number of countries are exempt from the requirement to have a visa to enter the U.S. however; they are not exempt from the Sevis fee. Proof of the I-901 Sevis fee payment must be verified at the U.S. port of entry before the visa-exempt individual will be admitted to the U.S. in J-1 status. For a list of countries who participate in the Visa Waiver Program: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

## **To Pay the Sevis I-901 Fee Online – *This is the recommended way to pay your I-901 Sevis Fee***

1. Fill out Form I-901 online at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). A payment coupon will be generated upon completion of the form.

2. Make certain to type your name and SEVIS ID number exactly as it appears on your Sevis Form DS-2019 and complete each section accurately. You must supply the necessary Debit, Visa, MasterCard or American Express card information for payment.
3. Submit the electronic Form I-901 and payment. Be sure to include your email address on the application.
4. Print a copy of the online receipt to use as proof of payment of the Sevis I-901 fee and keep with your Form DS-2019 and other relevant documents.

**To Pay the Sevis I-901 Fee by Mail**

If you prefer to pay the I-901 fee by mailing a check or money order, please complete Form I-901 online following steps 1 and 2 above. A payment coupon will be generated. Follow the instructions on the coupon for mailing in the payment. You will need your Sevis ID, Name, and Date of Birth to access the confirmation.

**To Pay the Sevis I-901 Fee at a Participating Western Union Agent**

1. Fill out Form I-901 online at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). A payment coupon will be generated upon completion of the form.
2. Print a copy of the payment coupon and take it to your local Western Union Office.
3. Fill out the Quick Collect Form according to the information found at the bottom of the printed coupon. Example below:

- a. Company Name (or Code City): SEVISFEE
- b. Account Number: Coupon Number (ex: 010222013872390)
- c. Amount: \$180.00

4. Present the coupon and your payment to the Western Union Agent for processing. Payment will be linked to your Form I-901 and your online payment confirmation will be available immediately at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). Please print your payment confirmation and keep it with your Form DS-2019 and other immigration documents. If a third party is paying your I-901 Sevis fee on your behalf, you will need to provide them with your coupon number to enter into the Account Number field of the Western Union Quick Collect Form.

You will need proof of payment of the I-901 Sevis fee for your visa interview at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy and for admission at a U.S. port of entry. Please note that the Sevis fee is non-refundable. If your J-1 visa application is denied by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, and you reapply for a new J-1 Visa within 12 months of the denial, you will not be required to pay a new Sevis fee.

**Obtaining a Valid J-1 Visa:** Please apply for a J-1 Visa well in advance of your planned travel to the United States. It can take a few months to obtain a nonimmigrant visa at some U.S. embassies and consulates. To find the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest you, visit the following website: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>.

To apply for a J-1 or J-2 Visa, you will need to submit the following documents to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate: *Nonimmigrant Visa Application* (Form DS-160). The application must be submitted electronically and can be accessed at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/forms/ds-160--online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html>

The following documents will be needed to complete the visa application:

Passport

Travel itinerary – if you have already made travel arrangements

Dates of your last five visits or trips to the United States. You may also be asked for your international travel history for the past five years.

Resume or Curriculum Vitae – You may be required to provide information about your current and previous education and work history.

Sevis ID and Exchange Visitor Program Number (found on Form DS-2019)

1. After you (and dependents if applicable) complete Form DS-160, you must print and keep the DS-160 confirmation barcode page. (You do not need to print the full application).
2. Schedule a visa interview or appointment with a U.S. Embassy or Consulate (check with the applicable Embassy or Consulate for country-specific instructions)

3. Pay the visa application processing fee (check with the applicable embassy or consulate for the fee amount and how it must be paid)

### **Documents needed for Visa Interview:**

- Passport
- Confirmation page with your application ID number from your Form DS-160 online nonimmigrant visa application
- Application fee payment receipt, if you are required to pay before your interview
- Photo –Upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the photo upload fails, you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the photograph requirements.
- Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status, Form DS-2019 – A Sevis-generated Form DS-2019 is provided to you by your program sponsor after the sponsor enters your information in the Sevis system.
- Proof of payment of the I-901 fee
- Original documents proving the availability of sufficient funds to meet expenses as stated on your Sevis Form DS-2019
- Evidence of English sufficiency for exchange visitor program
- Evidence of residence abroad and intent to depart the U.S. after completion of your exchange program
- Original acceptance letter from Hartford Seminary
- Any other documentation required by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate

Please keep in mind that it may take a few weeks to schedule an appointment so you should initiate your visa application as early as possible. Before your interview, practice answering questions in English about your application, your plans in the U.S., and your plans after you return home. If your spouse and children will remain in your home country, be prepared to explain how they will support themselves without you sending them money from the United States.

You may not need to do anything special to prove that you intend to return home. It may be sufficient for you to explain that you plan to return to your country to work, to continue your studies, or to do whatever you plan to do when you return home. However, you may need to prove that you have such strong ties to your home country that you will return there.

The consular official may decide to subject your application to a special “security clearance” before granting the visa. Security clearances may take as long as a few months, so it is very important that you apply for your J-1 Visa as early as possible. Once the application has been sent for security clearance, the applicant must simply wait until the consulate approves or denies the visa. If your visa application is denied, it is unlikely that the Consulate will reverse the decision. For this reason, it is important that you arrive at your appointment with the best supporting information. If your visa is denied, please contact me and we will try to provide you with suggestions that may strengthen your next visa application.

Please review the attached document titled *10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa* prior to your interview.

**Please Note:** If you are already in the U.S. in another nonimmigrant status, you must apply for a change of status to J-1. To apply for a change of status, please visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> and complete an I-539 Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status.

**Caution:** Do not enter the U.S. on a B-1 or B-2 visitor visa, or in WT or WB status through the “Visa Waiver” program. It is unlawful for individuals in these classifications to work in the U.S., and it is difficult and sometimes impossible to change your nonimmigrant visa status to J-1 once in the country.

## **Travel**

**Travel to the United States:** Once you have obtained your J-1 visa, you are ready to travel to the United States. Immigration regulations allow you (and dependents, if applicable) to enter the U.S. **no earlier than 30 days prior to the start date** of your program as indicated in item number 3 on your Form DS-2019. Please carry with you all items related your visa. Place these documents in a folder or envelope that you should have on your person during your travel.

**Port of Entry and Admission into the United States:** When you arrive in the U.S., you will apply for “admission” and an Immigration Inspector will examine your documents. You will need to present the following documents:

- Passport with valid J-1 Visa
- SEVIS Form DS-2019

You should have the following documents ready to present if the Immigration Inspector asks for them:

- Original financial documents
- Original acceptance letter from Hartford Seminary

The Immigration Inspector may ask you one or more questions. If you are asked about your funding, answer the question and offer to show the inspector your financial documents. If you are asked about your “intentions,” answer the question and offer to show supporting documents. Please be advised that nationals or citizens of certain countries are now subject to a “Special Registration” when entering the United States. You may be fingerprinted and photographed at the point of entry. You should calmly provide all the information requested by the Immigration officer.

If you have the required documents and there are no more questions, the Immigration Inspector will “admit” you to the U.S. by stamping your passport and creating an electronic I-94 Arrival/Departure record for you. Please download your I-94 record (and your dependents), at: [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) to print a copy. You (and your dependents if applicable) will be admitted for “duration of status” (D/S), which is the period of time in item 3 of Form DS-2019, plus a 30-day grace period following the program end date, “for the purposes of travel.”

When you leave the inspection area, make certain you have the following documents in your possession:

- Passport
- SEVIS Form DS-2019 and all supporting documents

## **Travel Information and Tips**

**Travel Arrangements:** We recommend arriving on a weekday if possible. Please take a taxi to Hartford Seminary (77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105) if you will be living on campus; or to your address off campus. Please see the information on “Ground Transportation” below. Please make sure you have cash in U.S. dollars in order to pay for the taxi ride (estimated cost is \$45-\$55 including tip). There will be someone waiting for you in campus housing to welcome you and to give you a key. If you will be living off-campus, please contact me prior to arriving for additional assistance.

We understand that in some cases arriving at John F. Kennedy Airport or LaGuardia Airport in New York City may be less expensive than arriving at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. You will have to

arrange your own transportation from NY to Hartford, CT. Please research the ground transportation links below to choose the best mode of transportation for you. Please email me if you need additional assistance.

Please check in with the CISSS upon your arrival on campus. It is very important that you email me when you and your dependents arrive on campus or if you are living off campus. An appointment will be setup for orientation at the time of check-in.

**Travel after Arriving in the United States in J-1 Status:** Please keep your DS-2019, J-1 Visa, and Passport on your person while traveling. Be sure your DS-2019 is properly endorsed under the travel validation section. Signatures are valid for one year. You must also present an unexpired J-1 Visa each time you re-enter the United States.

### **Transportation:**

#### *Airlines:*

Bradley International Airport: <http://www.bradleyairport.com/home/>

John F. Kennedy International Airport: <http://www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk.html>

LaGuardia Airport:

<http://www.ny.com/frame?url=http://www.panynj.gov/airports/laguardia.html&frame=/frame/travel.html>

#### *Ground Transportation:*

Airport Shuttle Network: <http://www.airportshuttles.net/connecticut.shtml>

CT Limo Shuttle: <http://www.ctlimo.com/>

Uber: <https://www.uber.com/>

Lyft: <https://www.lyft.com/>

Taxi's: <http://www.theyellowcab.com/>

Amtrak: <http://www.amtrak.com/home>

Greyhound Bus: <http://www.greyhound.com/>

### Travel to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean

If you and your dependents travel for less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands in the Caribbean only, with the exception of Cuba with an expired J-1 visa, your visas will be extended to the date of re-entry. This will allow you to re-enter the United States without needing to obtain a new visa at a U.S. consulate. If you plan to travel to any of these places with an expired J-1 visa, please see the CISSS for further information prior to making your travel plans.

### Immigration Procedures

**Change of Status:** If eligible (please see the CISSS for eligibility), you may apply for a change of status to another non-immigrant visa classification. Please download instructions and complete *Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status* from the USCIS website (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>). This should be done as soon as you determine that you need to change your visa classification. You must continue the approved activity under your current visa classification until USCIS renders a decision on your application. If you fail to follow this regulation, you risk falling out of status.

**Note:** If you are subject to the two-year home residency requirement, you are not eligible to change your nonimmigrant status. If you have a waiver to this requirement, you may apply to change your status. Be sure to include a copy of the waiver with your change of status application.

**Transfer to a Different Exchange Visitor Program:** You can transfer from one program sponsor to another only if the purpose of the transfer is to complete the objective for which you were admitted to under your current exchange visitor status. In addition, you must remain within the same participant category. Please see the CISSS for transfer procedures and deadlines.

**Returning Home while Dependent Remains in United States:** All J-2 dependents must leave the United States when the J-1 principle holder does. If your J-2 dependent(s) return to your home country before you do, please inform the CISSS at least 10 days prior to the date they plan to leave so that your Form DS-2019 can reflect this change. This also applies when the J-2 dependent does not plan to return to the U.S. with their J-2 Visa.

**Termination of Form DS-2019/Departure:** If your DS-2019 is terminated you and your dependents must leave the United States and return to your home country immediately, and are not given a 30-day grace period. Not complying with the health insurance requirement and not following all policies set forth by Hartford Seminary and the Department of State will put you in jeopardy of having your DS-2019 terminated.

**30-Day Grace Period upon Program Completion:** You and your dependents are given a 30-day grace period which begins the day after your program ends. The only activities permitted during the grace period are: travel within the United States or making preparations to return to your home country. Staying in the U.S. longer than the 30-day grace period granted is not permitted without an extension of your DS-2019.

### **Housing and Research Scholar Fees**

**Housing Information:** Please review the enclosed housing brochure carefully. We offer basic accommodations. Housing is only available to individual scholars. Scholars with dependents must secure off campus housing (please email the CISSS for housing options close to the Seminary; spouses and children must reside with the J-1). Please complete the housing application and return it to Roseann Lezak with the Housing Reservation Deposit of \$100 (please contact the housing department to waive the deposit if applicable). If you have any questions or concerns about housing, please email Ms. Crawford at [acrawford@hartsem.edu](mailto:acrawford@hartsem.edu).

*Housing information/instructions/application:* <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/housing/>. You will receive additional information on safety in the dorms, around campus, and around Hartford in general during Orientation.

**Research Scholar Fees:** Please see the attached document titled “J-1 Research Scholar Applicant Fees & Related Information 2019-2020” itemizing all the fees associated with being a research scholar at Hartford Seminary.

### **Emergency/Natural Disaster**

Please read the enclosed report titled, “Campus Safety, Security and Fire Safety Report - 2019” carefully. This document explains emergency and safety issues on campus. Security cameras are located in each parking lot.

### **Banking**

To open a bank account, please bring the following with you to the bank:

- Confirmation letter that you are a Research Scholar at Hartford Seminary from the CISSS
- Two forms of ID (passport and Research Scholar ID from Hartford Seminary)

**Bank of America:** Bank of America is the closest bank to the Seminary within walking distance. There is a charge for having an account. Please see Ms. Ummul Saleh to open a bank account.

550 Farmington Ave

Hartford, CT 06105

860-570-1780

[www.BankofAmerica.com](http://www.BankofAmerica.com)

**Webster Bank:** Please see Ms. Darlene Johnson to open a bank account. There is a charge for having an account.

108 Farmington Avenue

Hartford, CT 06105

860-723-5440

<http://www.websteronline.com>

## **Weather in Connecticut**

Please keep in mind that the weather in Connecticut changes based on the season. If you arrive in early September, the temperature can average from the high to low 80s. From late September through March, the temperature will continue to drop and get very cold. Please bring the appropriate winter clothing with you (coat, hat, gloves, sweaters, and appropriate footwear). If you need assistance in purchasing these items once you arrive, please see the CISSS.

During the winter months (typically December-early March) inclement weather (snow and ice storms) may prevent the Seminary from opening. Please check the Hartford Seminary website (<http://www.hartsem.edu/>) or call the front desk at 860-509-9500 for closing information due to bad weather.

## **United States Holidays**

**The Seminary is closed on the following Holidays:**

*Eid-Al-Adha* - **August 12**

*Labor Day* – **September 2**

*Rosh Hashanah* –**September 30**

*Yom Kippur* – **October 9**

*Thanksgiving Break* – **November 28-December 1**

*Christmas Holiday Break* – **December 24-December 25**

*Winter Break* - **December 26-January 1**

*Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday* – **January 20**

*Good Friday* – **April 10**

*Easter Saturday and Sunday* – **April 11-12**

*Memorial Day* – **May 25**

*Eid El Fitr* – **May 24**

*Independence Day* – **July 4**

## **Immigration Resources**

Study in the States: <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov/>

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: <http://www.ice.gov/>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection: <http://cbp.gov/>

U.S. Embassies and Consulates: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>