



J-1 Visa Guide

This information is for J-1 Research Scholars/Professors who plan to enter the United States for the first time to research, teach, or observe. For information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to continue studies, or renewing your J-1 visa, or for more details on how to apply for a J-1 visa, please see [Office of International Students & Scholars Services | Hartford International University](#) and [Programs - BridgeUSABridgeUSA \(state.gov\)](#).

Steps

1. Carefully read your SEVIS Form DS-2019. Your SEVIS Form DS-2019 indicates that we have created a record on your behalf in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Your SEVIS ID number is found in the upper right-hand corner of page one (1) of your SEVIS Form DS-2019. If any information on this form is incorrect, please contact our office (or your "Program Sponsor" if your DS-2019 was issued by an organization other than Hartford International University). If all of the information on the form is correct, sign your name in the appropriate space on the form. If you have dependents (husband or wife, children under the age of 21) who will be traveling with you, they will receive their own Form(s) DS-2019 to assist with their application(s) for J-2 visa(s). Please contact the [OISS](#) if you intend to bring your dependents to the U.S. with you and you have not received separate documentation for your dependent family members.

Please refer to the start date in section three (3) of the SEVIS Form DS-2019 to make sure that it is accurate. Note that entry to the U.S. in J-1 scholar status or J-2 dependent status is permitted **up to 30 days before** and **up to 30 days after** this start date.

Note: The spelling of your name and your date of birth must be exactly as they appear in your passport. The same is true for dependents. If there are any discrepancies, please request a corrected SEVIS Form DS-2019 from our office by [email](#).

2. Make sure your passport is valid. In order to avoid delays when applying for your visa and entering the U.S., your passport should be at least six (6) months beyond the date you plan to enter the country. You may be able to renew your passport in the U.S. after the six (6) months.
3. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. J-1 scholars must pay a 220 USD SEVIS fee once per J-1 program. Please pay the 220 USD fee at least three business days before your visa interview. SEVIS fees are transferable, but not refundable. If you paid the fee for a previously issued DS-2019, you do not need to pay the fee when you apply for a new J-1 visa, provided it is for the same J-1 program.

To Pay by Mail

- Download the [I-901 form](#) or
- Ask for the form by phone at 800.870.3676 (inside the United States)
- Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your DS-2019 form.
- Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft (drawn on U.S. banks only) in the amount of 220 USD, made payable to "The Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement."
- Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. You may therefore obtain a check from a bank chartered or operated in the United States, a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or a foreign bank that has an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank
- Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the address listed on Form I-901.



- A Form I-797 receipt confirmation letter should be mailed within 3 days of processing the fee. Be sure to make copies of this receipt letter and keep it with your other important immigration documents.

To Pay Online (recommended)

- Log onto the following website: [Department of Homeland Security - Form I-901 \(fmjfee.com\)](https://fmjfee.com).
- Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard, or American Express information. *Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your DS-2019 form.
- Print a copy of the online receipt.
- Be sure to make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents
- You must bring the receipt of fee payment with you to the interview. If you have lost the receipt, the Visa Officer should be able to view your payment history in his or her database.
- If you are transferring schools, extending your program, 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 220 USD SEVIS fee.

To Pay at a participating Western Union

In some cases, you may be asked to make a payment in person at a local Western Union. If you are asked to do so when applying online, please do the following:

- Log onto the following website: [SEVIS I-901 Fee Payment by Western Union Quick Pay Instructions | ICE](#).
- For specific instructions, please see the link above.

4. Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a valid J-1 visa. Citizens of all countries (except Canada) are required to have a J-1 visa to enter the U.S. To apply for a J-1 visa, you will need to submit the following documents to the US Embassy or Consulate in your country:
 - Application for Nonimmigrant Visa (Form DS-160). You can complete this form here: [DS-160: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application \(state.gov\)](#).
 - A passport valid for at least six months
 - Form DS-2019 (make sure it is signed)
 - Appointment or invitation letter from Hartford International University
 - Two 2"x 2" photographs in the [prescribed format](#)
 - A receipt for the visa application fee
 - A receipt for the SEVIS fee. 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.
 - Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds as stated on your DS-2019
 - Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the United States. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.
5. Travel to the U.S. Once you have obtained your J-1 visa, you are ready to travel to the U.S. Current immigration regulations allow you to enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the start date of your program indicated in Section 3 of your SEVIS Form DS-2019. You must carry with you the following: passport, DS-2019, appointment or invitation letter, original financial documents, and SEVIS fee payment receipt. Place these documents in a folder or envelope that you will have with you at all times during your travel. You will be asked to present these documents at the airport to a Customs and Border Protection agent.