

WELCOME TO PENN STATE



PennState

This packet contains important information. Read it thoroughly.

For further information, visit our website: global.psu.edu/international-j1-scholars

As a participant of the United States Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), you are joining nearly 300,000 annual foreign visitors from 200 countries and territories who come to experience American society and culture. In academic settings, the EVP promotes the exchange of ideas, research, mutual enrichment and collaboration between academic/research institutions in the United States and those abroad. The U.S. government provides information about the J Exchange Visitor Program at j1visa.state.gov/participants.

STEP 1: Apply for a J-1 Visa

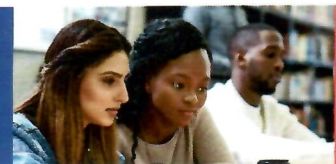
1. Review the enclosed DS-2019(s) to confirm that your information is correct. If there are any errors, email JScholarAdv@psu.edu. If not, read page 2, then sign your DS-2019. Any J-2 dependents over 14 years old should sign their DS-2019 themselves. Otherwise, sign on their behalf.
2. Pay your I-901 SEVIS fee at fmjfee.com. You do not need to pay this fee for your J-2 dependents. Print your I-901 SEVIS fee receipt.
3. Locate an American embassy in your home country at usembassy.gov. Follow all instructions on the embassy's website.
4. Complete Form DS-160 to apply for your J-1/J-2 visa(s) and pay the visa application fee(s). Print the DS-160 confirmation page and your visa application fee receipt.
5. Schedule your visa appointment(s). Take your I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, visa application fee receipt, DS-160 confirmation page, DS-2019, invitation letter from Penn State, financial documentation, passport photos, and passport.

Special Instructions for Canadian Citizens

Canadian citizens are not required to apply for a J-1 visa at an embassy/consulate.

1. Review the enclosed DS-2019(s) to confirm your information is correct. If there are any errors, email JScholarAdv@psu.edu. If not, read page 2, then sign your DS-2019. Any J-2 dependents over 14 years old should sign their DS-2019 themselves. Otherwise, sign on their behalf.
2. Pay your I-901 SEVIS fee at fmjfee.com. You do not need to pay this fee for your J-2 dependents. Print the I-901 payment receipt.
3. At the port of entry, present your Canadian passport, DS-2019, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, and financial documentation. For J-2s, you must present proof of family ties, such as a marriage certificate for your spouse and/or a long form birth certificate for your child.
4. Confirm in your passport you are in J-1 status. If you are admitted as a tourist (B-1/B-2), return to Canada to reenter in the correct status.

IMPORTANT: Do not move to Step 2 until you have received your visa!





STEP 2: Prepare for Your Travel and Stay

TRAVEL: To reach your Penn State campus, fly into State College, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington D.C., or New York City. Depending on your arrival city, you could have several hours of car or bus travel in order to reach your campus.

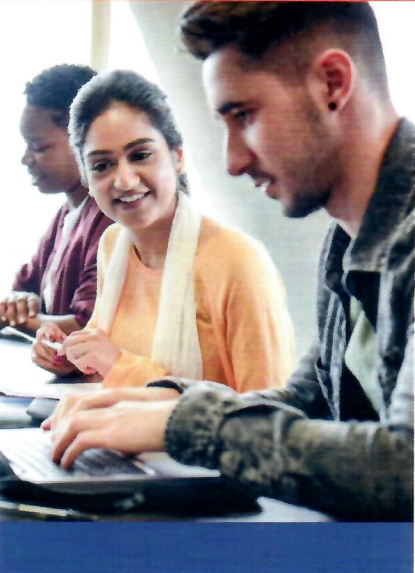
HOUSING: Penn State does not provide housing for visiting scholars. Housing is in high demand, so seek housing as soon as you secure your visa. Before you begin your search, familiarize yourself with common rental concepts and terms. Contact your department for additional assistance.

Helpful links:

- studentaffairs.psu.edu/offcampus
- livingoffcampus.psu.edu
- lionslease.com

We do not recommend using other websites as scammers have targeted international visitors.

CHANGE OF PLANS: If your arrival is delayed, you must request a change to your DS-2019. Return to your J-1 Incoming Scholar Checklist in iStart and submit the *Amend Program Dates form*. We will electronically change your DS-2019 and send you a late arrival letter to present to the customs officer at the port of entry.



STEP 3: Purchase Medical Insurance

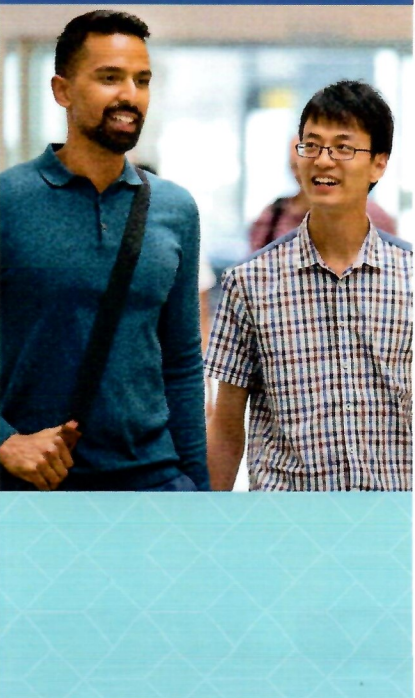
As a J-1 Scholar, you must have health insurance for yourself and for any accompanying J-2 dependents during the entire duration of your program. Willful failure to purchase and maintain the minimum required insurance coverage for you and your J-2 dependents will result in the termination of your exchange program.

According to the U.S. Department of State, the minimum required insurance coverage has:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Medical evacuation to your home country in the amount of \$50,000
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness

For more detailed information, visit our website:

global.psu.edu/article/j-1-scholar-medical-insurance



STEP 4: Finish Your Checklist

Your checklist must be completed **before** you arrive in the United States! Return to iStart to complete the following tasks:

- ✓ I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Confirmation
- ✓ J-1 Visa Confirmation
- ✓ Confirm Travel Plans
- ✓ Emergency Contact Information
- ✓ J-1 Scholar Training
- ✓ Medical Insurance

STEP 5: Enter the United States

At your port of entry, present the following documents to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer:

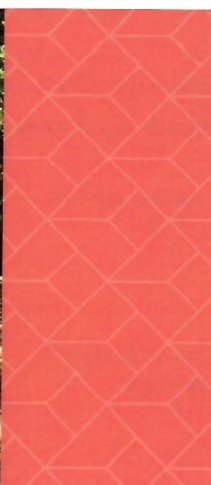
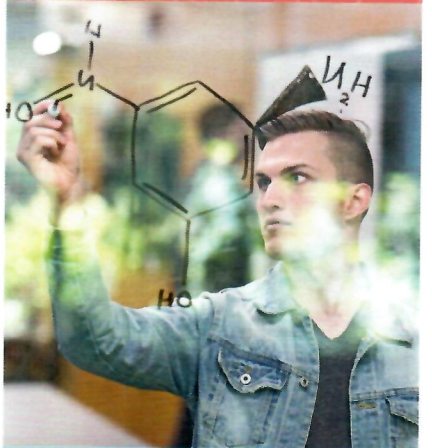
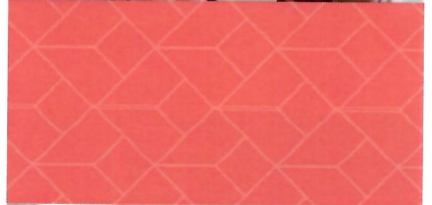
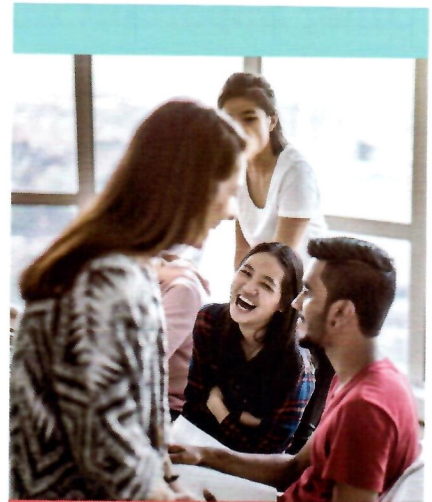
- ✓ Passport with valid J-1 visa
- ✓ Original DS-2019
- ✓ Customs Declaration Form
- ✓ Financial documentation
- ✓ Late arrival letter, if you have amended your DS-2019 start date

The CBP officer will stamp the passport with your arrival date, visa status, and expiration date, which should be "D/S" for "Duration of Status." Before you leave customs, verify that your passport has been marked with the correct status and that all your documents have been returned to you.

If you travel by land, you may receive a paper I-94 card (Arrival/Departure Record) at the border. If you travel by air, you must print your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record from i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home after your arrival and save it for your records. You will need your I-94 to apply for a Social Security Number, driver's license, etc.

STEP 6: Arrive at Penn State

1. Visit your Penn State departmental contact as soon as you arrive on campus to complete your document check-in. Your departmental contact will also help you navigate items such as a Penn State ID card, Access Account, and employee medical benefits, if applicable.
2. If you have J-2 dependents, submit their documents (passport, J-2 visa, I-94, and DS-2019) using the *J-2 Dependent Check-In form* in iStart.
3. After you have checked in, apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). You must have been in the U.S. for at least 10 days, have received your Document Check-in confirmation email from J-1 Scholar Advising, and have already started your exchange program. For further information, see global.psu.edu/node/157.
4. Open a bank account. Some banks will create an account for a J-1 Scholar using only a Penn State ID, but others will require a Social Security number.
5. You may be eligible for a Pennsylvania Driver's License. Before you apply, make sure you have received your Social Security Card and your Document Check-in confirmation email from J-1 Scholar Advising. See global.psu.edu/node/186 for more information.



Other Important Information

2-YEAR HOME RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Some J-1 Scholars are subject to a 2-year home residency requirement. If you are subject, you must return to your home country for two years before you are eligible to apply for H visas, L visas, K visas, or permanent residency. You may be subject to this requirement if you: 1) received government funding, 2) have specialized knowledge deemed necessary to your home country's development, and/or 3) received graduate medical education or training in the U.S. If you are subject to this requirement, it should be marked on your DS-2019 and/or your visa. It is possible to waive this requirement. Go to global.psu.edu/category/maintaining-j1-status for more information.

Cost Breakdown

APPROXIMATE PROGRAM COSTS			
SEVIS fee	\$220	EPPIC	\$375/semester*
Visa fee	\$160/person	Health Insurance	\$9.42/day*

AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES			
Rent – Studio apartment	\$868	Groceries (1 adult)	\$225
Rent – 1-bedroom apartment	\$887	Groceries (2 adults)	\$495
Rent – 2-bedroom apartment	\$1019	Utilities	\$200****
CATA Bus Pass	\$79***	Childcare	\$1000/child

* If your Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) rating is "Conditional," you are **required** to enroll in EPPIC's J-1 Scholars program. The cost will be prorated if you will not be present for an entire semester.

** This is the cost to purchase the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

*** CATA is the bus service for the University Park campus. Prices at other campuses may vary. Some apartments rentals include a bus pass.

**** Some utilities may be included in your rent, so this number can vary.

SOURCES:

fns.usda.gov/cnpp/usda-food-plans-cost-food-reports-monthly-reports
bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/city/pennsylvania/state_college
numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/State-College



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