



J-1 Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Process at UGA

The information below pertains to the J-1 sponsorship process at UGA. The purpose of the Exchange Visitor (EV) Program is to promote cultural and educational exchange between citizens of the United States and those of other countries. The program provides foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the U.S. and then return home to share their experiences.

There are three main J-1 scholar categories. Departments should choose the category that best matches the intent and length of the EV's stay. The three categories are listed below.

PROFESSOR:

The primary purpose is to teach, lecture, observe, or consult. Also may conduct research. **Duration:** Programs can last up to 5 years. Minimum stay – 3 weeks

RESEARCH SCHOLAR:

The primary purpose is to conduct research, observe or consult in connection with a research project. Also they may teach or lecture. **Duration:** Programs can last up to 5 years. Minimum stay – 3 weeks

SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR:

The primary purpose is for a professor, research scholar, or person with similar education or accomplishments who enters the United States for a short-term visit for the purpose to lecture, observe, consult, or train. **Duration:** Programs can last from 1 day to 6 months. There is **NO** extension permitted beyond the time limits listed.

ELIGIBILITY:

It is the Department of State's expectation that scholars have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. In general, however, scholars coming to UGA under the J-1 program should have an advanced degree in the field of research or teaching.



PURPOSE:

The EV needs a DS-2019 Form issued by the Immigration Services Office at UGA to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad or to change immigration status to J1 from within the U.S., if they are already inside the U.S. The request for a DS-2019 should be made at least 3 months prior to the start date of the exchange visitor's program at UGA but no later than 2 months prior. If someone is already inside the US, the transfer process is faster. For additional information regarding the J-1 EV program, please go to our website at

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/uga-departments/scholars>

PROGRAM START DATE:

The EV cannot begin his/her research program at UGA until the start date (listed on DS-2019) has been reached. However, an EV may enter the U.S. **30** days prior to the start date on the DS-2019. The purpose of an early arrival is for EV to get settled in, find housing, complete orientation with department, and become familiar to his/her new environment.

VISITING RESEARCHERS/SCHOLARS (Not paid by UGA)

There is a two-step process to host any position that will not be paid by UGA. (NOTE: postdocs do not have to go through the VRS system – that's only for non-paid visiting scholars.

1. The first step is to complete the Office of Research's Visiting Researcher/Scholar questionnaire on their website at **<http://research.uga.edu/visiting/procedures/>**. Once OVPR assigns the 810 number, department proceeds to step two. If the EV is being paid by UGA, once the hiring proposal has been approved, the sponsoring department will need to go into ID Manager and search by the EV's name to obtain the 810 number. Once completed, department proceeds to step two.
2. The department must submit the required e-forms in the Compass system (**<https://compass.uga.edu>**) Immigration Services prefers to have the 810 number first, but we do not need it to begin a visa sponsorship. A TEMP ID number will be assigned when the visa sponsorship is initiated in Compass, and then change later when 810 number has been issued. The department is responsible for providing Immigration Services with the 810 number.



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COMPASS:

Compass is the University of Georgia's portal for benefit applications relating to international students, scholars, faculty, and staff at the University of Georgia. The Compass portal can be found here <https://compass.uga.edu>

PROCESS:

The department representative initiating the sponsorship must be approved for access in Compass. This Compass User Guide will show you how to request access as well as how to complete request for J-1 sponsorship in Compass.

https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/portal/compass_departmental_user_guide.pdf

The department representative must then log in to Compass using her/his MyID and password. J-1 sponsorship forms can be found under Departmental Services > Tasks. Click on "J-1 Scholar Application (new or previously started)." The representative completing the form will need to know the employee's UGA ID number and date of birth. If the person is not found by the system when this information is entered, the department representative will be required to add the person into the system. There are complete instructions on how to do this in the User guide linked above.



INTAKE E-FORMS:

Within the link to the J-1 Scholar Application, there are several online intake forms that must be completed and submitted by both the department and the EV. Once the "Applicant Access" form has been submitted, the EV will receive an email with a link to the forms that he/she must complete. Once all forms are submitted, an immigration advisor will review paperwork, and will begin the process to issue a DS-2019 document.

DEPARTMENTAL FORMS:

- Department Applicant Access
- Dept. Information
- Dept. Program Information
- Dept. Fees
- Deemed Export Attestation
- Dept. Export control Officer Notification
- Dept. Compliance Certification

EV FORMS:

- Scholar Biographical Information
- Scholar Immigration Status Information & History
- Scholar Academic & Employment History
- Scholar Funding, Fees & Health Insurance
- Scholar J-1 Program Transfer (if applicable)
- Scholar Dependent Spouse & Children (if applicable)
- Scholar Notify Department of Form Completion

PROCESSING TIME:

The issuance of a DS-2019 form takes 7 to 10 business days or less from the submission of complete application packet.



APPOINTMENT/INVITATION LETTER TEMPLATES:

Click on the link below to review the new J-1 position offer letter template.

https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/portal/j1_position_letter_template.pdf

Click on the link below to review the courtesy J-1 appointment letter template (No UGA funding or salary).

https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/portal/j1_appointment_template.pdf

ALLOWED FUNDING SOURCES:

U.S. or Home government

Self-funded

UGA funded

Outside agency funding

ENGLISH ASSESSMENT FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS:

Per U.S. Department of State federal regulations, EVs must have "sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, successfully to participate in his/her program and to function on a day-to-day basis." (22 CFR 62.10(a)(2)).

Specifically, the U.S. Department of State requires sponsors to ensure that EVs have "sufficient English proficiency to perform their jobs, navigate daily life in the United States, read and comprehend program materials, understand fully their responsibilities, rights and protections, and know how to obtain assistance."

There are 3 ways to verify and document EVs English language proficiency. Click on the link below to review Immigration Services' policy for English Assessment, and the option for an EV to prove English ability.

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/scholar/J-1EnglishProficiencyUGA.pdf>



HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS:

EV's sponsored under the J-1 program are required to have health insurance that meets federal regulatory requirements. Click the link below to review the J-1 Health Insurance Handout

https://globalengagement.uga.edu/images/documents/immigration/scholar/J1_Health_Insurance_Info_Sheet_.pdf

UGA EXCHANGE VISITOR HANDBOOK FOR SCHOLARS AND DEPARTMENTS:

Our office has compiled a handbook with a broad array of useful information for incoming EV's. Click on the link below to review the UGA EV Handbook,

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/uga-departments/scholars>

INTERNAL Immigration Services COST:

Immigration Services at UGA is a "cost recovery program", and is not fully funded centrally. As a result, we are required to charge fees for our services. The internal fee sheet can be found here: <https://globalengagement.uga.edu/immigration/fees-page>

SEVIS FEE:

The SEVIS fee, payable to the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) for J-1 EVs is \$220. J-1 EVs must pay a \$220 SEVIS fee once per J-1 program, prior to applying for the J-1 visa.

What is SEVIS?:

SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the web-based system that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses to maintain information regarding: Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified schools. J-1 visa Exchange Visitor Program participants (and their J-2 dependents).

VISA APPLICATION FEE:

The visa application fee, payable to the U.S. Department of State, is \$160. This fee must be paid by the EV at the time of the visa application.



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR COMPLIANCE FEE (ISCF):

EV's are required to pay an annual fee during their program participation. Click on the link below for the correct International Scholar & Compliance Fee (ISCF) amount.

<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/immigration/fees-page>

MINIMUM FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

The minimum monthly amount of funding that an EV must show must be at least \$1900. This is the required amount to cover living expenses, including housing, meals, transportation, and other miscellaneous costs. Either the department, or the EV can show this funding. Additional funding is needed for each dependent accompanying the J-1 principal.

FORM I-9: EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION:

The EV is required to complete a Form I-9 in his/her department within 3 days of beginning to work at UGA, if they are in a paid position, and hired by UGA.

EMPLOYMENT CHANGES AND/OR TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION:

Notify Immigration Services right away if an EV from your department has the position changed in any way, resigns or has his/her employment terminated.

GRACE PERIOD:

The J-1 EV is entitled to a **"grace period"** of 30 days after the expiration date on the DS-2019. The purpose of the grace period is to prepare for departure, travel or just remain inside the U.S. for an extra 30 days. EV may **NOT** be in the lab or continuing any research or employment during this grace period.

SEVIS OUT OF COUNTRY FUNCTIONALITY:

The EV might be eligible to participate in his or her EV program for a particular period of time outside the U.S. The SEVIS record will remain in "Active SEVIS" status during that period, thereby continuing the active research relationship with UGA. This benefit must be approved by an immigration advisor first before the EV departs the U.S.

FURTHER QUESTIONS:

Please refer any questions to immigration@uga.edu / 706-542-2900. We look forward to assisting you.