



Immigration Services
Office of Global Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Immigration Services

J-1 Scholar Pre-Arrival Information

WELCOME

Immigration Services in the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) is responsible for administering the Exchange Visitor Program at The University of Georgia and for signing all documentation, granting benefits and monitoring legal visa status falls. The Department of State oversees all exchange visitor programs in the United States and determines the laws governing your visa category.

The information below may be helpful to you as you make your plans to come to The University of Georgia as an exchange visitor. If, after reading the following you need additional information, please contact the Immigration Services Office at 706-542-2900 or immigration@uga.edu.

DEFINITION OF EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS

The Exchange Visitor Program brings qualified students, interns, teachers, professors, research scholars, specialists, and trainees to the United States for a variety of educational purposes. The exchange visitor is under the sponsorship of an agency, institution, or organization that has been approved by the Department of State.

An Exchange Visitor at The University of Georgia is a foreign national who is a student, student-intern, professor, research scholar, short-term scholar or specialist in a field of specialized knowledge or skill. The Exchange Visitor is coming temporarily to the United States as a participant in a program designated by the Department of State, for the purpose of teaching, instructing or lecturing, studying, observing, conducting research, consulting, or demonstrating special skills. The principal exchange visitor obtains a J-1 visa; the spouse and minor children obtain J-2 visas.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR EXCHANGE VISITOR CATEGORIES

1. Students -- for the purpose of participating in a designated exchange program while studying at a degree-granting, post-secondary, accredited, educational institution. Students must pursue a full course of study either toward completion of a degree or a prescribed course of study in a non-degree program. Students must be financed directly or indirectly by one of the following: United States or home government; international organization; educational institution; state or local government; or substantially from another source other than personal or family funds.

2. Professors and Research Scholars -- A professor or research scholar whose purpose is to stimulate international collaborative teaching and research or to promote interchange between research and educational institutions in the United States and other countries (Maximum period of 5 years if funded by UGA sponsor; 2 years if funded by outside source)
3. Short-term Scholars -- a professor, research scholar, or specialist, or a person with similar education or accomplishments coming to the United States for up to six months to lecture, observe, consult, participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, study tours, professional meetings, or similar types of educational and professional activities. (Maximum period of six months - no extension possible).
4. Specialist -- an expert in a field of specialized knowledge or skill coming to the United States for observing, consulting or demonstrating special skills. (Maximum period of one year - no extensions possible).
5. Student-Intern -- student enrolled in a degree program at home university, outside the U.S., to be sponsored for an internship in the United States, as part of their current degree program requirements. (Maximum period of one year- no extensions possible)

STATUS OF EXCHANGE VISITORS

1. Exchange visitors are admitted to pursue an educational or research objective and cannot change educational objectives once in the United States or change from one category of Exchange Visitor to another (e.g., from student to professor/researcher) unless very unusual or extenuating circumstances exist. If you plan to become a full-time student, do not come to our program as a research scholar or specialist. Research scholars cannot pursue full-time study. Instead, contact the Graduate Admissions office for an application as a graduate student.
2. Exchange visitors cannot change program sponsorship without a release (approval) from the UGA Responsible Officer of the program on whose DS-2019 the exchange visitor is currently participating. This transfer of program must be consistent with the exchange visitor's educational or research objective.
3. Students and visiting scholars are required to carry health insurance coverage for themselves and any dependents. This coverage must include the following minimum amounts: (1) medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness (In the United States, pregnancy and childbirth are treated as illnesses; therefore, health insurance must cover these expenses); (2) repatriation of remains - \$25,000; (3) expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to the home country - \$50,000; (4) deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness. Health insurance can be purchased on arrival in Athens. *An exchange visitor who knowingly does not maintain the required insurance coverage or who gives untrue and misleading information to the sponsor concerning such coverage is in violation of these regulations and will be terminated as a participant by the sponsor.*
http://iissis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/J1_Health_Insurance_Info_Sheet_.pdf
4. After completing an Exchange Visitor Program in the United States, certain exchange visitors are required to live in their home countries for a period of two years before they are eligible to apply for immigrant status or for other nonimmigrant status such as temporary workers, trainees, or intra-company transferees. The two-year home country residence requirement

applies to those exchange visitors who (1) are financially supported by the U.S. government or their home governments; (2) have skills which are needed in their home countries, as specified on the Exchange Visitor Skills List; or (3) are medical doctors who have graduated from a foreign medical school and have come to the United States to study or work in the field of medicine. The purpose of the home country residence requirement is to enforce the return of exchange visitors in order to carry out the educational exchange objectives of the program. Waivers of the residence requirement can be recommended by the Department of State and granted by the Citizenship and Immigration Service under certain circumstances, but such waivers are difficult to obtain.

EXCHANGE VISITOR CATEGORIES AND HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS

Students – all students at UGA will automatically be enrolled in a school-approved insurance policy. The fees for this policy will be paid along with tuition. Only those students that will be sponsored by the Department of State, the Open Society Institute, LASPAU-FULBRIGHT or their home country embassy can waive this required insurance. Information about how to waive this requirement will be given to you at new student orientation.

Student-Interns, Professors, Research Scholars and Short-term Scholars employed by UGA – all employees of UGA are given the option to enroll in the University Staff and Faculty Insurance policy run by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. While this is an excellent insurance company that we recommend you accept, please keep in mind that it does not fully cover the insurance requirements mandated by the Department of State. To supplement this insurance policy so that all requirements are met you must purchase a policy that covers you for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Please refer to the link regarding current Health Insurance Options for J-1 and J-2 Exchange Visitors: http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/J1_Health_Insurance_Info_Sheet_.pdf

PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING AN ENTRY VISA

Take the Form DS-2019 (mailed to you) and documentation of financial support to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and apply for a J-1 visa. If a spouse and/or children are requesting J-2 visas, a DS-2019 form, a marriage license, birth certificates (family records), and additional financial documentation will be needed. If the consular officer determines that you are a bona fide exchange visitor, the visa will be granted and you may come to the United States. It should be noted that the consular officer is required to determine the intent of the applicant, and this determination and decision regarding the issuance of a visa cannot be appealed.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Exchange visitors will be admitted to the United States with a valid passport and a valid U. S. entry visa stamped in the passport by the U. S. Consulate, on the basis of a valid DS-2019 and proof of sufficient funds. If, for some reason, you will be entering the country with a tourist visa, B-2, be sure to notify the consular officer of your intention to be an Exchange Visitor and of the extenuating circumstances that prevented you from having the required documentation. At that time your visa can include a "prospective J-1" statement, which will greatly facilitate your change of visa to J-1. It is very important to always use the same name and name order (if your name is composed of several names). This is especially important for names translated from other languages and scriptures. Please use the official

translation that is in your passport for immigration documents, registration at the university, etc. You may view this video for more information: <http://www.cbp.gov/video/opa/you-arrived.mp4>

WHAT TO BRING

Georgia's climate is moderate. The average temperature in January ranges from 46 degrees F (7.8C) to 60 degrees F (15.6C) and the average temperature in July ranges from 72 degrees F (22C) to 88 degrees F (31.1C). It sometimes gets colder in the winter and hotter in the summer. A medium weight overcoat should keep you warm in the winter, except on colder days you might need a sweater. Bring gloves, a raincoat, and an umbrella as the average rainfall in Athens is 50 inches (1,270 millimeters) per year. Class dress is informal. When more formal dress is appropriate, women usually wear a dress and men a shirt and tie. Also, if your country has a national dress, instruments, crafts, or other traditional materials, please bring them with you if luggage space permits. We offer many opportunities for you to introduce and share your culture and customs with Americans, and for you to learn more about American culture and customs.

If you take prescription medicine or wear glasses, bring a copy of your prescription along. Also bring copies of any medical records which are important - especially IMMUNIZATION records. If you are married and joined by your family, bring their immunization records also.

GETTING TO ATHENS

Upon arrival at the Atlanta International Airport, you may reach Athens via the following ways:

1. Groome Transportation- groometransportation.com- The fare is \$37.00 one way and leaves Atlanta at various times during the day. It takes approximately 1 ½ hours to arrive in Athens after leaving the airport. Locate the International Shuttle Connector which transports from the International Terminal to the Domestic. The ride is approximately ten minutes. Once at the Domestic terminal, you would locate our van at Ground Transportation in lanes 12-15.
2. Take a taxicab to the Atlanta Greyhound Bus (\$14.00-\$20.00), and then the Greyhound Bus to Athens (\$12.00 plus tax). Check with the taxi driver on the fare before departing.

If you need to stay overnight near the Atlanta Airport, the least expensive motels are the Red Roof Inn (1-855-352-7611) and the Fairfield Inn (1-770-994-3666). One night at the Red Roof Inn costs approximately \$80.00 and includes transportation from and to the airport. One night at the Fairfield Inn cost approximately \$70.00 and included transportation from and to the airport. You make arrangements for your free ride by calling the motel on the courtesy phone in the terminal.

UPON ARRIVING IN ATHENS, GEORGIA

If you arrive during business hours on a weekday (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.), you may call your sponsoring department to inform them of your arrival. If you need taxi service, call "Your Cab Co." – (706) 546-5844 or London Taxi – 706-549-5966. If you arrive without housing accommodations, you may wish to stay at one of the local hotels near campus. Although not the least expensive hotels, the Holiday Inn (706-549-4433), Georgia Center (706-542-6364) Courtyard Marriott (706-369-7000) and Country Inn & Suites (706-612-9100) are closest to campus. The single room rates are approximately \$60.00 - \$90.00 per night. If you arrive by shuttle, the shuttle stops at each location.

You should plan to arrive several days before beginning your program to look for available housing. You may need to spend a few nights in a local motel while looking. It is not possible to make rental arrangements by mail. Many departments that invite Exchange Visitors assist them in locating housing. You may also contact your sponsoring or hosting academic department for assistance with housing.

Off-campus housing in Athens includes furnished rooms and furnished and unfurnished apartments. Single furnished rooms are rare and generally rent from \$400.00 to \$600.00 per month. Generally, a deposit of one-half the month's rent is required. Please note that in the United States a furnished apartment does not supply basic linens, plates, etc. However, all apartments almost always include a stove and refrigerator. Be sure to bring adequate funds for your initial expenses (approximately \$1,500 USD) and enough to sustain yourself until you begin receiving your regular financial support. An estimate of the minimum needed for one person for one year is \$18,960. If your family will accompany you, a minimum of \$5,000 per year is suggested for your spouse and approximately \$4,000 per year for each child. The amount of funds actually needed varies according to your lifestyle, the cost of available accommodations and your spending patterns.

STEPS IN APPLYING FOR A J-1 VISA AND TRAVELING TO THE U.S.

Please check the following sites for information about how to pay the required \$180 SEVIS fee prior to your application for a J-1 visa, for information about the visa application process, and for information about traveling to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta on your way to the University of Georgia campus in Athens, Georgia.

1. Pay the SEVIS database fee using Form I-901

Three payment options are (from fastest to slowest):

a. Credit Card Payment – <http://www.fmjfee.com>

- At the site, click the “Submit Form I-901 and Fee Payment.”
- On the next page, select “Form DS-2019” and then “OK”
- Fill out next page with your personal information.
- The form requires the SEVIS Identification Number on the DS-2019. This number is in the upper right hand corner of the DS-2019 and begins with an N and has 10 digits.
- The form also requires the “Program Number” which is on your DS-2019. The Program Number is: P-1-00263.
- On the next page check to be sure the information is correct.
- Choose First class mail (recommended). A copy of your receipt will be mailed to you for your records. Print several copies of the receipt to bring with you to the U.S. Consulate.
- The Credit Card Form has a place for “Cardholder address.” You do not need to complete this part, as it is not a required field and the space is too small for most international addresses.
- Print at least two copies of the receipt!

To ensure electronic verification of the fee payment at the consular office, non-immigrants paying the fee electronically or by mail must submit the fee at least three business days (preferably more than three days) before the scheduled visa interview to the DHS address

listed on the Form I-901. This will allow time for the fee to be deposited and payment recorded in SEVIS. Alternatively you can pay manually:

b. Payment by Western Union

- See the introduction for Western Union payment at <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee>

c. Manual Payment - <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee>

DHS will issue an official paper receipt (I-797) acknowledging every payment regardless of payment method. You will need your receipt when applying for an J-1 visa.

2. Find the U.S. Embassy or Consulate closest to your home: <http://www.usembassy.gov>
3. Review the following Information Websites:
 - a. Temporary Visitors to the United States- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>
 - b. Getting a Visa- <http://j1visa.state.gov>
 - c. Visa Denials (learn why they are denied): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html>
4. Fees for Visa Services: <http://j1visa.state.gov>
5. Visa Photo Requirements: <http://j1visa.state.gov>
6. U.S. OBIM (Office of Biometric Identity Management): <http://www.dhs.gov/obim>
7. Port of Entry Fact Sheet for J-1 Visa Holders: <http://www.cbp.gov/border-security/ports-entry>
8. Airport Status: <http://www.fly.faa.gov/flyfaa/usmap.jsp>
9. Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Atlanta: <http://www.atlanta-airport.com>

IMMIGRATION CHECK-IN UPON ARRIVAL TO THE U.S.

NOTE: If you cannot arrive by the beginning date on the DS-2019 form, please inform your sponsoring department and immigration advisor of your actual date to enter the U.S. Otherwise, your record will be cancelled in the SEVIS database and you will not be allowed entry in the U.S.

Immediately, upon your arrival at the University of Georgia, you must check-in online with the Office of Global Engagement using <https://compass.uga.edu>. If you do not check in with the Office of Global Engagement, the SEVIS database will CANCEL your program. If your program is cancelled, you must return home.

Scholars should follow the instructions below to complete the mandatory check-in:

To begin Checking in Online --_Go to <https://compass.uga.edu>

[If you have your UGA MyID, click on "Login"](#)

If you do not have your UGA MyID, but you do have your 81x UGA ID number, or a TEMP ID number, choose Login with PIN.

Upon logging in, the J scholar should click on "Immigration Check in Forms" in the left-hand menu, and then "J-1 Scholar Immigration Check-in Forms".

There are two forms in the main body of the page: "J-1 Scholar Immigration Check-in Form" and "J-2 Dependent Immigration Check-in Form".

Click on the first form, complete it and click submit at the end of the form. If the scholar is accompanied by a

spouse or children, he or she should submit the J-2 scholar dependent form for each dependent.

Scholars will be instructed to upload the following documents to the online form:

- DS-2019
- Passport ID Page
- Printed I-94 from cbp.gov/i94
- J Visa Stamp
- Mandatory Health Insurance Certification/Proof of Health Insurance
- Scholar will call and sign up for Mandatory J-1 Scholar Orientation – 706 542-2900
- International Scholar Compliance Fee will be Paid at Orientation by Check, Money Order, or by Credit Card -this is an annual fee and is paid each year of your continuing program. If paying by credit card, please review the link: <http://tinyurl.com/iscfonline>

If you have any questions, please contact OIE at 706-542-2900 or immigration@uga.edu

COMPLIANCE UNIT- J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM OFFICE

The Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation has a new Compliance Unit. The Compliance Unit will serve as an information resource for clarification of, guidance regarding, and improvements to the Exchange Visitor Programs.

The Department recognizes that the Exchange Visitor Program can be most successful if it is aware of the needs, interests and concerns of all parties involved in the Exchange Visitor Program. In order to improve communications among the Department, program sponsors, and program participants (including host families), the Department established an email address by which sponsors, participants, and interested third parties may contact the Compliance Unit.

Pursuant to regulations found at §62.10(c)(7), J-1 Exchange Visitor Orientation must include the address and telephone number of the Exchange Visitor Program Services of the Department of State. Recently, the EVP Office clarified that this contact information must include the new email address as well.

If you have any questions or concerns about your J-1 exchange program that cannot be resolved by the International Office at the University of Georgia (UGA), please feel free to contact Mr. Martinez or Ms. Dickerson.

Compliance Unit
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