
Welcome Letter

Dear Exchange Visitor:

We are very pleased that you will soon join us at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Please find enclosed Form DS-2019 for you and any dependents coming with you to the United States. Please review this form carefully to make sure the information is correct. Contact your academic department immediately if you discover any errors.

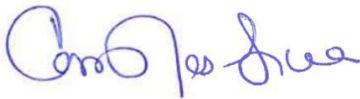
Here are your next steps:

1. Pay the [required SEVIS fee](#) and print a receipt for your visa interview.
2. Begin applying for a J-1 visa by making a visa appointment with a [U.S. embassy or consulate](#). Dependents will apply for J-2 visas. *Canadian citizens do not require a visa to enter the U.S.*
3. After you receive your visa, you must enter the United States within 30 days of the start date on your DS-2019. [Here are directions](#) to the University of Maryland campus.
4. After your arrival, please contact your academic department by phone.
5. After your arrival, [check in online](#) with the office of International Student & Scholar Services.
6. Once you have completed the check in process, you will receive an email inviting you to attend our J-1 Exchange Visitor orientation session. This orientation is mandatory and is held on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Included in this packet you will find the U.S. Department of State welcome brochure, information regarding the J-1 program and health insurance requirements, and instructions for the online iTerp check-in. ***Please read all of this material carefully.***

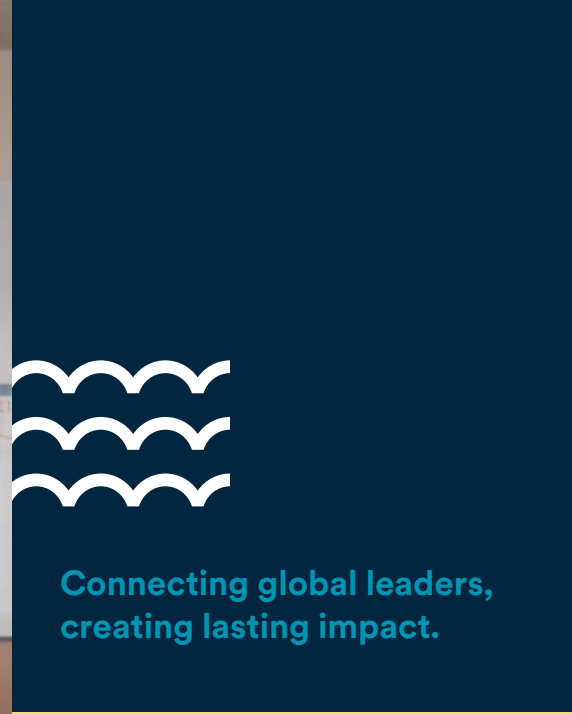
Please also visit our [International Welcome Center](#), which includes information on housing, transportation and U.S. culture.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the International Faculty and Scholar Advisor who signed your DS-2019. We look forward to meeting you soon and hope that your time with us will be enjoyable and beneficial, both personally and professionally. Sincerely,



Connie Jesse Lira

Assistant Director Faculty Immigration



Exchange Visitor Program

Welcome Brochure

Welcome to the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program, BridgeUSA.

During your exchange program, you will have the unique opportunity to experience life in the United States. You will not only serve as an ambassador of your home country helping to educate the American people about your country and customs, but you will experience American culture first-hand. You will also enhance your skills and expertise and make connections and memories that will last a lifetime.

This brochure will help you understand the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program, provide you with information on contacting the U.S. Department of State, and introduce you to some of the major requirements of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations.



BridgeUSA

The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange.



The Exchange Visitor Program

The U.S. Department of State administers the Exchange Visitor Program under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States with the expectation that on completion of their exchange program, they will return home to share their experiences.

Sponsors

The U.S. Department of State designates U.S. organizations such as government agencies, academic institutions, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations to administer exchange visitor programs. These organizations are known as sponsors. Sponsors screen and select exchange visitors to participate in their programs based on the regulations governing the exchange activity and stated in 22 CFR Part 62. Sponsors provide exchange visitors with pre-arrival information and an orientation in addition to monitoring activities throughout their exchange program. Sponsors offer or identify cross-cultural activities that will expose exchange visitors to American society, culture, and institutions. You are encouraged to participate in activities that provide you with an opportunity to share your language, culture, and history of your country with Americans.



Responsible Officers

Sponsors appoint individuals as responsible officers and alternate responsible officers to advise and assist exchange visitors. These officers issue the Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019) and conduct official communications with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on your behalf. Your sponsor's role is to help you manage your program. If problems arise or you have questions, your sponsor is there to help you. Should you have any questions about the regulations or any aspect of your exchange program, your initial and primary contact is your sponsor. Unless provided specific contact information by your sponsor, you should contact the person whose name and telephone number is located on your Form DS-2019.

Exchange Visitor

An exchange visitor is a foreign national selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program and who is seeking to enter or has entered the United States temporarily on a J-1 visa.

Spouse and Dependents

Some categories of the Exchange Visitor Program permit a spouse and/or unmarried children, under 21 years of age, to accompany an exchange visitor to the United States. These individuals may apply for J-2 visas with the permission of your sponsor.

Current Regulations

The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, (22 CFR, Part 62) and can be found at:

j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/current/regulations-compliance/

It is important that you understand and abide by the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, U.S. laws, and sponsor rules. Regular contact with your sponsor will help you keep current with any change which may affect your J-1 visa status. Some requirements of the Federal regulations and where to find them are indicated below.

- **Register with your sponsor** – Your Form DS-2019 was created in a computerized system known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This System is administered by the Department of Homeland Security and is used to collect and maintain information on the current status of non-immigrants and their dependents in the sponsor's program during their stay in the United States.

When you arrive in the United States, you must contact your sponsor to ensure that your data in SEVIS is accurate and updated. Failing to maintain your program status could result in serious consequences and may affect your ability to remain in or return to the United States.

- **Activities and Program Provisions** – You entered the United States in a specific program category and are required to engage in the activity listed on your Form DS-2019. You must comply with the specific program provisions of the regulations relating to your exchange category.
- **Insurance** – You are required to have medical insurance in effect for yourself (J-1), your spouse, and any dependents (J-2) for the duration of your program. Some sponsors provide the required insurance for their exchange visitors. Other sponsors may allow you to make your own arrangements or may help to identify insurance providers. Consult with your responsible officer's sponsor before the start of your program.

Maintenance of Insurance

Willful failure on your part to maintain the required insurance throughout your stay in the United States will result in the termination of your exchange program.

Maintenance of Valid Program Status

You are required to have a valid and unexpired Form DS-2019. Sponsors may terminate an exchange visitor's program for violating U.S. laws, Exchange Visitor Program regulations, or the sponsor's rules governing their particular program. If your program is terminated, you are expected to immediately depart the U.S.

Required Notifications to Sponsors

You must immediately inform your sponsor if you change your address (residence), telephone number, email address, or complete or withdraw from your exchange visitor program early. Doing so assists your sponsor in complying with their notification and reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. Failure to keep your sponsor informed could result in the termination of your program.

Contacting the U.S. Department of State

The Exchange Visitor Program is administered under the oversight of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



Questions or concerns about your exchange program?
Contact the sponsor listed on your Form DS-2019.

Still have questions AFTER speaking with your sponsor?
Email Jvisas@state.gov

Remaining concerns or need emergency assistance?
Call the J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline at [1-866-283-9090](tel:1-866-283-9090)

The U.S. Department of State does not tolerate any form of retaliation and fully supports your request for assistance.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911!



Helpful Links:

For questions on applying please visit:

j1visa.state.gov/participants

j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EV-TRIFOLD.pdf

Resources and Common Questions for Exchange Visitors:

j1visa.state.gov/participants/current

j1visa.state.gov/participants/common-questions/

J-1 Pre-Arrival Checklist

IMPORTANT: All J-1 exchange visitors are required to enroll in a University of Maryland health insurance plan.

We recommend that you purchase health insurance to cover any gap between your arrival and the start of your insurance through the University of Maryland.

Before Arrival

- Pay the SEVIS fee (Form I-901) and print the receipt.
- Make a visa appointment at a U.S. consulate or embassy. (Citizens of Canada do not require a visa to enter the U.S.)
- Inform ISSS and your department if you experience visa delays or administrative processing. A new DS-2019 may need to be created to accommodate your start date.
- Visit [Return.umd.edu](https://return.umd.edu) for all information regarding UMD's Covid-19 response.

While Traveling

- When entering the U.S., keep your passport and DS-2019 in your carry-on bag to present at customs and immigration.
- After passing through immigration, check the entry stamp placed in your passport for the correct notation (J-1, D/S).

After Arrival

- Check in with your department by phone or email.
- Complete "Documents Check In" on iTerp.
- Activate your UMD Directory ID.
- Attend J-1 Orientation session. (You will be emailed information regarding Orientation after you have correctly completed "Documents Check In" on iTerp.)
- Enroll in University of Maryland health insurance.
- Upload proof of Insurance Enrollment to iTerp.
- (Optional) Sign up for the ISSS Newsletter.

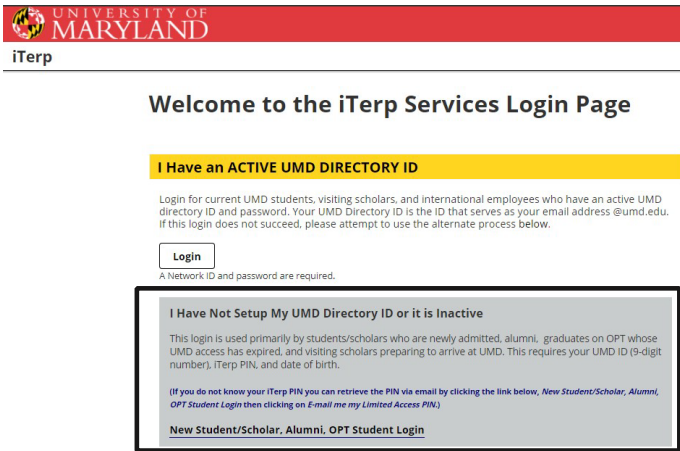
J-1 Scholars & Interns: Online Check-in and Logging into iTerp

All J-1 Exchange Visitors in the Scholar and Intern categories are required to check in with ISSS **after** their arrival to the United States. This check-in process is completed online using the ISSS iTerp system.

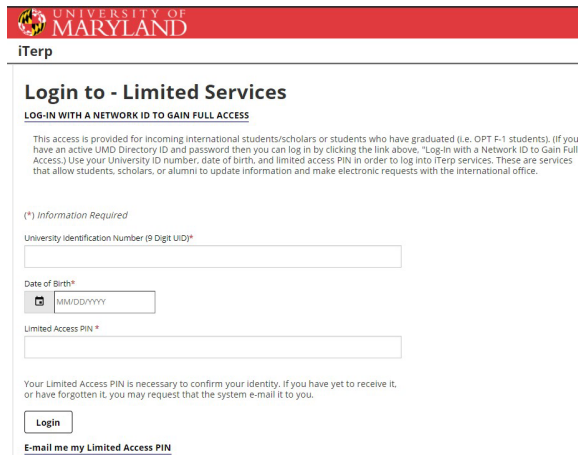
Step 1: Notify your department administrative contact of your arrival to the U.S.

Step 2: Complete the online check-in at [iTerp Services](#). For your convenience, this process can be completed anywhere you have an internet connection. iTerp accepts most file types.

A. Login to iTerp using your UID Number, Date of Birth, and Limited Access PIN



The screenshot shows the 'Welcome to the iTerp Services Login Page'. It features a yellow banner with the text 'I Have an ACTIVE UMD DIRECTORY ID'. Below this, there is a 'Login' button and a note: 'A Network ID and password are required.' A grey box contains the text 'I Have Not Setup My UMD Directory ID or it is Inactive', explaining that this login is for students/scholars who are newly admitted, alumni, graduates on OPT whose UMD access has expired, and visiting scholars preparing to arrive at UMD. It requires a UMD ID (9-digit number), iTerp PIN, and date of birth. A link is provided to retrieve the PIN via email, and another link is provided to request a limited access PIN.



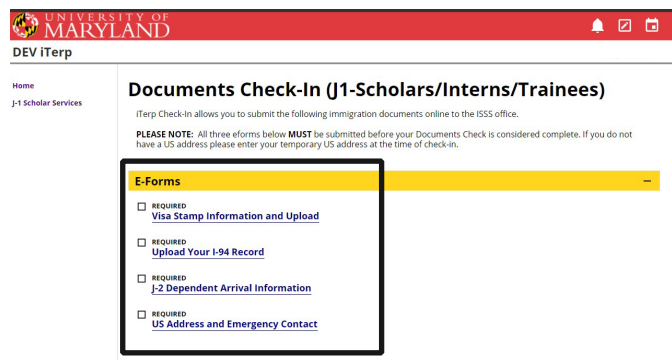
The screenshot shows the 'Login to - Limited Services' page. It includes a header 'LOG-IN WITH A NETWORK ID TO GAIN FULL ACCESS' and a paragraph explaining that access is provided for incoming international students/scholars or students who have graduated (i.e. OPT F-1 students). It lists the required information: UMD Directory ID and password, UMD ID, date of birth, and limited access PIN. Below this, there is a section for 'Information Required' with input fields for 'University Identification Number (9 Digit UID)*', 'Date of Birth*' (with a calendar icon), and 'Limited Access PIN *'. A 'Login' button is at the bottom, along with a link to 'E-mail me my Limited Access PIN'.

B. Click on "J-1 Scholar Services" on the left-hand side and then click on "Documents Check-In" under the "Tasks" menu.



The screenshot shows the 'DEV iTerp' interface. On the left, there is a navigation menu with 'J-1 Scholar Services' highlighted. The main content area is titled 'J-1 Scholar Services' and contains a 'Tasks' section. The 'Tasks' section is a grid of six items, each with a checkbox and a document icon: 'Documents Check-In (J-1 Scholars/Interns/Trainees)', 'J-1 Health Insurance Confirmation', 'J-1 Scholar Address Update', 'J-1 Travel Signature', 'J-2 Dependent Departure', and 'J-2 Dependent Arrival Information'. A link for 'Request Immigration Documents for a Spouse or Child' is also visible.

C. Complete each section and upload required documentation [visa, [I-94 form](#), DS-2019]. **A U.S. phone number and address** are also required to complete the check-in.



The screenshot shows the 'Documents Check-In (J1-Scholars/Interns/Trainees)' page. It includes a 'PLEASE NOTE' section stating that all three e-forms below must be submitted before the Documents Check is considered complete. Below this, there is an 'E-Forms' section with a list of required items, each with a checkbox: 'REQUIRED Visa Stamp Information and Upload', 'REQUIRED Upload Your I-94 Record', 'REQUIRED J-2 Dependent Arrival Information', and 'REQUIRED US Address and Emergency Contact'.

Step 3: ISSS will review your documents and notify you if any additional information is needed. When ISSS has completed the check-in, you will receive a confirmation email with J-1 Orientation information. Once you receive the email, your check-in is complete.

Step 4: Once "Documents Check-In" is complete, ISSS will approve your appointment in the University PHR system, which will allow you to set up your Directory ID and obtain the University ID card. You will receive an email when this step is completed.

J-1 Health Insurance Information

Department of State (DOS) Requirements

Program participants and their dependents are required to have medical insurance coverage with the following minimum benefits [22 CFR 62.14] for the duration of the J-1/J-2 program:

- Medical benefits of at least **\$100,000** per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of **\$25,000**
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of **\$50,000**
- A deductible not to exceed **\$500** per accident or illness

University of Maryland Requirements

The University of Maryland requires all J-1 Exchange Visitors to enroll in insurance through the University of Maryland during their stay in the U.S. This is to ensure sufficient coverage and to ensure compliance with DOS regulations. The type of insurance depends on your benefits eligibility at the University. **Outside or independent insurance plans will not be accepted.**

J-2 Dependents

J-2 dependents are subject to the same DOS requirements as the J-1. However, they are not required to enroll through UMD. **ISSS strongly recommends that you enroll your dependents through UMD insurance**, since healthcare costs in the U.S. can be expensive.

If you do not enroll your dependents through UMD, it will be your responsibility to show proof that their insurance meets DOS requirements. The proof of insurance must show the specific DOS requirements and the U.S. dollar amount covered. An English translation is also required, if it is in another language.

You will be required to show proof of your dependent's insurance from the date of their arrival in the U.S. through the end of the program. This will include any time spent outside of the U.S. **There can be no gaps in their insurance coverage.** If your dependent(s) will only accompany you for short visits, please contact an ISSS advisor regarding your plans for your dependent(s).

Two Types of Health Insurance at UMD

1) UMD Benefits Plan

This plan is for scholars who are paid by UMD and eligible for university benefits. You will enroll online after your arrival. Please contact your department about the enrollment process and eligibility. Your health insurance will begin on the 1st of the month following the month of your arrival or your program start date. More information can be found at uhr.umd.edu/benefits/.

This plan covers DOS medical benefits and deductible requirements, but **does not** cover medical evacuation and repatriation. You should purchase supplementary medical evacuation and repatriation insurance at the UMD Health Center.

If you are traveling internationally within 60 days of your arrival to the U.S., please discuss your plans with your ISSS advisor as soon as possible. Travel can impact other government applications and your enrollment in your health insurance.

2) Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

This plan is for scholars **not paid** by the University of Maryland or scholars who are paid by UMD, but not eligible for the UMD Benefits Plan. SHIP covers all DOS requirements. You will enroll online using a letter provided by ISSS after your arrival to the U.S. Please refer to the email you received from ISSS and the ISSS website for additional information about SHIP.

Current rates at \$6.40 /day per person, but are subject to change. SHIP is purchased yearly on the academic calendar (August 1-July 31) and payment must be made in one lump sum.

***Please refer to "J-1 & J-2 Health Insurance Enrollment Information" for more details regarding enrollment.**

Additional Information

- A Social Security Number is **not** required to start the enrollment process for either insurance plan.
- You will only be able to enroll in UMD insurance **after** your arrival to the U.S.
- Failure to comply with DOS health insurance requirements for you and your dependents is considered a willful violation and will result in the termination of your J-1 program.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Information

J-1 Program Restrictions

212e: Two-Year Home Country Requirement

Certain J-1 Exchange Visitors and their J-2 Dependents may be subject to this requirement if they:

- Received funding from the U.S. government or their home country government;
- Gained skills that are needed in their home country, per the Exchange Visitor Skills List;
- Came to the U.S. to receive graduate medical education or training.

If you are subject:

- You must reside and be physically present in your country of lawful permanent residence for a total of two years before you are eligible for H-1B, L-1, K-1, or permanent resident status;
- You are unable to change your status within the U.S. You must travel to obtain a new status.

24-Month Bar on Repeat Participation

All Exchange Visitors in the **Research Scholar or Professor** category (Box 4 on DS-2019) are subject to the 24-month bar on “repeat participation” of the Research Scholar or Professor category.

If you are in the Research Scholar or Professor category, you must wait 24 months from the end of your program to begin a new Research Scholar or Professor program. This does not include extensions within the 5 year limit of this category.

12-Month Bar

An Exchange Visitor (in any J status) who has been in the U.S. for more than six months is not eligible for the Research Scholar or Professor category for a 12 month period.

J-2 Dependents

The J-2 Dependent visa is a non-immigrant visa for spouses and children (unmarried children under the age of 21) of J-1 exchange visitors, who accompany or later join the J-1 holder in the United States. More information can be found at: <https://j1visa.state.gov/basics/j2-visa/>

If you did not request a J-2 DS-2019 and you have a spouse or child that will join you later, you can request a J-2 DS-2019 from ISSS after your arrival to the U.S.

As the primary J-1, it is important that you ensure that your J-2 Dependent(s) maintain(s) their status while in the U.S. This includes:

- Maintaining health insurance for your dependent(s) from the day they enter the U.S. through the end of the program. This insurance needs to meet Department of State requirements. **This includes time spent outside of the U.S.;**
- Informing ISSS when your dependent enters the U.S. and when they leave permanently (if earlier than you);
- Obtaining a travel signature for your dependent before they travel abroad.

Maintaining your Status while in the U.S.

After your arrival to the U.S. as a J-1 Exchange Visitor, it is important to maintain your J-1 status by:

- Maintaining health insurance for the duration of your program;
- Engaging only in approved activities at the location on the DS-2019;
- Maintaining valid immigration documents;
- Reporting address changes to ISSS within 10 days;
- Traveling abroad for less than 30 days at a time.

Estimated Living Expenses

Living Expense	Per Month	Per Semester	Per Year
Campus Parking	\$12/day	N/A	\$494 - \$986
Local Transportation	\$265	\$1,000 - \$1,300	\$3,200
Food	\$300-\$600	\$900 - \$1,800	\$3,600 - \$7,200
Housing- 1 Bedroom Apartment	\$1,200 - \$2,000	\$3,600- \$6,000	\$14,400 - \$24,000
Housing- Room in a House	\$600 - \$1,000	\$1,800 - \$3,000	\$7,200 - \$12,000

J-1 & J-2 Health Insurance Enrollment Information

Paid Scholars

“Paid Scholars” refers to Research Scholars and Short-term Scholars who **receive funding from the University of Maryland** and are eligible for UMD Benefits. **Please contact your department to confirm eligibility.**

Enrolling in UMD Benefits

Once your account has been processed you will receive an email from SPS/Workday prompting you to enroll in UMD Benefits. **The enrollment must be complete within 60 days of your program start date.** Please note that it can take several weeks to receive the email.

Enrolling in AES

Scholars enrolling in UMD Benefits also must enroll in AES. This covers Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance which is not covered in UMD Benefits. You will enroll through the [Health Center](#) for the academic year (August -July) for \$96.

UMD Benefits Special Considerations:

- If you are **arriving on or before the 1st of the month** in which your program begins your coverage will begin the 1st of that month.
- If you are **arriving after the 1st of the month or your program begins after the 1st of the month**, your coverage will begin the 1st of the following month. You must enroll in travel insurance or other third-party insurance which meets the State Department’s requirements to cover this gap between your program start date and the 1st of the following month.
- If you **have J-2 dependent(s) arriving after you**, they may enroll in UMD Benefits. However, they will not be able to enroll in AES until the next academic year (August-July). They will need third-party medical evacuation and repatriation insurance.

Non-Paid Scholars & Student Interns

“Non-Paid Scholars” refers to Research Scholars and Short-term Scholars who **receive funding from outside of the University of Maryland**. Student Interns, whether receiving funding from UMD or not, must enroll in SHIP.

Enrolling in SHIP

You will enroll in SHIP using the letter given to you at Orientation by the ISSS office. You will enroll through the [Health Center](#) for the academic year (August -July).

SHIP Special Considerations

- SHIP payments must be paid in one lump sum. Please plan to have funds available for payment upon arrival.
- If you **arrive before your program start date** coverage will begin on your program start date.
- If you **arrive on or after your program start date** coverage will begin on your arrival date.
- If your program ends after July 31 you will need to renew your SHIP Insurance after July 31 for the next academic year or until your program end date.
- If you **have J-2 dependent(s) arriving after you**, they will not be able to enroll in SHIP until the next academic year (August-July). They will need third-party insurance until then.