

How to Bring a J-1 scholar to OSU

Tina Newton tina.newton@okstate.edu
International Student and Scholar Services
309 Wes Watkins Center

What is the J-1 exchange program?

- The BridgeUSA J-1 Exchange visitor program originated in 1961 with the Fulbright-Hays Act (Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961). It falls under the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
- The Preamble of the Act states the mission as:
 - “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations, and the contributions being made toward a peaceful and more fruitful life for people throughout the world; to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.”

Why does this J-1 exchange program exist?

- This is to foster exchanges between other countries and the United States in order to further education and cultural understanding.
- It is a requirement for all J-1 sponsors that they are involved in both the educational but ALSO cultural aspects of being in the United States.
- See the [BridgeUSA](#) website for a deep description of the program
- The program is overseen by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange under the Department of State.

What are the categories of J-1 participants?

- There are 15 categories for J-1 visa exchange program.
- OSU uses 6 of these:
 - Student degree-seeking
 - Student non-degree (study abroad exchange students)
 - Student Intern
 - Short-term scholar
 - Research Scholar
 - Professor
- OSU departments have commonly used the intern and scholar categories

Which category can I use?



Student Intern—This is for students who are enrolled back in their home institution but are coming for a required internship in their institution. The maximum is for 12 months. This can be a paid or un-paid position.



Short-term Scholar—This is someone who already has a bachelor's or is a professional in their field, usually working on an advanced degree. They can work on research or teaching and it is a maximum of 6 months.



Research Scholar—The same requirements as a Short-term Scholar, but is allowed up to 5 years. The primary focus is research.

Professor—This has the same requirements as a research scholar, but the primary focus of the program is teaching.

212e Restriction (2 Year Rule)

- The 212e restriction is a 2-year residency requirement that requires the scholar to return to their home country for 2 years after the program is completed. The 2 years is accumulative, so it does not have to be done all at one time. It is not restrictive to entering on another J or F visa in the meantime but will still apply after the subsequent visa program.
- It is meant to prevent foreign nationals who are on a non-immigrant visa (such as the J) to switch to a work visa, such as an H, L, or permanent residency.
- The 212e restriction can be placed on a visa when the scholar applies at the embassy. This can be due to:
 - Governmental funding of the program
 - Scholar's field being on the skills list which indicates that it is in a highly needed occupation back in the home country.

Repeat Participation Bars (12 and 24 month)

- Exchange Visitors in the Research Scholar or Professor categories are subject to a 24-month bar on “repeat participation” in those categories. This does not apply to Short-term scholars, although immediate repeat participation in the same project is not allowed. This bar also applies to J-2 dependents.
- Any exchange visitors in any J visa category who have been in the U.S. for more than six months in the previous year are not eligible to enter the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for a 12-month period. They may return as Short-term Scholars or Students.

How Do I Decide on the Appropriate Category?

- The educational level and length of time will determine which can be chosen. If you have questions or doubts, contact the J scholar specialist in the International Student and Scholar office.
- If it will be for a scholar and less than 6 months with no anticipated extensions, the sponsor should use the Short-term scholar option as there are less restrictions to re-enter later.
- However, if anticipated needing to extend beyond six months, then the Research Scholar or Professor category is what you would choose.

Sponsor (Hosting OSU Dept) Responsibilities

- There must be a supervisor overseeing the work and guiding the scholar/intern.
- The hosting OSU department must approve in advance with an offer letter that specifically states what costs will be covered by this department and what will not be covered. (Samples are on the application link.)
- J-1 visa holders are required to have health insurance with certain minimums as directed by the Department of State [guidelines](#). If the OSU hosting department is going to cover the insurance, it must be through OSU's United Healthcare, not BCBS (at this time) to meet the minimums. If the scholar purchases their own, they can use private insurance companies or United through OSU. This must be presented to the J-1 specialist in the ISS office. This is a requirement to be "in status" on this visa.
- The OSU hosting department must fill out the DS-2019 application with materials supplied by the participant. The participant does NOT fill out this themselves.

IMPORTANT!!

- J scholars and interns are here as a part of an EXCHANGE PROGRAM. It is meant for cultural and educational exchange and has a limited duration.
- Although these positions will be working in your department and can be paid for their time, they are NOT OSU employees and are not here on work or immigrant visas. OSU benefits are not automatically included.
- All J visa exchange visitors must have health insurance coverage at the levels required by the Department of State. This can be paid personally or through the department, but must meet the minimum levels as listed on the [ISS page](#) and [BridgeUSA website](#). If using OSU health plans, use United Healthcare international student insurance, not the staff BCBS due to the benefit coverage. If this changes, we will let you know.
- J scholars can come on their own funds or through other sources, but still must have enough financial support to cover the full time of the program. This also can be in conjunction with partial OSU support.
- Visiting scholars/interns will be given work permits through the ISS office (if they are to be paid by the department) as they are allowed to work within their fields on the J visa.
- Scholars and interns must be working within the designated field and not as office staff or doing work that does not advance their knowledge.

What is the process?

- Once a supervisor has identified a potential scholar/intern and has departmental approval, then the application for a DS-2019 needs to be submitted from the department to the ISS office.
- For scholars, click [here](#). (The link works best in Microsoft Explorer or Edge, not Chrome.)
- For interns, use this [link](#). (The link works best in Microsoft Explorer or Edge, not Chrome.)
- This will be submitted directly to the ISS office for processing. Please allow up to five business days for processing. It will then be sent out directly from ISS to the scholar by FEDEX.
- Once the scholar receives the DS-2019, they will make an appointment at the U.S. Embassy in their area and go in for an interview. They will have to pay a SEVIS fee (currently \$220) before making the interview.
- After receiving the J visa, they will be able to enter the U.S. (with approval from the Customs and Border Patrol and barring any travel restrictions).
- The program allows a scholar to enter the U.S. up to 30 days before and up to 30 days after the start date of the program as listed on the DS-2019. However, they are not able to actually START the program at the university until the program start date.

How long does the whole process take?

Good Question!!

- This can depend upon the embassy and country.
- It is suggested to allow at least 2 months minimum for the whole process. This includes:
 - 5 business days of processing the DS-2019
 - One week for the FEDEX to arrive in the mail
 - Appointment scheduling at the embassy, this time varies from country to country and beware of holidays or embassy closings
 - After approval, time to submit the passport and receive the visa
 - Time to make travel plans

How long should I request for the program?

- Use the maximum time that you have funding
- Funding must be available for the whole time requested which can be through the department or personal funds or a mixture of both.
 - Current financial minimums are \$1200/month for the scholar/intern
 - \$850 more for a spouse
 - \$450 more for each child
- Programs can be extended up to the maximum allowed time, but due to uncertain government proclamations, it is best to put the most you can. Programs can easily be shortened.

What does this cost for the department?

- DS-2019 application costs:
 - \$100 for a scholar application
 - \$350 for an intern application
- Mailing fees
- No fee for a change of the program date before the scholar arrives
- Extension fee: \$100
- Whatever stipend you wish to give the visiting scholar/intern (any OSU funding must be reported as taxes may apply)
- If the offer letter includes insurance, the cost of the OSU United Healthcare international student insurance will apply.

Suggestions



Be very clear in the offer letter as to what the department is paying versus the scholar.



Allow enough time for everything



Look at the first page of the application link and gather all of the information you need from the scholar and the department **BEFORE** you start. Do not use old paper forms.



Ask. Contact the J-1 scholar specialist along the way for advice and clarification if you are not sure.

Contact Info

- Tina Newton, J-1 scholar specialist:
tina.newton@okstate.edu
- ISS office: iss@okstate.edu
- Website for ISS: <https://lcl.okstate.edu/iss/>
- Links for all forms:
<https://lcl.okstate.edu/iss/forms.html>
- Website for the BridgeUSA J-visa exchange program: <https://j1visa.state.gov/>

International Student and Scholars Office

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405-744-5459