

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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## PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION FOR NEW J-1 STUDENT EXCHANGE VISITORS

*Congratulations on your admission to UConn! Please read this pre-arrival guide and contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at [international@uconn.edu](mailto:international@uconn.edu) if you have questions related to your J-1 status prior to arrival.*

### DS-2019 INSTRUCTIONS

Enclosed is Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. Carefully read Pages 1 and 2, sign and complete the EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1.

Your J-2 dependents (if any) who are older than 14 years may sign their own Forms DS-2019. Otherwise, you, as the J-1 principal, must sign on behalf of your young dependents.

*Important! Please check your DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility and notify ISSS immediately BEFORE you apply for your visa if there are any errors. We will send you a corrected DS-2019 to use to apply for your visa.*

### J-1 STUDENT INTERN CATEGORIES

If your J-1 Exchange Visitor Category is Student Intern (see box 4 on the Form DS-2019) then you will also receive with your DS-2019 a Form DS-7002, Training/Internship Placement Plan. It has been completed in part by your hosting department and the ISSS office. Please complete any "Participant Information" on the form that is missing, read carefully through the contract agreement, review for accuracy, and sign/date in the "Trainee/Intern Signature" section on page 1. You will need to bring this completed form to your J-1 visa interview.

### SEVIS I-901 FEE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges a \$180 fee to new J-1 Exchange Visitors. **This fee is IN ADDITION TO the visa fees charged by the U.S. consulate or embassy.** The SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) I-901 fee must be paid and you must print your receipt before you apply for your student visa if you are outside the U.S., or before you apply for a change of status if you are in the U.S. If you are transferring from another U.S. institution you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again UNLESS you receive a new Form DS-2019 AND a new SEVIS ID number. Your J-2 dependents do not need to pay a separate SEVIS fee. The fee can be paid online by credit card (<http://www.fmjfee.com>), and you must have a printer ready to print the electronic receipt at the time of payment. The fee can also be paid by mail

with Form-I-901 or by Western Union. See the ICE website at

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

### ARRIVING FROM ABROAD

*If abroad*, pay SEVIS fee (see above) and consult the website of the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for instructions on applying for a J-1 visa stamp. The visa stamp is a travel document affixed to your passport that you will need to seek entry to the United States for the purpose of your exchange program at UConn. You will need to bring your passport (valid at least 6 months into the future), your Form DS-2019, your proof of funding and any other required support documentation specified on the embassy/consulate website to your visa interview. Exchange visitors coming in the Student Intern category must also bring the completed DS-7002. Please see the website of the consulate where you will apply for your visa for the full list of supporting documents you will need for your visa interview. For links to all U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide, see:

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Citizens of Canada are visa-exempt and do not have to apply for a J-1 visa stamp before traveling to the U.S. to begin their J-1 program

([http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1260.html#2](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1260.html#2)). Citizens of Canada *do* need to pay the SEVIS fee and present the Form DS-2019, passport and proof of funding to enter the U.S. with J-1 status at the start of the exchange program.

Plan ahead as the visa application process can take several weeks, and sometimes longer. Because most visa applicants are required to appear for a personal interview it can take a long time to schedule an appointment and security checks can delay visa issuance by several weeks or months. Current appointment and average processing times can be found here:

[http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait\\_4638.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html)

When you receive a visa, please immediately verify if the information on your visa is accurate, such as your name spelling/order, date of birth, expiration

date, etc. If any errors are found, contact the consular office that granted your visa immediately to fix them.

It is strongly discouraged to purchase your flight tickets before your visa is granted.

*Other helpful websites:*

*J-1 Visa Program*

<http://j1visa.state.gov/>

*ISSS Visa Application Guidance*

[www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu) > Students

*SEVIS I-901 Fee*

<https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>

*Visa Denials*

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials\\_1361.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html)

### ARRIVAL TO THE U.S.

After you obtain the visa you may travel to the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date indicated on box 3 of your Form DS-2019. You should plan to arrive at UConn BEFORE the program start date. Please contact your program and ISSS if you will arrive after your program start date. Please contact your program or hosting department and ISSS will arrive after your program start date. Please notify ISSS if you have received a Form DS-2019 from UConn but decide not to attend. You must return the form to ISSS.

As you near the U.S., you will be given a customs declaration form during the flight. On the customs declaration form, you must provide information found in your passport as well as your U.S. address. Again, if you do not have a U.S. address, you may use the ISSS office. Be sure to print clearly. Also on the form, you must declare the amount of money you are bringing with you IF it is \$10,000 or more. Be sure to tell the truth. There is no penalty for bringing this much money but it MUST be declared. You must also include on the form the total value of any goods that you are bringing into the US. You don't have to be specific, you can use general terms (i.e. clothing, books, gifts). You can estimate the value of the items. You do not have to pay a duty fee on totals less than \$1,000.

When you travel please carry with you your Form DS-2019, passport, visa, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, admission letter or offer letter and funding documentation. **Do not pack these documents into your checked luggage.** Present your passport and Form DS-2019 to the U.S. immigration officer, who will stamp and annotate your documents with "J-1 (or J-2)" and "D/S" (Duration of Status). Be sure

that the officer admits you using your J-1 visa by checking the entry stamp in your passport - if the officer stamps your passport with any other entry than J-1 (J-2 for dependents) and/or a specific expiration date (not D/S) please go back to have this corrected BEFORE you leave the immigration booth.

If you travel through a land border by car you will receive a Form I-94 in addition to the entry stamp in your passport. This form must be annotated the same as in your entry stamp "J-1 (or J-2)" and "D/S".

Self Service Kiosks or Global Entry Program: If your immigration is processed through a self-service kiosk, you may need to elect the type of visa that you enter on. Pay special attention that you process your self-service admission using the correct visa/visa type. Please check the kiosk for any receipts issued to you upon processing your entry, and do not misplace this receipt!

Upon admission, you must confirm your admission record online at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94). Please print out your online I-94 and keep it for your records.

### ARRIVAL TO UCONN AND CHECK-IN

**IMPORTANT! You must check in with ISSS by the program start date on your Form DS-2019. ISSS must register your arrival in SEVIS, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database.** ISSS is located in room 183 of McMahon Hall at the Storrs campus. ***Only ISSS can register your arrival/current U.S. address in SEVIS. Failure to check in within 30 days of your program start date on the Form DS-2019 may result in losing your legal J-1 status.*** The U.S. Department of State is very strict about the requirements.

For check-in you will need to bring your passport with entry stamp, Form DS-2019, print-out of your online admission record, and visa stamp. You should also bring information on your health insurance policy/plan (see later section on Health/Travel Insurance). If you have family members with J-2 visas, please bring their documents as well. We will provide you with more detailed Check-In instructions by email.

### ORIENTATION

All J-1 students are required to attend a mandatory ISSS orientation. Further details on the orientation schedule are provided separately.

### REGIONAL CAMPUS STUDENTS

J-1 Students enrolled at one of the regional campuses (Avery Point, Graduate Business Learning

Center, Greater Hartford, School of Law, Stamford, Torrington or Waterbury) are also required to attend an orientation session and check in with ISSS staff and attend an ISSS orientation. To find out which orientation session you will need to attend, please check the ISSS website: [www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu). In many cases ISSS comes to your campus to provide an ISSS orientation and take care of your check-in requirements.

### MEDICAL (HEALTH) INSURANCE

#### *Medical (Health) Insurance requirements -*

Government regulations require all J-1 Exchange Visitors and their dependents to carry insurance for the duration of the Exchange Visitor Program as a condition of maintaining legal status. Please see [www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu) > Students > J Visa Insurance Requirements for full details of what your plan must cover. These requirements are also applied to each of your accompanying J-2 family members individually. Failure to maintain this insurance requirement constitutes a VIOLATION OF STATUS.

#### You may not begin your

J-1 exchange program until you have insurance coverage that meets the requirements of the J-1 program. This is a mandatory requirement and no exceptions can be made. Your coverage must be effective from the day you arrive in the U.S.

Please note that our office cannot review your plan to determine whether it meets the J-1 visa requirements. If you are unsure whether your plan is sufficient we advise you to contact the insurance company and ask if the plan meets the mandated benefits.

Most full time students enrolled in classes are automatically enrolled and billed for the UConn Student Health Insurance plan. **This plan meets the minimum requirements for the J-1 visa.** You may apply to opt out of the UConn student insurance plan following University procedures listed on Student Health Service's (SHS) website if you have your own insurance coverage comparable to the University plan, but it must also meet the regulatory requirements for the J-1 program in order to be sufficient. For more information on Student Health Services please see:

<http://www.shs.uconn.edu/insurance.html>

Some degree programs are not eligible for the automatic enrollment option: See <http://www.shs.uconn.edu/insurance.html> for a list of programs that do not automatically enroll students in the insurance plan. If you are in one of these programs, you may elect to purchase the UConn Student Health Plan - contact SHS for details- or you may purchase a plan that offers comparable coverage.

Graduate students with assistantship awards may choose to enroll in the UConn employee insurance plan for graduate assistants instead of the UConn student insurance plan. Your assistantship award letter provides more information on any benefits associated with the award. To ensure that you have coverage for your entire exchange program in the U.S. we recommend that you purchase a travel medical insurance coverage for yourself (and family members if any) for at least the first 30 days in the U.S.

J-1 students who are not enrolled in courses (e.g. J-1 Student Interns) have the option to purchase the UConn student insurance plan during the stay, but you need to purchase a temporary insurance plan meeting the J-1 requirements to cover you until the UConn plan can be purchased and become effective (at least 60 days). Please consult the ISSS website if you are interested in this option.

### STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND IMMUNIZATIONS

In addition to facilitating insurance student coverage under the UConn student health plan, Student Health Services provides medical services to students matriculated in Storrs-campus programs. Students enrolled in programs at regional campuses may purchase the UConn student health insurance plan, but they must seek medical services through off-campus providers. In addition, all new students are required by Connecticut State Law to show documentation that they have obtained certain vaccinations prior to starting classes at UConn (Student Health History Form). Storrs-campus students will attend a Health Screening during the international student orientation program, and if they are missing any required immunizations, SHS will administer the immunizations at that time. Regional campus students will not be able to obtain immunizations at the orientation and should plan to obtain all required immunizations prior to arrival at UConn. Please contact SHS directly with any questions about the Student Health History Form or the immunizations requirement, or see: [http://www.shs.uconn.edu/immunization\\_requirements.html](http://www.shs.uconn.edu/immunization_requirements.html)

### SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

J-1 students who have been authorized to work in the U.S. will need to apply for a Social Security Number after checking in and obtaining written work authorization from ISSS. During the orientation, ISSS brings Social Security Administration officials to campus to take your SSN applications (Services Day). Students are highly encouraged to wait and apply on campus during Services Day. Otherwise you will not be eligible to apply for an SSN until about two weeks after you

have checked in with ISSS and your SEVIS record has been registered.

### DRIVING

International students may drive in the U.S. with a foreign driver's license used together with an International Driver's Permit obtained in the home country. If you have a driver's license in your home country, it is highly recommended that you obtain the International Driver's Permit before your arrival. If you do not have the International Driver's Permit, you will be required to go through the regular process described below in order to legally drive in Connecticut and the U.S.

The process to obtain a Connecticut state driver's license is long and requires students to first apply for a learner's permit for 90 days, during which time you can only drive with an experienced, licensed Connecticut driver. In addition, international students must have a CT driver's license or CT State ID in order to register a car you have purchased. You are required to register a car in order to drive it. Therefore, if you are planning to purchase a car, you should not do this until you have obtained your CT driver's license or CT State ID. For further information please see: [www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu) > Driving in CT. In addition, the CT Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) requires you to have a SSN or obtain a denial letter from Social Security Administration before you may apply for a driver's license.

### PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

In accepting the J-1 visa, you obligate yourself to all terms and conditions stated on Form DS-2019 and will be admitted to the U.S. for the purpose of pursuing the exchange program stated on your Form DS-2019. You are eligible to pursue your exchange activity between the dates indicated on your Form DS-2019. Any changes to the terms of your academic program must be reported and updated on your Form DS-2019 after arrival. Please see the website of ISSS for further information on maintaining J-1 status after your arrival at UConn: [www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu) > Students

### THE HOME COUNTRY PHYSICAL -PRESENCE REQUIREMENT 212(E)

Many (but not all) J-1 Exchange Visitors are subject to the "2-year home residence requirement; 212(e)." The purpose of 212(e) is to ensure the visitor's home country also benefits from the experience of the J-1 Exchange Visitor. J-1 Exchange Visitors come to the U.S. for a specific objective, such as a program of study, research, or to teach. The requirement is intended to prevent a participant who is "subject" to this law from staying longer than necessary for the objective, and to

ensure that he or she will spend at least two years in the home country before coming back to the United States for a long-term stay. For the terms of the requirement, please see item (a) page 2, of the Form DS-2019. If you have any questions about why you are or are not subject to the requirement, please raise them with the consular officer when you apply for your visa.

### J-1 VISA REGULATIONS

There are many rules and regulations that you must follow in order to maintain your J-1 student status after you have arrived in the U.S. ISSS is the only office on-campus responsible for advising students on their J-1 status. It is very important that you understand the terms of your Exchange Visitor status and abide by those terms. ISSS has three International Advisors who serve the advising needs of all Storrs and regional campus students. Please see [www.issu.uconn.edu](http://www.issu.uconn.edu) > About Us to find your assigned international advisor.

### PRE-ARRIVAL SUMMARY

- Read thoroughly this material and your Form DS-2019.
- Sign your Form DS-2019 and any J-2 dependent Forms DS-2019.
- Pay I-901 SEVIS fee (you do not have to pay a separate fee for accompanying dependents).
- Apply for your J-1 visa and J-2 visas for accompanying dependents.
- Obtain an International Driver's Permit while in the home country.
- Obtain medical/travel insurance for at least the first 30 days of your stay. Be prepared to pay for medical insurance for the length of your visit after you arrive.
- Make sure your immunizations are up to date and complete the Student Health History Form [www.shs.uconn.edu](http://www.shs.uconn.edu) (except Student Intern categories)
- Activate your Net ID: <https://netid.uconn.edu/>
- Pay your student fee bill: [www.bursar.uconn.edu](http://www.bursar.uconn.edu)
- Register for your orientation program (if required)
- Contact ISSS ([international@uconn.edu](mailto:international@uconn.edu)) if you will be arriving after the program start date on your DS-2019
- Enter the U.S. in J status no earlier than 30 days before your start-date on Form DS-2019.

### POST-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST- FIRST THINGS TO DO

- Upon arrival to the U.S., make sure you have been admitted in the correct visa status (check the entry stamp in your passport and online I-94).

❑ **Storrs campus students:** Visit the Lodewick Visitors Center and ask for a campus map!  
<http://visitors.uconn.edu/>

❑ **Storrs campus students:** Check in at ISSS, located in McMahon Hall, main level (above the Dining Hall) Bring your passport, Form DS-2019, print-out of online I-94 admission record, medical/travel insurance information, and any of the same documents for accompanying family members. <http://maps.uconn.edu/>

❑ **Regional Campus students:** Determine which orientation you will attend, and bring all of your immigration documents to the ISSS session:  
<http://global.uconn.edu/about/iss/iss-newstd-orientation-information/>

❑ Obtain your UConn One Card (UConn ID Card) before the mandatory orientation day:  
<http://www.onecard.uconn.edu/>

❑ Attend a mandatory ISSS Orientation program. Bring your immigration documents and UConn One Card to the orientation!

❑ Ensure that you are registered for a full-time course load (9 credits per semester for graduate level students and LLM students, 12 credits per semester for undergraduates level students) or

pursue full time internship/research activity (J-1 Student Intern category.)

#### WHAT NOT TO DO RIGHT AWAY UPON ARRIVAL:

❑ **Do not apply for a Social Security Number.** After your arrival, your immigration records will not yet have record of your status in the U.S., so Social Security Administration will not be able to process your application. You must wait until at least 2 weeks after you have checked in with ISSS (sometimes longer) before you may apply. It is best to wait until "Services Day" during the orientation week at our office (and easier for you!).

❑ **Do not apply for a Connecticut Driver's License or Connecticut State ID.** In order to apply for a Driver's License or Connecticut State ID you must have a Social Security Number (SSN) or evidence from Social Security Administration that you are not eligible for a SSN (SSN denial letter). This can only be done after you have checked in, and sometimes after the start of the semester (see above). **This means you should consider transportation needs if you will live in off-campus housing - do not commit to a housing arrangement where you will need a car/driver's license.**

❑ **Do not purchase a car.** In order to purchase a car and legally drive it, you must have a CT driver's license or CT State ID (see above).