

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

University of Connecticut 📍 2011 Hillside Road, Unit 1083; Storrs, CT 06269 📞 Phone: 860-486-3855 📠 Fax: 860-486-5800
Web: <http://www.iss.uconn.edu> ISSS Stamford: <http://iss.uconn.edu/stamford/> ISSS Hartford: <http://iss.uconn.edu/hartford/>

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

Congratulations on your admission to UConn! Please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at international@uconn.edu if you have questions related to your J-1 visa prior to arrival. Additional information to prepare for your arrival can be found at iss.uconn.edu > New Students.

DS-2019 INSTRUCTIONS

Please review your Form DS-2019 upon receipt. Carefully read Pages 1 and 2, sign and complete the EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1. **Important! Notify ISSS immediately if there are any errors on your Form DS-2019 BEFORE you apply for your visa, so we may send you a corrected DS-2019 to use to apply for your visa.**

If you have J-2 dependents: Your J-2 dependents who are older than 14 years may sign their own Forms DS-2019 at the bottom of the form. Otherwise, you, as the J-1 principal, must sign on behalf of your young dependents.

SEVIS I-901 FEE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges a \$180 SEVIS I-901 fee to new J-1 exchange visitors. **This fee is IN ADDITION TO the visa application fees charged by the U.S. consulate or embassy.** If you are outside the U.S., the SEVIS I-901 fee must be paid, and you must print your payment confirmation, before you go to your visa interview. You can schedule your visa interview before you have paid the fee. If you are in the U.S. and applying for a change of status, the SEVIS fee must be paid before you file your application to USCIS. If you are transferring from another U.S. institution you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again UNLESS your new Form DS-2019 lists a SEVIS ID number that is different from your prior Form DS-2019. Your J-2 dependents do not need to pay a SEVIS fee. The Form I-901 can be completed and the fee can be paid online by credit card at <http://www.fmjfee.com>; print payment confirmation after completing Form I-901 and submitting payment. The fee can also be paid by check or money order after completing Form I-901 online, or by Western Union. See the ICE website at: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA

If outside the U.S., consult the website of the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for instructions on

applying for a J-1 visa stamp. For links to all U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide, see:

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

The visa is a stamp/sticker affixed to your passport that you will present upon entry to the United States for the purpose of participating in an exchange program at UConn. You will need to complete the online Form DS-160 and attend an in-person visa interview. The DS-160 will ask for your U.S. address; if you do not yet know where you will live, you can use your academic department or the ISSS address on the form. You will need to bring your passport that is valid at least 6 months into the future, your SEVIS fee payment confirmation, your proof of funding and any other required support documentation specified on the embassy/consulate website, to your visa interview. The ISSS website also lists further support documentation tips for new visa applicants.

Citizens of Canada do not have to apply in advance for an J-1 visa stamp in their passport, but they must be granted J-1 status by U.S. immigration authorities upon travel to the U.S. in order to legally study: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit/canada-bermuda.html>.

Citizens of Canada *do* need to pay the SEVIS fee and present the Form DS-2019, passport, SEVIS fee payment confirmation and proof of funding when entering the U.S. to begin their exchange program as a J-1 exchange visitor.

Plan ahead, as the visa application process can take several weeks, and sometimes longer. Because visa applicants are required to appear for an interview, it can take a long time to schedule an appointment, and security checks can delay visa issuance by several weeks or months. Check usvisas.state.gov for current estimated appointment and visa processing times.

When you receive a visa, please IMMEDIATELY verify if the information on your visa is accurate before leaving the embassy/consulate (if picking up your

passport), such as your name spelling/order, date of birth, expiration date, visa type, etc. If any errors are found, contact the consular office that granted your visa as soon as possible to fix them.

We suggest that you wait until your visa is granted before purchasing flight tickets.

Other helpful websites:

J-1 Visa Program

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

ISSS Visa Application Guidance:

issu.uconn.edu > *New Students* > *Prepare for Arrival*

Visa Denials

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/denials.html>

ARRIVAL TO THE U.S.

After getting your visa you may travel to the U.S. up to **30 days** before the program start date listed in box 3 of your Form DS-2019. You must arrive at UConn **BEFORE** the program start date. . Your program start date should be consistent with the start date of your orientation program. Please contact your academic program and ISSS if you have extraordinary circumstances that prevent you from arriving by your program start date.

Please notify ISSS if you have received a Form DS-2019 from UConn but decide not to attend. You must destroy or mail the unused form back to ISSS.

During your flight, you will be given a customs declaration form as you near the U.S. On the customs declaration form, provide your U.S. address and other requested information. Again, if you do not have a U.S. address, you may use the ISSS office. Be sure to print clearly. You must also declare on the form the amount of money you are bringing with you, but only 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 you are bringing into the U.S. 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 traveling, please carry your Form DS-2019, passport, visa, I-901 SEVIS fee payment confirmation, 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 your passport and write "J-1 (or J-2)" and "D/S" (Duration of Status). Be sure that the officer admits you as a J-1 student by double-checking this entry stamp in your passport - if the officer stamps your passport with any other entry than J-1, or lists a specific expiration date (not D/S) please go back to have this corrected **BEFORE** you leave the immigration area.

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!

I-94 Admission Record

Upon admission, ALL STUDENTS must confirm the admission record online at:

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>. **Please print out your online I-94 admission record and keep it for your records. If you are at Storrs campus, you may print this in the ISSS office.**

If you travel through a land border by car you will receive a paper Form I-94 attached to your passport. Both the paper I-94 and the online I-94 should be annotated the same as your entry stamp: "J-1 (or J-2)" and "D/S".

ARRIVAL TO UCONN AND CHECK-IN

IMPORTANT! You must complete online check-in with ISSS by the program start date listed on your Form DS-2019. ISSS must register your arrival in SEVIS, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database.

To check in, you must do the following AFTER arriving in the U.S.:

1) Update your "Current Local" address field in Student Admin: <http://students.uconn.edu>

2) Complete the online check-in form on the ISSS website: <http://issu.uconn.edu/check-in/>

You will need to have electronic/scanned copies of your passport ID page, visa stamp, signed Form DS-2019, I-94, and the entry stamp in your passport at the time you complete online check-in, to upload into the check-in form. If you decide to upload photos of your documents, be sure they are clear and that you save and rename the files prior to uploading. Computers are available in the UConn Library and at ISSS in Storrs for scanning documents,

to check-in and update addresses. ISSS is located in room 183 of McMahon Hall at the main UConn campus in Storrs. **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.**

ORIENTATION

All J-1 students are required to attend an orientation to the J visa regulations provided by ISSS. Further details on orientation will be provided separately. Some students must pre-register and pay for orientation. Different orientations are held for different groups of students, depending on your campus and your program. Please see ISSS > New Students > Orientation for an overview of the different orientations offered, and more information on sign-up, if required.

MEDICAL (HEALTH) INSURANCE

Medical (Health) Insurance requirements

All full time UConn students are required by the University to have health insurance coverage. In addition, the **U.S. government requires all J-1 exchange visitors and their dependents to carry insurance for the duration of the exchange program as a condition of maintaining legal status.** Please see issu.uconn.edu > International Students > Medical Insurance for full details. These requirements also apply to all accompanying J-2 family members. Failure to maintain this insurance requirement constitutes a VIOLATION OF STATUS and your SEVIS record may be subject to termination if you do not have adequate coverage for yourself and all accompanying family members. **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 throughout your entire J-1 program.** Finally, you may also be required under the government's Affordable Care Act to maintain health insurance coverage.

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 covers the mandated benefits.

Insurance Options

Most Storrs-campus full-time registered students are automatically enrolled in and billed for the University-sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Check your fee bill to see if you were

automatically registered. Many full time students at the other UConn students are *not* automatically registered in the UConn SHIP and you must contact UConn Student Health Services to enroll, or find a comparable insurance plan yourself. The University-sponsored insurance meets the Affordable Care Act insurance requirements and it is strongly recommended for you maintain coverage under the UConn SHIP. If you were automatically enrolled in the UConn SHIP but prefer to use your own personal health insurance plan, you may "opt out" of the University sponsored plan through Student Admin; however it is your responsibility to meet the Affordable Care Act requirements. Please see <http://issu.uconn.edu> > International Students > Medical Insurance for further information. If you choose to use your own health insurance, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you understand how your plan works (for example, whether you must pay out of pocket for expenses and seek reimbursement from your insurance provider, or if you can send your bill to the insurance provider for direct payment to the doctor, etc.).

Graduate students with assistantship awards are eligible to enroll in the **Connecticut Partnership Plan for Graduate Assistants**, instead of the UConn SHIP. Unlike the Student Health Insurance Plan, Graduate Assistants MUST elect to enroll in the Connecticut Partnership Plan or not. To sign up for the plan or to get more information visit: <http://hr.uconn.edu/ct-partnership-health-benefits/>. The CT Partnership Plan for GA's does **NOT** meet the government's requirements for the J-1 visa. If you choose the CT Partnership Plan you will be responsible for purchasing supplemental insurance to cover medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Contact ISSS for further information about enrolling in supplemental coverage.

UConn's Student Health Services medical office, which provides medical services for Storrs campus students, directly bills only limited insurance companies for service. SHS, as well as hospitals and doctor's offices outside of campus, may not directly bill travel insurance or insurance from outside the U.S. Medical care in the United States is VERY expensive. **We strongly recommend that all international students keep the University-sponsored insurance plan for this reason.** For more information on insurance and which plans SHS directly bills, please see: <http://shs.uconn.edu/> > Insurance and Billing.

To assist in the transition from your current medical insurance, to insurance for your stay in the U.S., we recommend you purchase travel insurance coverage

for yourself (and family members, if any) for at least the first 30 days in the U.S.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH HISTORY FORM

Connecticut state law requires all students to show documentation that they have obtained certain vaccinations prior to starting classes at UConn, by submitting a Student Health History Form. Students at the School of Social Work and School of Law are exempt from the SHS Health History Form, but may have their own form requirements <http://shs.uconn.edu/forms>.

All students should obtain the required immunizations in advance of submitting the Health History Form. Storrs-campus students will be contacted by Student Health Services if they are required to attend an additional health screening during Orientation; if required immunizations are missing from your record, SHS will administer them at that time. Please contact SHS directly with any questions about the Student Health History Form or the immunizations requirement at shs.uconn.edu.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

The Social Security Number (SSN) is a U.S. government issued number issued for tax purposes. Only students who have employment are eligible to get an SSN. Graduate students who will work as graduate assistants (Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant), and any students who obtain on-campus employment, must apply for a Social Security Number after completing online check-in with ISSS. At the beginning of each semester, Social Security Administration officials visit the Storrs campus to take your SSN applications. Students at other campuses may apply at their local Social Security Administration office. See the ISSS website for further details. Storrs campus students are strongly encouraged to wait and apply on-campus. Students who apply at the local SSA office will not be able to receive a SSN until about two weeks after you have completed online check-in with ISSS.

HOUSING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

If you will be living in University housing at Storrs campus, all academic buildings and services are within walking distance. There is also a system of University buses to help students get more quickly from one end of campus to another, as campus is quite large, and some housing is located further from the center of campus. See <http://transpo.uconn.edu/> for more information on University bus services.

If you are living off-campus, it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that you find housing within walking or biking distance to campus. The Storrs area is very

rural and public transportation is limited. Students who live in or near the town of Willimantic (next to Storrs) may be able to meet basic transportation needs through the Windham Region Transit District bus system: <http://www.wrtd.net/> The Storrs-Willimantic Bus and Route I95 Express Service buses all stop at UConn and are free to the UConn community with a UPASS and Husky One Card. However, service is limited and schedules are subject to change, so it is safer to find housing that is within walking or biking distance to campus. Many UConn students purchase cars for better and more convenient mobility; however, basic on-and-off campus needs can be met within walking/biking vicinity to the UConn campus. See www.offcampushousing.uconn.edu for further resources on finding housing off-campus.

Students attending programs at UConn's Hartford, West Hartford or Stamford campuses may find that public transportation is better in these more urban areas. See <http://www.cttransit.com/> for further details on city bus schedules.

DRIVING

International students may drive in the U.S. for up to one year with a foreign driver's license; if your license is in a language other than English or Spanish, the license must be accompanied by an official International Driver's Permit (IDP) obtained in the home country. If you have a driver's license from your home country, it is highly recommended that you obtain the IDP before your departure. If you do not have the IDP, you will be required to go through the regular process described below in order to legally drive in Connecticut and the U.S.

In the United States, each state issues a driver's license for residents of that state. In Connecticut, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is the office that issues driver's licenses. The process to obtain a Connecticut driver's license is long and requires students to first apply for a learner's permit, and then after a 90 day waiting period, during which time you can only drive with an experienced, licensed Connecticut driver, you may take a road test to get the full driver's license. If you have a license issued in another country, you can waive the 90 day waiting period but still must take the permit test, which can be scheduled months into the future. For further details visit the ISSS website.

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 before you can drive the car. 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 (non-driver's identification). Students can apply for the CT State ID through the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. You will also be required to have auto insurance to register your car in Connecticut. If you plan to purchase a car and drive in the U.S., please budget accordingly.

Please note: To apply for a CT driver's license OR a CT State ID, you must first apply for a U.S. SSN and receive either the SSN, or a SSN denial letter (if you are not eligible for the SSN).

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

The purpose of the J-1 exchange visitor program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges. We hope that your experience participating in an exchange program at UConn will help to support these goals. 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.

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 exchange program is complete by bringing what you have learned in your program back to your country of permanent residence. If you are subject to the 212(e) law, you will not qualify for an immigrant visa to the United States, and you may not change visa types within the United States until you have lived in your home country for two years following completion of your exchange program. You may still visit the U.S. with a nonimmigrant visa obtained through a U.S. embassy/consulate while subject to the 212(e) law. You will be subject to this law if you are receiving government funding from your home country or the United States, or if your academic/professional skills are in high demand in your home country. 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 authorized and responsible for advising students on their visa and immigration

matters. It is very important that you understand the rules of your student visa and abide by those rules. The ISSS advising team at Storrs, Hartford and Stamford campuses serve the advising needs of all international students at the Storrs and regional campuses. Please see issu.uconn.edu > About > Staff Directory to find your assigned international advisor.

PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- Read thoroughly this material and your Form DS-2019.
- Review the ISSS New Student information at issu.uconn.edu > New Students.
- 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.
- If you have a driver's license, obtain an International Driver's Permit while in the home country.
- Purchase travel insurance for at least the first 30 days of your stay that meets the requirements of the J-1 visa program. Be prepared to pay for medical insurance for the length of your visit after you arrive. The UConn SHIP is strongly recommended.
- Make sure your immunizations are up to date and complete the Student Health History Form (exception: Law and Social Work students) <http://shs.uconn.edu/international-students/>
- Pay your student fee bill: www.bursar.uconn.edu
- Register for your orientation program (if required)
- Submit your Husky One Card Photo online <http://onecard.uconn.edu/the-one-card/online-photo-submission/>
- Contact ISSS (international@uconn.edu) if you will be arriving after the program start date on your DS-2019
- Enter the U.S. with your J visa documents no earlier than 30 days before the start date on your Form DS-2019.

students and LLM students, 12 credits per semester for undergraduates and JD students. UCAELI: IEP counts as full time.)

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/>
- Update your “Current Local” address, as well as your mailing address, in Student Admin.
<http://students.uconn.edu>
- Go to the ISSS website to complete the online check-in: <http://iss.uconn.edu/check-in/> To complete your check-in, you will need scanned copy of all your immigration documents taken AFTER going through the immigration inspection at a port of entry.
- Storrs campus students: Pick up your Husky One Card (if you pre-submitted your photo online):
<http://www.onecard.uconn.edu/>
- Attend orientation. Bring your immigration documents and your Husky One Card to the orientation!
- Ensure that you are registered for a full-time course load (9 credits per semester for graduate

WHAT NOT TO DO RIGHT AWAY UPON ARRIVAL:

- Do not apply for a Social Security Number (SSN).** Social Security Administration will not be able to process your application until after you have completed online check-in with ISSS and your immigration/SEVIS record has been activated. You must wait until at least 2 weeks after you have checked in with ISSS before you may apply. It is best to wait until “Services Day” during the orientation week if you attend Storrs campus. Otherwise, wait 2 weeks after checking in to go to your local Social Security Administration office.
- 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 with ISSS, 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).