Welcome to the University of Arizona!

This packet contains important information pertaining to the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program was developed to implement the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hayes Act) of 1961. The overall purpose of that Act, and the objective of the 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." Included in this packet, you will find the following materials:

- About Your DS-2019 Form
- How to Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee
- How to Apply for Your J-1/J-2 Visas
- Health Insurance Requirements
- Arrival in the United States: International Scholar Checklist
- Applying for a Social Security Card in Tucson as a J-1 Exchange Visitor
- Expenses You May Incur During Your Stay
- Monthly Expenses Table
- Understanding the Two-year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement
- Understanding the 24-Month Bar on Repeat Participation and the 12-Month Bar Provision

Understanding this information is essential to the success of your program. If you have any questions after reading this packet, please contact our office (IFS) by phone at (520) 626-6289 or email at uafs@email.arizona.edu.
About Your DS-2019 Form

The DS-2019 is a legal document issued by the University of Arizona on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. When you receive your DS-2019, please:

1. Carefully review all enclosed documents, especially the DS-2019(s). **If you find any data errors or discrepancies, inform IFS immediately at uaifs@email.arizona.edu.**

2. If everything is correct, sign and date the bottom of the DS-2019 where indicated.

3. Review and carefully follow all of the instructions found in this pre-arrival packet.

4. Inform IFS immediately if your proposed arrival dates will be delayed, especially if the delayed date is 30 days past the original start date.

5. Make an appointment at the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate and apply for your J-1/J-2 visa(s).

6. When you (and your dependents) arrive at the Port of Entry in the U.S., be prepared to present your DS-2019(s) and passport(s) containing the valid J visa(s).

7. **Upon arrival in the U.S., check in with IFS to validate your immigration status before beginning work.**

Our office is located in the University Services Building:
888 North Euclid Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room 301G,
Tucson, AZ 85721

Office Hours:
M-F 8:00am – 5:00pm
Closed: 12:00 – 1:00pm
How to Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee

Before you apply for your J-1 visa, (Canadian citizens see below), you must pay the I-901 SEVIS fee. For more information about SEVIS, the current fee amount, and who is required to pay the fee, click here.

The I-901 SEVIS fee must be paid online in U.S. Dollars. You will need a credit card and the SEVIS number from your valid DS-2019. The SEVIS number is a 10-digit number which begins with “N00” on the upper right hand side of the DS-2019.

Complete the I-901 SEVIS fee information page, and make your payment. After paying, print out the payment screen, and take it with you to your visa application interview.

Canadian citizens only:
No visa or visa application is required of Canadian citizens. Present your receipt for the paid I-901 SEVIS fee and your valid DS-2019 form at the U.S. Port of Entry.
How to Apply for Your J-1/J-2 Visa(s)

To apply for your J-1/J-2 visa(s), you must submit the following to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate nearest you:

- Original DS-2019 for each visa applicant
- Valid passport for each visa applicant
- Form DS-160, completed online prior to your appointment
- $160 visa fee for each applicant
- Receipt for your paid I-901 SEVIS fee
- Visa reciprocity fee
- Two photographs (2” x 2”)

Please be aware that visas are granted solely at the discretion of the consular official and that the burden of proof to establish nonimmigrant intent rests on you. If your visa is granted, the consular official will return the DS-2019 to you, along with your passport and visa.

You may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to your start date. If you are not able to start your program within 30 days of the program start date due to visa delays or complications abroad, you must inform your sponsoring department and IFS.
J-1 Health Insurance Requirements

DOS regulations require that all J-1 principal and J-2 dependent non-immigrants in residence at U.S. institutions of higher education have specific medical insurance coverage by the time of the J-1 program start date as outlined below (22 CFR § 514.14 and 22 CFR § 62.14). Required coverage must remain in effect for the duration of the J-1 program, without gaps, even when outside the United States.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

- medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness
- a co-insurance not greater than 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness
- a deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness
- a waiting period for pre-existing conditions that is reasonable by current industry standards
- coverage for activities inherent to the exchange program (i.e., flight training for an aviation school)
- 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

In order for your J-1 program to be validated, you must submit proof of the required health insurance coverage (in English and U.S. Dollars) for yourself and all your J-2s when you check in with IFS.

Proof of existing insurance coverage from your home country which meets the DOS requirements must be provided in English and U.S. Dollars.

If you are eligible to enroll in UA employee insurance coverage, you will need to purchase a short-term health insurance policy to cover the 3- to 4-week gap before your UA insurance coverage begins. After your UA coverage takes effect, you will need to purchase separate insurance coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains to satisfy the DOS requirements.

When making your benefits selection for UA employee insurance coverage, J-1 scholars should NOT enroll in the Aetna Health Savings Account (HSA) option. The HSA deductible exceeds the $500 maximum required by the Department of State.
Arrival in the United States: International Scholar Checklist

To assist you in transitioning to the University of Arizona, the following is a checklist of items to complete upon your arrival:

- **Check in with your sponsoring department.** Your sponsoring department will assist you with employee-related questions and procedures, such as obtaining a [UA identification card](https://www.arizona.edu) (CatCard), etc.

- **Obtain required health insurance coverage for yourself and all J-2 dependents.** If you would like to purchase health insurance through UA, please contact Campus Health via their [web form](https://www.arizona.edu). Campus Health cannot provide health insurance coverage for J-2 dependents.

- **Check in with IFS.** Our office must validate your immigration status with the Department of State **before you can begin working.** Please bring the following for yourself and your dependents:
  
  - I-94 arrival/departure record printed from the [CBP website](https://www.cbp.gov)
  - Original DS-2019 form, signed and endorsed by the U.S. Consular Officer
  - Passport containing J visa
  - Current U.S. home address and phone number
  - Email address
  - Proof of health insurance

- **Find housing.** For a current list of available apartments and housing, visit the [Office of Off-Campus Housing](https://www.arizona.edu) website.

- **Arrange for daycare and/or schooling for your children.** For information on daycare options, visit [Child Care and Family Resources](https://www.arizona.edu) website.
Applying for a Social Security Card in Tucson as a J-1 Exchange Visitor

The nearest U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) office is located at 3808 North 1st Avenue (between Prince Road & Roger Road).

Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Closed on weekends and federal holidays

By phone: 1-800-772-1213 or TTY 1-800-325-0778

Before you can apply for a Social Security Number, IFS must validate your immigration status AND you must be present in the U.S. for AT LEAST 10 days.

Take the following documents with you:
- Original DS-2019 Form
- I-94 Arrival/Departure Record
- Passport containing J Visa
- Original invitation letter mailed to you by your sponsoring department

If you were able to apply for a Social Security Number at the consulate in your home country, please notify the SSA representative. The following information may be needed to verify your original application:
- Your date and place of birth
- Your mother’s maiden name
- Your father’s name

It may be 3 to 4 weeks before you receive your Social Security card. If you plan to be in the U.S. for less than a month, please contact your sponsoring UA department to request use of their mailing address on your application so they can mail the card to you in your home country.

For more information visit Social Security Administration and Social Security Number for Non-citizens.
Expenses You May Incur During Your Stay

Below is a list of common U.S. expenses:

**Housing** – You have the option to rent or lease. Expect slightly lower rates if you commit to a longer rental contract than if you pay month-to-month.

**Renter’s Insurance** - Protection for the things you own inside your apartment, with cost of coverage based on the value of the insured items.

**Electricity** - Services provided by [Tucson Electric Power](#). In addition to the cost of electricity used, your bill will include taxes, fees, surcharges, and connect/disconnect charges. Renters may also be charged a deposit fee. Expect higher bills during the summer months for air conditioning.

**Natural Gas** – Services provided by [Southwest Gas](#). In addition to the cost of natural gas used, your bill will include taxes, fees, surcharges, and connect/disconnect charges. Renters may also be charged a deposit fee.

**Water** – Services provided by [Tucson Water](#). In addition to the cost of water used, your bill will typically include sewer, and curbside trash/recycle pickup, taxes, surcharges, and connect/disconnect charges. Renters may also be charged a deposit fee.

**Internet** – Multiple providers available. Some businesses and apartments offer free Wi-Fi.

**Phone Service** – Multiple providers available for cellular and/or land line services. 9-1-1 emergency line is free.

**Television Service Providers** - Multiple providers available, with service via cable or satellite. In addition to the cost of the programming you have selected, your bill will include taxes, fees, and connect/disconnect charges.
**Transportation Costs** – Walking and bicycling are common in Tucson, depending on the weather. Low-cost public transportation is available via SunTran. Private transportation services are available via taxi services, ride sharing apps, car rental agencies, etc. Vehicles are available for purchase through individuals or car dealerships. When purchasing a vehicle, make sure you factor in associated expenses, such as monthly car payments, gasoline, car insurance, driver’s license fees, license plates and registration, annual vehicle emissions testing, parking permits, and potential accrual of parking/traffic citations.

**Health Care** – Out-of-pocket costs may include monthly insurance premiums, co-payments for doctor’s visits, out-of-pocket deductibles which must be met before insurance starts to pay, the cost of prescribed medications, and lab services. In the U.S., visiting an urgent care facility is much less expensive than visiting a hospital for non-critical care.

**Food** – For restaurant meals where food is brought to your table, it is customary to include a 15-20% gratuity (tip) for your server. Tipping is also customary for various other services, such as food delivery to your residence, valet parking of your vehicle, and hair or nail salon services.

**State and Local Sales Tax** – In the U.S., sales tax is not included in the price of an item. In Tucson, expect an additional 8.5% to be added at the time of payment for goods, but not for services or certain food items at the store. The actual tax amount you pay will vary depending on the city/county/state where the purchase was made.

**Income Tax** – If you will be a UA employee receiving a paycheck, expect to see itemized amounts for FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act), federal and state income tax, and any elected contributions for retirement, health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, etc., deducted before your pay is deposited into your account. Even if you are not a paid UA employee, you may be subject to U.S. income taxation dependent upon existing tax treaties with your home country.

**Banking** – Fees may be charged for ATM access and special services, such as requests for cashier’s checks, money orders, overdraft protection, etc.
Monthly Expense Table

The following information is provided as an estimate of costs. Your actual expenses may vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of expense</th>
<th>Average per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing/Rent</td>
<td>$725 - $1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity (expect higher bills during the summer months)</td>
<td>$75 - $300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas (possibly for clothes dryer, water heating, whole-house heating, stove)</td>
<td>$20 - $100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (includes sewer, trash, and recycling)</td>
<td>$50 - $150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>$20 - $100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television Service Provider</td>
<td>$30 - $100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Service (per line)</td>
<td>$20 - $100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food (per person)</td>
<td>$275 - $350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-day bus pass (per person)</td>
<td>$45 - $60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car (car payment/gasoline/insurance)</td>
<td>$250 - $850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance (per person, depending on age and deductible level)</td>
<td>$35 - $240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Understanding the Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement

Many Exchange Visitors are subject to what is known as the two-year home country physical presence requirement of Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act. It is commonly referred to as “§212(e),” “the two-year rule,” and “the home residency requirement.” A J-1 Exchange Visitor (and his or her J-2 dependents) may be subject to the §212(e) requirement for one or more of the following reasons:

1. **The Exchange Visitor Skills List.** §212(e) applies if the field of study, research, or teaching is listed on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for an Exchange Visitor’s country of citizenship or country of past permanent residence.

2. **Funding.** §212(e) applies if the Exchange Visitor receives U.S. or home government funding (directly or indirectly) specifically to support their visit to the United States.

3. **Receipt of graduate medical education or training.** §212(e) applies if the Exchange Visitor participates in the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Exchange Visitor Program to receive graduate medical education or training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject to Two-Year Rule?</th>
<th>J-1 Category</th>
<th>WHAT IS ALLOWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change of legal immigration status in U.S.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Short-Term Scholar</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Scholar/Professor</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Short-Term Scholar</td>
<td>No restriction (but may not change to other J-1 category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Scholar/Professor</td>
<td>No restriction (but may not change to other J-1 category)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are subject to §212(e), you will have a notation on your visa and your DS-2019. To comply with §212(e), an Exchange Visitor must spend two years physically present in his or her home country or place of last legal permanent residence. Time spent does not necessarily have to be continuous.
Understanding the 24-Month Bar on Repeat Participation and the 12-Month Bar Provision

24-Month Bar on Repeat Participation

Exchange Visitors in the Professor and Research Scholar categories are subject to a 24-month bar on repeat participation in those categories after completing or breaking the continuity of a five-year period of eligibility. The 24-month bar applies in two circumstances:

1. The Professor or Research Scholar completes a full five years of program participation with one or more sponsors.

2. The Professor or Research Scholar completes his or her program before the full five-year period is over and the individual’s SEVIS record becomes “inactive”. The scholar is not eligible to access the unused time and must wait 24 months before beginning a new program as a Professor or Research Scholar.

In order to access a full five years of eligibility, the SEVIS record must be kept “active”. This requires a continuous period of program participation to prevent the SEVIS record from becoming “inactive” on the day after the DS-2019 end date.

Prior to the program end date, a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar must either:

1. Extend their J-1 status under the UA Exchange Visitor Program, OR
2. Transfer to another Exchange Visitor Program sponsor.

24-Month Bar on Repeat Participation versus the §212(e) Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement

The 24-month bar on repeat participation should not be confused with §212(e), as they are two completely different regulations. While §212(e) may apply to anyone who enters the U.S. on a J visa, the 24-month bar on repeat participation only applies to J visa holders who enter the U.S. in either the Professor or Research Scholar categories.

Unlike §212(e), the 24-month bar on repeat participation does not require the individual to reside in his or her home country or leave the United States. It requires only that (s) not be in J Professor or Research Scholar status for two years prior to becoming eligible for a new five-year period of program eligibility under a J Professor or Research Scholar category.
12-Month Bar Provision

An individual who participates in the Exchange Visitor Program in any J category (including J-2) within the preceding 12 months cannot participate in the Exchange Visitor Program as a Research Scholar or Professor until 12 months have passed without being in any J status. This rule does not apply to any time accrued as a Short-Term Scholar and time accrued in any J status will not prevent an individual from returning in the Short-Term Scholar category.

Individuals who are subject to the 24-month bar are not subject to the 12-month bar in addition to the 24-month bar.