Morgan State University (MSU)
Center for Global Studies (CGS)

J-1 Scholar Pre-Arrival Information

Congratulations on your academic appointment with MSU. The information below prepares J-1 Scholars for their arrival into the United States.

- Make financial arrangements before you come to MSU to have sufficient funds upon arrival.
- Be sure you have passport, Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2109 form), SEVIS fee receipt, and J-1 visa in your passport to enter the U.S. (Canadian citizens see Arriving from Abroad below.)
- Check your DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility immediately and notify CGS 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.
- If your entry to the U.S. will be delayed beyond your projected start date in Box 3 of the DS-2019, contact CGS by email at Johnson.niba@morgan.edu (put J-1 Scholar in the subject line), by phone, 443-885-4029, or by US post, Center for Global Studies, Morgan State University, 1700 E. Col Spring Lane, Baltimore, MD 21251.

Arriving From Abroad

Carefully read Pages 1 and 2 of your DS-2019, sign and complete the EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1. Do not separate copies.

If abroad, pay the SEVIS and visa fees, and present the DS-2019, your passport and financial support documentation to the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy to apply for the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa.

(Canadian citizens are visa-exempt and do not need to apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate. Canadians do need pay the SEVIS fee and present the DS-2019 and passport and financial support documentation to enter the U.S. with J-1 status.)

Be sure to plan ahead as the visa application may take longer than in the past. Visa applicants are required to schedule a personal visa interview in advance, and security checks can delay visa issuance by several weeks or months. Check the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate you are planning to visit for hours and instructions for obtaining a visa. You can access visa information and U.S. embassy or consulates at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html.

After you obtain the visa you must use the DS-2019 with your passport to enter the U.S. within 30 days before the “From” date in Part 3 of the DS-2019. If your entry will be delayed beyond this date please contact CGS at johnson.niba@morgan.edu for instructions and a new DS-2019 form. When you enter the U.S. the immigration officer will stamp and annotate your documents with “J-1” and “D/S” (Duration of Status).
Information on what to expect at the port of entry is available at:

Family Members - DS-2019 forms for family members should be used with their passports and proof of financial support to apply for J-2 visas for your immediate family members (spouse or dependent children under 21 years of age). For children over 21, family members born in the U.S., or family members other than legal spouses, please consult with the U.S. consulate for the correct visa.

Arriving From Within U.S.:

If you are already in the United States, please contact CGS at johnson.niba@morgan.edu immediately to arrange for change of status or transfer of J-1 program sponsors. Please note that a change of status application for you and any dependent family members may take many months to be processed by the U.S. government agencies, and a fee is charged. After consultation with our office, sometimes it is more practical to leave the U.S., apply for the J-1 visa, and reenter with J-1 status.

You will not have any of the benefits of J-1 status while your application is pending at the USCIS. If your current status does not allow you to be employed by MSU, you may not be paid by MSU until your change of status to J-1 has been approved by the USCIS.

If you plan to travel outside the U.S. before starting your employment at MSU, you should take the form DS-2019 from MSU, pay the SEVIS fee and obtain the receipt, and submit the above with your passport to the nearest U.S. consulate abroad to obtain the J-1 visa (J-2 visa for dependents).

Expenses & Housing

Expenses
Due to the high cost of living in the Baltimore area, CGS requires that J-1 scholars be able to demonstrate a minimum of $1200 per month for basic expenses. An additional $800 per month must be demonstrated for J-2 spouses, and $550 per month must be demonstrated for each J-2 child.

NOTE:
Insurance is a very large expense for exchange visitors, especially because it must be purchased for the primary J-1 and each J-2 dependent for the entire exchange visitor program. Please plan accordingly.

Housing
Scholars are responsible for making housing arrangements for their J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. If scholars are unable to make permanent arrangements prior to arrival, please make
temporary housing arrangements at a local hotel. Please see http://baltimore.org/hotels-and-accommodations/ for local hotel listings.

Insurance Overview

Government regulations require that all J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents carry medical insurance throughout the entire period of participation in the Exchange Visitor Program as a condition of maintaining legal status.

It is best to purchase insurance for the primary J-1 and each J-2 dependent prior to arrival. Our office is unable to validate the exchange visitor record until insurance can be demonstrated for each exchange visitor for the ENTIRE J-1 program as required by federal regulations. If the J-1 record is not validated, it will automatically terminate in the government database.

Please note that scholars are independently responsible for ensuring that their insurance meets U.S. federal requirements.

Minimum acceptable coverage required is:

- medical benefits of at least $50,000 per accident or illness
- repatriation of remains in the amount of $7,500
- expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of $10,000
- deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness
- covers pre-existing conditions after reasonable waiting period
- includes a co-payment provision that does not exceed 25% co-pay by the exchange visitor
- does not exclude benefits for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange visitors program.

Whichever insurance coverage you choose, the insurance corporation underwriting the policy must have one of the following ratings:

- an A.M. rating of "A" or above
- an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-i" or above
- a Standard & Poor's Claims paying ability rating of "A" or above
- a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above

Insurance coverage backed by the full faith and credit of your home country government meets this requirement.

SEVIS FEE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges a $180 SEVIS fee to new J-1 scholars. This fee is IN ADDITION to the visa fees charged by the U.S. consulate or embassy. The SEVIS fee only needs to be paid for the primary J-1 scholar, and does not need to be paid for any J-2 dependents.
The SEVIS fee must be paid and a receipt obtained before you apply for the visa if you are outside the United States, or before you apply for change of status if you are currently in the United States.

The fee can be paid over the internet by credit card. Scholars must have a printer ready to print the electronic receipt immediately. The fee can also be paid by mail with Form-I-901. See the ICE website at http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm.