

Why would I EVER want to bring a J-1 scholar/intern to my campus?

---- Brief Introduction to J-1 program at TTU



FROM HERE, IT'S POSSIBLE.™

What is the J-1 exchange program?



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).

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

Yes, yes, but WHY???

- Help with scientific research projects
- Help with classes
- Give experience while getting workers
- Positions can be paid or unpaid
- International connections
- Post-doc positions (researchers or professors)
- Diversity on campus
- Recruitment pipeline for graduate student degree programs, as well as a trial period for hiring professors



Which category can I use at TTU?

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 program's primary focus is teaching.

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

Student—when a student is sponsored by a third party, such as their home government.

Non-degree student—usually for exchange students, but could be for short-term programs, enrolled in TTU classes.

There are 15 categories for J-1 visa exchange program. The six categories are commonly used at TTU.



How Do I Decide on the Appropriate Category?



The educational level and length of time will determine which can be chosen.

- If the applicant is an undergrad, see if “Student Intern” (enrolled at home institution, not at TTU) or “Non-degree Student” (enrolled at TTU) is a good option.
- If the applicant is a graduate student or with a graduate degree and will be here less than 6 months with no anticipated extensions beyond that time, the sponsor should use the Short-term Scholar option as there are fewer restrictions to re-entry later.
- However, if anticipated needing to extend beyond six months, then the Research Scholar or Professor category is what you would choose. This can be up to 5 years.

Sponsor (Hosting TTU Dept) Responsibilities

The host department needs to:

- ☐ offer necessary support in J-1 scholars' housing arrangement in terms of their specific situation.
- ☐ arrange airport pick-up to make sure J-1 scholars have a smooth transition from the airport to their housing accommodation upon arrival in Lubbock.
- ☐ arrange an orientation for J-1 scholars during their first day on campus.
- ☐ offer the necessary support and guidance to help J-1 scholars apply for the campus ID card and TTU email account.
- ☐ remind J-1 scholars that they need to complete their check-in with International Affairs before they schedule their check-in with the department.
- ☐ notify International Affairs immediately if a J-1 scholar's program needs to be ended before their program ending date.
- ☐ report to International Affairs an incident involving exchange visitors within one business day when their J-1 scholars are not able to do so by themselves.
- ☐ complete the program evaluations for J-1 student interns. (At a minimum, all student intern programs require a concluding evaluation, and programs lasting longer than six months also require a midpoint evaluation.)

Important Information



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- 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 here on work or immigrant visas. TTU 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 TTU.
- 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 university support.
- Visiting scholars/interns will be given work permits at TTU automatically through the ISSS office after completion of their check-in 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.

English Language Evaluation

Note: Scholars must be able to communicate in English. They are here on a cultural/educational exchange visa. If they arrive and cannot communicate in English, the RO is REQUIRED to send them home.



English proficiency IS a requirement by the Department of State. Currently, we allow departments to conduct interviews and write a summary of EV's English proficiency with the department's letterhead if no official English test is taken by EV.

Eligible conditions:

- Native speaker
- Gone to an English-speaking school
- TOEFL, IELTS, or another proficiency exam
- English Language Institute Assessment
- A summary of EV's English proficiency with the department's letterhead.

212 (e) Restriction (2 Year Rule)—So Scary!!!



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 212(e) restriction can be placed on a visa when the scholar applies at the embassy. This can be mainly due to:

1. Governmental funding of the program;
2. 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)

24-month repetition bar

- ☐ Research Scholar or Professor categories are subject to avoid “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.

12-month bar repetition bar

- ☐ 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 or other categories.

What's
the
Difference
?

What is the application process?



What is the application process? Continued....

Once the scholar receives the DS-2019, they print it out and make an appointment at the U.S. Embassy by filling out the DS-160 form and pay the visa fee (currently \$185) to their embassy and go in for an interview. They will also have to pay a SEVIS fee (currently \$220) before making the interview.



After receiving the J visa, they can enter the U.S. with approval from the Customs and Border Patrol.



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?

That's a
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 preparing the required documents by the host department
- ✓ 5 business days or longer time of processing the screening request
- ✓ 2-5 business days of processing the DS-2019
- ✓ 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. The EV will be issued a visa for no longer than the time you request. The DS-2019 can be extended, but the visa (which is for entrance only) will not be. They will need to renew their visa if they travel outside of the U.S with an expired visa.
- ❖ Funding must be available for the whole time requested which can be through the department or personal funds or a mixture of both.
- ❖ For TTU, current financial minimums are \$1700/month for the scholar/intern.
 - \$2290/month for a family of two \$3470/month for a family of four
 - \$2880/month for a family of three \$ 4059/month for a family of five
- ❖ The financial minimum only reflects the minimum financial proof for J-1 program. It doesn't reflect the TTU payment requirement for any job positions. For example, the annual payment for a postdoc position at TTU should be no less than \$48,000.
- ❖ 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
 - \$200 for a scholar application
 - \$360 for an intern application
- No fee for a change of the program date before the scholar arrives
- Extension fee: \$130
- Whatever stipend you wish to give the visiting scholar/intern

Suggestions



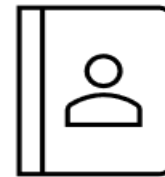
Be very clear in the offer letter as to what the department is paying versus the scholar.



Allow enough time for everything.



Do not use the old application form; always download the current version from the website or request the form from a J-1 advisor.



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

Best Practices

BEFORE

- Collect all of the paperwork
- Make sure your EV's English proficiency is good enough to conduct research/teaching in the program.
- Make sure all is clear in the offer letter from the department—what you are covering, what you are not. Approval within your department.
- All documents must align with the same dates and category requested.

CHECK-IN

Remind J-1 scholars that they must complete their check-in with International Affairs before scheduling their check-in with the department.

DURING

- Involve the EV in cultural activities, and encourage experiences, not just within the lab.
- Try not to use only the home language.
- Let ISSS know if there are any issues or if the EV leaves early. ISSS is REQUIRED by the government to keep track of all Exchange Visitors.
- EV either needs to extend the program at least 2 weeks before or fill out the completion forms if leaving.

Reminders on Transfers, repeat visitors, and dependents

TRANSFERS! (Transfers seem easy, but sometimes scholars will try to do things they shouldn't. Here are some reminders for the host):

- Number 1... contact ISSS to ask before promising anything
- ISSS office will need to check EV's DS-2019 and visa before any suggestion is given.
- CIP codes or at least the general field should remain the same after transfer. (**Transfer is considered as a continuation of the same program at a new site.**)
- Has a 212e waiver been filed? (**If yes, transfer or extension are not recommended**)
- Is there time left to transfer and extend? Some think they can transfer and start with another 5 years. (**Five years is the maximum time for a program in J-1 scholar/professor category**)

For Repeat J-1 scholars

- Repeat Short-term Scholars (**need to be different projects**)
- Research Scholars must have 2 years between Research Scholar visas (**24-month repetition bar**)

For Dependents Eligibility

Only spouses and unmarried children **under 21** are eligible for J-2 status.

Discussion/Questions

- Why do departments have to collect the information and then submit it, and even accommodate EV's arrival?
The department is the host and sponsor; therefore, those are the department's responsibility.
- What is the current visa situation? Areas of problems?
 - China –PP 10043, Suspension of entry connected the PRC Military Civil Fusion Strategy, funding by CSC
 - Iran—administrative processing
 - We anticipate longer screening processing for EVs from China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela through the TTU Export Control (EC) Office.
- Fulbright scholars?
We don't handle the immigration documents but still need to be involved in order to check them in, invite them to activities, and report if there is an issue.



Contact Information

Contact Information

Tina Newton, ISSS director (RO), J-1 visa specialist:
Tina.Newton@ttu.edu

Weijun (Sarah) Huang, J1 scholar administrator (ARO):
Weijun.huang@ttu.edu

- Website for ISSS: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/>
- Website for the BridgeUSA J-visa exchange program: <https://j1visa.state.gov/>

Office of International Student and Scholars Service (ISSS)
International Cultural Center, 601 Indiana Ave.,
Texas Tech University
806-742-3667

The End

