



# Guide to Hosting a Visiting Scholar

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1. SCHOLAR REQUEST (FORM DS2019)
2. SCHOLAR INVITATION LETTER TEMPLATE
3. SCHOLAR NOTICE OF DEPARTURE

# Guide to Hosting a J-1 (International) Visiting Scholar at West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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The Global Engagement Office (GEO) is pleased to encourage faculty, staff and administrators to participate in our Exchange Visitor Program by inviting international scholars to apply to visit our campus for an extended period of time to engage in collaborative scholarly endeavors. Visiting scholars provide opportunities for the university community to benefit from collaborative research opportunities and cross-cultural interactions. Visiting scholars may deliver guest lectures, teach, co-teach when appropriate, and make formal presentations.

This document is focused on the longer term (3-6 month or longer) visiting scholar, but we encourage you to reach out to GEO if you are planning to host an international colleague on campus for a day or two or for the week. Visiting scholars play a vital role in the internationalization of our campus. Through their presence, we expose students to new ideas from nations around the world, invigorate research with novel concepts and new populations with whom to work, and develop new avenues for collaborative work with institutions abroad.

Therefore, this document and its guidance are intended to help departments make decisions regarding how to help ensure visiting scholar relationships are successful. This is a step-by-step guide to help the WCU community know the J-1 visa categories, how to apply, what to do when the scholar arrives, and how to maintain the J-1 visa through the end of the scholar's program. The GEO serves as your resource on immigration matters and is WCU's liaison to the U.S. federal agencies that oversee our Exchange Visitor Program.

The GEO is here to assist and answer your questions. Typically, key issues and questions revolve around:

1. Funding to support a visiting scholar (typically, visiting scholars are supported by external funding agencies or governments and not by WCU).
2. Visa regulations (J-1 visa categories).
3. Office Space, Housing, and Logistical Support.
4. International graduate student research over the summer.

Please take a moment to carefully review the guide and become familiar with the terminology and procedures. We welcome your feedback and look forward to assisting you with the campus internationalization efforts.

Sincerely,

Dr. Angela Howard, PDSO RO, Global Engagement Office

# Preparation

## Choosing a J-1 Category

Once you are sure that the J-1 visa is right for your situation, it is now time to choose the appropriate J-1 category to use. WCU has authorization to use the following three categories for hosting international scholars:

1. Research Scholar/Professor
2. Short-Term Scholar
3. Student

For complete definitions of the above categories, please see **Appendix A**.

General rules for choosing a category:

- If you are certain that the scholar will be at WCU for six months or less, the Short-Term Scholar category is best.
- If the scholar will be here longer than six months, or if there is a strong possibility of an extension that would push the program beyond six months, the Research Scholar or Professor categories are best.
  - If the scholar will primarily conduct research, collaborate, and/or observe in connection with a research project, the Research Scholar category is best.
  - If the scholar will primarily teach courses, the Professor category is best.

When choosing a category, you should also be aware of the potential for certain restrictions. The scholar may already be subject to one of these restrictions, which may hinder his/her ability to use the J-1 visa. By using the J-1 visa, the scholar may also incur restrictions on future visa use. For information describing J-1 visa restrictions please see **Appendix B**. If you have questions about these restrictions or need help interpreting how the restrictions will affect your choice of a J-1 category, please contact the GEO

## Departmental Guidelines

When considering whether to host a J-1 scholar, WCU departments should ensure that they are prepared to provide adequate logistical and academic support to the J-1 Scholar. It is strongly encouraged that a faculty member or department discuss hosting a J-1 Scholar and coordinate with their respective department colleagues, Chair, and Deans. ***IMPORTANT: the formal letter of invitation (template provided at end) can be drafted by the Department but should formally come from the Provost's office (and letterhead/signature), upon recommendation from the Dean's office.***

WCU departments wishing to host a J-1 Scholar should be prepared to do the following:

### **Academic Match with the Department**

When receiving requests for visiting scholars, the most important consideration is whether there is an academic match for the potential visiting scholar and a host faculty member in a department in the College. The most productive visiting scholar arrangements are those in which the visiting and host scholars have common or complementary research and/or teaching interests. With common interests, new avenues for research and teaching can be explored, ideally, the host and visiting scholars will develop a transformative relationship that will benefit the professional lives of both visiting and host scholar, and possibly broaden both institutions.

### **Sufficient Academic and Logistical Support**

The department should be prepared to support the scholar's academic program. A general rule is that the collaborating professor should be prepared to meet with the J-1 scholar a minimum of once per week. Scholars should be given appropriate access to library facilities, classroom observations, etc.

It is strongly recommended, though not absolutely required, that the scholar be given office space and access to a computer and telephone line. Coordinating these requirements with the Department and College Dean's office is critically important, especially if any financial resources are required.

### **Choose Appropriate Program Parameters**

The program start date should be at least 3 months into the future at the time that the application is submitted to the GEO. The requested program end date should reflect the best possible estimate of how long it will take to complete the program objectives.

### **English Language Proficiency**

The U.S. Department of State requires that the visiting scholar possess sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language. Therefore, WCU must verify an applicant's English language proficiency through a recognized English language test prior to the issuance of the Form DS-2019.

The Department of State requires that evidence such as the score report be retained so that it may be made available to the Department upon request.

### **Housing Arrangements**

The department is responsible for assisting in making housing arrangements for the J-1 scholar and any accompanying family members. These arrangements must be finalized prior to the scholar's arrival.

### **Check-in at GEO**

The department should ensure that the scholar checks in with the GEO as soon as possible after arrival. Failure to check in with the GEO in a timely manner can result in a loss of J-1 visa status.

If the scholar has not checked in by the program start date, the GEO will send an email to the scholar and to the department contact person requesting information about the scholar's arrival. It is important to note that scholars can arrive up to 30 days prior to the start date and up to 20 days after the start date.

The scholar should bring the following documents to the GEO check-in:

- Passport
- I-94 card – this process is now automated, and the scholar can retrieve the I-94 number [here](#):
- Form DS-2019
- Emergency contact information – one contact in home country and one of the U.S.

### **Departure Notification**

It is essential that the GEO is notified when a scholar departs the U.S. If a scholar departs much earlier than the expected end date, the GEO has no way of knowing this unless the scholar or department sends a notification. If the scholar is nearing the expected end date, the GEO will send email notifications to the scholar requesting the scholar to complete the GEO Notice of Departure form.

If the GEO does not receive a prompt response from the scholar, the department contact will be copied on future emails to the scholar. Departments who receive such emails should be prepared to work with the scholar to ensure the GEO is properly notified of all future program plans, including departure, extension, or transfer.

## **Funding**

The host department must also ensure that sufficient funding is available for the program. Some scholars are funded by the host department and others are funded by outside sources, which include U.S. or foreign governments, a college/university in the scholar's home country, a non-government agency, or the scholar's personal/family finances.

- J-1 Scholar: U.S. \$1500 per month/U.S. \$18000 per year
- J-2 Spouse of J-1 Scholar: U.S. \$5000 per year (may be pro-rated for shorter programs)
- J-2 Child of J-1 Scholar: U.S. \$3000 per year (may be pro-rated for shorter programs)

While the J-1 visa does not require that the host department pay any fees, there is a \$180 fee (called the SEVIS fee) that must be paid prior to the scholar's visa application. This fee must be paid by the scholar.

## **Dependent Family Members**

The spouse and dependent children (unmarried and under age 21) of a J-1 scholar are eligible to apply for J-2 dependent visas. The J-2 document must be submitted at the same time that the J-1 scholar's documentation is required. The scholar must submit the documentation to the GEO; no departmental involvement is required.

A J-2 spouse may also attend classes at any level of study, although we recommend a spouse who enters a degree-seeking program strongly consider applying for an independent F-1 student visa status.

J-2 children may attend public or private primary and secondary schools and may also study at a college or university. J-2 children who are approaching the age 21 must either change their visa status or depart the U.S. prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

## **Submitting an Initial J-1 Request**

### **Timing**

It is important that you allow three months from the date you submit the completed J-1 request and the day you would like the J-1 scholar to walk through your door. This allows sufficient time for processing, shipping the documents to the scholar, application for a U.S. visa, and travel to West Chester. *Applications submitted with a shorter time frame are subject to date changes at the discretion of the GEO.*

### **Components of the J-1 Request**

The host department submits a J-1 Request to the GEO. The GEO will create a Form DS-2019 which is the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. The Form DS-2019 is used to obtain a J-1 visa stamp from a U.S. Consulate abroad (unless the scholar is already in the U.S.) and for verification purposes throughout the J-1 scholar's program. (Please note that the issuance of the Form DS-2019 does not guarantee a J-1 visa will be issued as this is the decision of the U.S. Consular.)



A complete request for a J-1 scholar consists of the following documents to issue the Form DS-2019:

1. **Completed J-1 Request form**
2. **Invitation letter on departmental letterhead with the following information:**
  - **Specific start and end dates of scholar's program**
  - **Summary of the scholar's proposed activities**
  - **Specific amount of payment – if any**
3. **Photocopy of the scholar's passport (identification page only)**
4. **Original copy of English Proficiency Score Report**
5. **Photocopies of dependents' passports (if applicable)**
6. **Scholar's CV**
7. **Proof of Funding Documents must be in English. Sponsorship letters must list a specific funding amount. Acceptable documents for proof of funding include:**
  - **Sponsorship letter from U.S. Government agency**
  - **Sponsorship letter from foreign government**
  - **Sponsorship letter from non-government agency**
  - **Personal or family bank statement showing a positive balance meeting the minimum funding requirements**
8. **If the scholar has been in J-1 status during the previous 5-year period, please include photocopies of all previous DS-2019's.**

**NOTE:** When choosing the start and end dates of the program, do not factor in extra time for travel. J-1 scholars may enter the U.S. 30 days prior to the program start date and may depart the U.S. within 30 days after the program end date.

### **What to Expect**

The GEO asks for 7-10 business days to complete a new Form DS-2019. Once the documents are ready, we will mail the packet to the address of the scholar. Due to the sensitive nature of visa documents, The Department of Homeland Security requires the Form DS-2019 to be distributed directly to the exchange visitor and prohibits the distribution via facsimile or other electronic means.

The scholar's packet will include:

- Welcome letter
- Brochure from the U.S. Department of State outlining the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program
- Brochure of the Visa process
- Original Form DS-2019 (and Form DS-2019's for dependents, if applicable)
- Information about scholar health insurance
- Summary of scholar responsibilities
- SEVIS fee instructions (**Appendix E**)

# Preparing for Arrival

## Housing Arrangements

It is the host department's responsibility to verify or make housing arrangements for the J- scholar and any accompanying family members. These arrangements should be finalized prior to the scholar's arrival.

## Visa Application

If the scholar is outside the U.S., they should contact the nearest U.S. Consulate to schedule an appointment to apply for a J-1 visa. The scholar must pay the SEVIS fee prior to the visa application. The visa application process could be anywhere from a few days, weeks or months. The length of time it takes to get a visa depends on many factors, including the location of the Consulate, the scholar's citizenship, and/or the scholar's area of study. For more detailed information on potential visa problems, see **Appendix C**.

*Transfers and Change of Status:* If the scholar is already in the U.S. in J-1 scholar visa status, they will make the transfer arrangements with their current institution and with the GEO and arrive on or after their transfer date. The GEO will issue the Form DS-2019 at the time they arrive at WCU. (The Form DS-2019 is not needed in advance of a transfer arrival.) If the scholar is already in the U.S. in a different visa status, arrangements may vary depending on their current visa status.

## Health Insurance

All J-1 and J-2 visa holders are **required** by federal regulation to carry sufficient health insurance at all times during their stay in the U.S. If the scholar will receive health insurance as a benefit of WCU employment, then this requirement will be fulfilled. If the scholar is not receiving health insurance from WCU, they are responsible for obtaining sufficient health insurance coverage. Minimum health insurance requirements are listed in **Appendix D**.

Scholars will be asked to verify their health insurance coverage shortly after arrival. For more information on health insurance, please visit: <https://www.isoa.org/>

## Determining the Date of Arrival

Although you may have selected an approximate arrival date, we recognize that certain events may serve to either accelerate or delay the arrival of the scholar. ***J-1 scholars may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to or up to 20 days after the program start date.*** If you foresee that the actual arrival date will fall outside of this window, it is very important to contact the GEO immediately.

# Arrival and Getting Started

## Airport Pickup

It is the host department's responsibility to ensure that the scholar has safe transportation from the airport to their lodgings. It is recommended that the scholar's final destination arrival should be the Philadelphia National Airport (PHL).

## Check In with the GEO

The scholar should complete the mandatory check-in process at the GEO as soon as possible after arrival. This process is necessary to properly activate their J-1 visa status. Failure to check in with the GEO in a timely manner can result in loss of J-1 visa status! The scholar should bring the following documents to the check-in:

- Passport
- I-94 card – this process is now automated and the scholar can retrieve the I-94 number [here](#):
- Form DS-2019
- Emergency contact information – one contact in home country and one of the U.S.

At the check-in, the scholar's SEVIS record will be updated, documents photocopied, and a review of immigration policies to maintain the J-1 status will take place.

## WCU Identification Card (RAM e Card)

A newly arrived scholar is eligible for a WCU Identification Card. To request a card, the scholar must have been checked in with the GEO, submitted the required documents, and registered in SEVIS. The GEO will provide the scholar with the documentation to receive the card.

## Social Security Number

Scholars who will be paid by WCU must apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). Scholars who will not be paid by WCU are not required to apply for an SSN.

**IMPORTANT: Newly arrived scholars must wait 10 days after their date of entry to the U.S. before applying for a SSN. Applications submitted too early often result in added delays of one month or more.**

Applications for an SSN are submitted at the local Social Security Administration office, which is located on 1101 West Chester Pike, West Chester, PA 19382. The following documents are required for an application:

- Passport
- I-94 card
- Form DS-2019
- Social Security endorsement form (from GEO)

## **Payroll**

If the scholar will be paid by WCU, he/she should visit WCU Payroll Office (201 Carter Drive) after receiving the Social Security card. In addition to the Social Security card, the scholar should also bring their passport, Form DS-2019, and WCU ID card. The Payroll Office will calculate the proper amount of tax to be deducted from the scholar's income according to the tax treaty between the U.S. and the scholar's country of citizenship.

## **During the Program**

### **Notification of Changes**

If a significant aspect of the scholar's program changes at any time, please notify the GEO immediately. Examples of events that would need a notification include:

- Change in funding (i.e., scholar gains or loses funding from the host department or other source)
- Change in biographical data (i.e., legal name change, change in permanent residence status)
- Change in site activity (i.e., transfer from one WCU department to another, transfer from one research site to another)
- Change in U.S. address

### **Program Extensions**

Extending a scholar's program end date is both common and easy to do. Extensions are processed internally at the GEO – no outside application to any government agency is required.

The extension application is submitted by the host department, not the scholar. A complete extension application will contain the following information:

- A completed J-1 Scholar Extension Request
- Extension memo from the host department. The memo should be printed on departmental letterhead and contain the following information:
  - \* New end date of the scholar's program
  - \* How much funding the scholar will receive from the department, if applicable
- Supplemental funding documentation, if needed

The GEO asks for 7 – 10 business days to complete a J-1 scholar extension request. Once the new Form DS-2019 is ready, we will notify the departmental contact listed on the application form. Please arrange for someone from the host department to pick up the documents at the GEO in Mitchell Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

**Note on Visa Stamps:** When an extension is completed, the Form DS-2019 is extended, but the J-1 visa stamp in the passport remains the same. The J-1 visa stamp will expire on the original end date of the J-1 program.

This is not a problem while the scholar stays inside the U.S. because the visa stamp is an *entry permit only*. While inside the U.S., only the Form DS-2019 and the passport must be valid in order to maintain valid J-1 visa status. If a scholar has an expired J-1 visa stamp, it means that if they make a temporary visit outside the U.S. during the program, the scholar must apply for a new J-1 visa stamp in order to re-enter the U.S. (*Limited exceptions exist for travel within North America – if there are any questions, please ask the scholar to consult with the GEO before traveling.*)

## **Temporary Departures**

It is becoming more common for scholars to leave the U.S. for a relatively lengthy period of time and still maintain academic collaborations with the WCU host department. It is possible for WCU to maintain a scholar's visa status while they are out of the country for a maximum of one year. During the absence, the academic collaboration must be ongoing and the scholar must still maintain health insurance coverage.

In order to arrange for such an absence, the scholar should submit a Notice of Departure form at the GEO. The form should be marked for "Departing the U.S. for one year or less" and must include a letter or memo from the host department on department letterhead confirming the ongoing nature of the program and the date of expected return.

It is strongly recommended that J-2 dependents do not remain in the U.S. while the J-1 scholar is out of the country. In the absence of the J-1 scholar, it would be difficult for the J-2 family members to prove that they are maintaining a valid visa status.

## **Ending the Program**

### **Early Departures**

If it becomes necessary for a scholar to leave their program at WCU more than 30 days prior to the program end date on the Form DS-2019, it is crucial that the scholar file a Notice of Departure with the GEO. We will then issue a new Form DS-2019 to reflect the shortened end date of the scholar's program. *Failure to file a departure form may result in more lengthy restrictions on future use of the J-1 scholar visa.*

### **Normal Departures**

If a scholar departs within 30 days before or 30 days after the program end date on the Form DS-2019, it is considered a "normal" departure. There is no formal "check out" procedure performed at the GEO. The only requirement is that the scholar files a Notice of Departure with the GEO. The notice can be submitted by fax, campus mail, or in person.

We will begin sending email notices regarding the program end date to the scholar and the host department within 60 days of the program end date on the Form DS-2019.

## After the Program

### Department of State Reporting Requirements

The U.S. Department of State requires that each institution submit an annual report on their J-1 program. This report is submitted by the GEO. In order to submit the report, the host department must submit the following information to the GEO within 30 days of the scholar's program end on the Form DS-2019:

- A brief summary of the activities in which the scholar was engaged, including evaluation of program effectiveness
- Cross-cultural activities: A summary of the cross-cultural activities provided for the scholar
- Identify the number of staff (full and part time) used in the administration of the scholar's program. e.g. third parties, local and regional representatives

### Two-Year Bar

All J-1 scholars in the Research Scholar or Professor category are subject to a two-year bar on repeat participation. This means that after completing a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program, the scholar cannot begin a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program (anywhere in the U.S.) for the next two years. Please note that this restriction applies only to a J-1 scholar in the Research Scholar or Professor category, not to J-1 scholars in the Short-Term Scholar category.

Scholars who are subject to the two-year bar are still eligible for the J-1 Short-Term Scholar visa status, B1/B2 visitor visa status and F-1 student status.

### Two-Year Home Residency Requirement

J-1 scholars maybe subject to the two-year home residency requirement. Scholars of any category (Research Scholar, Professor, Short-Term Scholar) may be subject to the requirement. There are three ways for a scholar to become subject to the two-year home residency requirement:

1. Participate in a program for foreign medical graduates (WCU does not have the ability to sponsor this kind of program; you will rarely if ever encounter this).
2. Participate in a program that is on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for the scholar's country of citizenship. (GEO can advise on the Skills List.)
3. Receive program funding from either the U.S. Government or a foreign government. (Please note that working on government research grants rarely if ever qualifies as direct U.S. Government funding for the purposes of the two-year home residency requirement. Please consult with the GEO for more clarification.)

If a scholar is subject to the two-year home residency requirement, it will affect him/her in two different ways:

- While in the U.S. under J-1 status, the scholar cannot apply for an in-country change to any other visa status (with the exception of A or G visas for diplomatic/government purposes).
- Once the scholar has left the U.S., he/she cannot apply for an H employment visa, L employment visa, K fiancé visa or U.S. permanent residency.

A scholar who is subject to the requirement can only be released from these restrictions if he/she receives a waiver of the requirement or spends two years in the country of last residence. The country of last residence is most often the country of citizenship; however sometimes it is the country of permanent residence, if different from the country of citizenship. The two years do not have to be spent consecutively – they can be spent cumulatively if accurate records are kept for each span of time in the home country.

Scholars who wish to apply for a waiver must do so independently. The GEO cannot assist in this process.

## **Appendix A**

### **Definitions of J-1 Scholar Categories**

#### **Research Scholar**

A research scholar is defined as: an individual primarily conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project at research institutions, corporate research facilities, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions, or similar types of institutions. The research scholar may also teach or lecture, unless disallowed by the sponsor. This category has a minimum stay of three weeks, and a maximum continuous stay of 5 years. The five year “clock” begins with the start date on the Form DS-2019. This status remains available until the end of five years from that date or the date the J-1 program is concluded, whichever is earlier. At WCU, the initial Form DS-2019 will be issued for the duration of the academic appointment and can be extended up to a maximum of five years. However, when the program at WCU is completed, so is the J-1 status unless the scholar transfers immediately to another J-1 sponsor.

#### **Professor**

A professor is defined as: an individual primarily teaching, lecturing, observing, or consulting at post-secondary accredited educational institutions, museums, libraries, or similar types of institutions. A professor may also conduct research, unless disallowed by the sponsor.

#### **Short-term Scholar**

A short-term scholar is defined as: a professor, research scholar, specialist, or a person with similar education or accomplishments coming to the United States on a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills at research institutions, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions, or similar types of institutions. This category should be used when the academic objective for the visit can be completed within six (6) months or less. This J category is often used for lectures, observations, consultations, or to participate in seminars, workshops, conferences or professional meetings. This category is designed for academics who reside outside the U.S. and will from time to time be invited for short visits. The J-1 Short-term Scholar may return to the U.S. again for a new Short-Term Scholar stay providing there is a substantial break in between and each visit constitutes a new objective.



## Appendix A, continued

### Definitions of J-1 Scholar Categories

#### **\*Student**

There are two categories:

- Student: An individual who is pursuing a full course of study leading to the award of a WCU degree
- Non-Degree: An individual who is pursuing a full course of study in accordance with a written WCU exchange agreement

*\*This category is for students pursuing research.*

NOTE: These are the categories the U.S. Department of State has authorized WCU to sponsor.

**Source:** US Code of Federal Regulations. Specific Citation: 22CFR§62.4

## Appendix B

### Summary of J-1 Research Scholar/Professor

#### Restrictions

Restriction	Trigger	Effect
12-month Bar	Participation in any J visa program (including J-2) except for Short-term Scholar	At the time of application for a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program, if the visitor has any part of the past 12 months in J-1 or J-2 status, <b>and</b> if that program was 6 months or longer in duration, s/he cannot begin a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program.
2-year Home Residency Requirement	Use of government funding for a J program (can be U.S. government or foreign government) <b>OR</b> Participating in a J program that is listed on the Exchange Visitor Skills List	Visitor cannot change from J-1/J-2 status to any other status while inside the U.S. <b>AND</b> Visitor cannot gain H-1B, L-1, or Permanent Residency status until the visitor has either spent two years in their home country or received a waiver of the requirement.
2-year Bar	Participation in a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program <b>OR</b> Gaining status as the J-2 dependent of a J-1 Research Scholar or Professor	Visitor cannot start a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor program until two years after the end of the first program. (Ban on repeat participation within two years.)

## Appendix C

### Potential Visa Difficulties

#### Scheduling Delays

The availability of visa appointments may vary by country from several days, weeks, or months. The Department of State maintains a website that gives estimated wait times for both visa appointments and visa issuance (if the visa is approved). For an estimated wait time, please visit this website:

[VISA WAIT TIMES](#)

#### Security Clearance

Some scholars will be subject to a Security Clearance procedure when applying for a visa. It is hard to predict exactly who will be subject, as the Department of State's policies regarding security clearances are not all made public.

In very general terms, two groups of visa applicants are likely to require a security clearance, according to the public aspects of Department of State policy:

- Scholars whose field of study has potential military application
- Scholars who are male from a predominantly Islamic or Middle Eastern country

Please keep in mind that anyone can be subject to a security clearance at any time. Some scholars who fall into one of the above categories may avoid a security clearance, while other scholars who fall into neither category above may be subject to a security clearance.

The security clearance process is supposed to last a maximum of 30 days. If a scholar experiences a security clearance delay of longer than 30 days, please contact the GEO for guidance.

If the scholar is delayed to the point where they cannot arrive within 20 days after the program start date on the Form DS-2019, please contact the GEO and request a revised Form DS-2019 with a later program start date.

## Appendix D

### Health Insurance Policy Requirements

All F-1 students, J-1 students, J-1 scholars, and J-2 dependents are required to carry a health insurance policy meeting the following minimum coverage levels:

- \$100,000USD per accident or illness
- \$50,000USD for medical evacuation<sup>1</sup>
- \$25,000USD for repatriation<sup>2</sup>
- Maximum \$500 deductible per accident or illness
- Include inpatient and outpatient coverage for sickness and accidents
- Worldwide coverage

J-1 scholars and J-2 dependents are required by law to always be covered by an insurance policy which meets the above requirements.

NOTE: Insurance is a requirement of the U.S. Department of State (22 CFR 62.14) and must meet the criteria mentioned above. The insurance must be in effect during the period of time that the scholar participates in the exchange visitor program.

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<sup>1</sup> Medical evacuation is coverage for transportation of the insured person back to the home country as recommended by the attending physician for medical reasons.

<sup>2</sup> Repatriation is coverage for transportation of the insured person's remains back to the home country in the event of death.

## Appendix E

### SEVIS Fee Information

#### What is the SEVIS fee?

The fee is a Department of Homeland Security fee to cover the costs of operating the SEVIS system. It is not a WCU fee or a visa (Department of State) fee.

#### How much is the SEVIS Fee and who pays it?

The SEVIS fee is a one-time charge of \$350 USD. It will be paid by all J-1 visitors whose initial Form DS-2019 was issued on or after 09/01/2004. Dependents (J-2) do not pay the fee.

#### Who pays the SEVIS fee?

The SEVIS fee is paid by the incoming J-1 scholar.

#### How is the SEVIS fee paid?

The SEVIS fee may be paid either online with a credit card or through the mail with a check or money order.

- If paying online, you must use a credit card. Go to [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com) and complete the I-901 Form. Please print a receipt immediately. Do not forget to print a copy. It will take approximately three days for payment to be processed. Please allow plenty of time for this to clear before the visa interview.
- If you are paying by mail, your payment must be made by U.S. money order or a check drawn on a U.S. bank. The check must be in U.S. dollars. This does not mean you have to have a U.S. bank account. Many of the larger banks in your country will have agreements with U.S. banks and can provide you with a check drawn on a U.S. bank. DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL.
- The address to submit payment is:

**I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee  
1005 Convention Plaza  
St. Louis, MO 63101  
USA**

## **Appendix E (continued)**

### **SEVIS Fee Information**

#### **When must the SEVIS fee be paid?**

The SEVIS fee must be paid after the Form DS-2019 has been issued and prior to the scholar's visa appointment. If the fee is paid online, a receipt may be printed immediately that can be taken to the consulate as proof of payment. If the fee is paid by mail, DHS will express mail the receipt.

#### **Are Canadians required to pay the SEVIS fee?**

Canadian citizens are still required to pay the SEVIS fee. Canadians do not need a visa stamp to enter the United States. Therefore, payment of the fee will be verified at the port of entry.

#### **How long is the SEVIS fee payment valid? What if the visa is denied?**

The SEVIS fee is good for 12 months from the date of payment. If a visa is not obtained within that time, a new fee must be paid in order to continue applying for a visa.

## **J-1 Scholar FAQs**

### ***What is a definition of a J-1 Research Scholar or J-1 Short-Term Scholar?***

An individual primarily conducting research, observing or consulting research in connection with a research project. The research scholar can also teach or lecture unless disallowed by the sponsor. (Note: WCU sponsors the visas for almost all J-1 Scholars at WCU and we would not disallow teaching/lecturing. If teaching is the primary activity, the J-1 Professor category can be used.)

### ***What is the difference between a Short-Term Scholar and a Research Scholar?***

A Short-Term Scholar's program lasts between one day and 6 months while a Research Scholar's program can last for a minimum of 3 weeks and as long as 5 years.

### ***What academic credentials does a J-1 Scholar need?***

Research scholars are expected to have appropriate academic or similar credentials. The Department of State has not specified minimum academic levels. However, generally a prospective exchange visitor or researcher should have at least a bachelor's degree with appropriate experience in the field of endeavor.

### ***What does this mean for WCU's J-1 Scholar program?***

WCU will require at least a bachelor's degree for the J-1 research scholar. Exceptions to this rule can be made if a person's skill or experience is extraordinary and the person will engage in appropriate program activities. Examples of this might be an accomplished artist or musician without a traditional bachelor's degree, or someone with more than 12 years of full-time experience in the field of endeavor.

### ***Is there an English language proficiency requirement?***

The Department of State requires that "The exchange visitor possesses sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in his or her program." The Department continues to find that too many exchange visitors lack sufficient English proficiency to perform their jobs or complete their academic programs; to navigate daily life in the United States; to read and comprehend program materials; to understand fully their responsibilities, rights, and protections; and to know how to obtain assistance. This requirement is mandatory before the issuance of the form DS-2019.

### ***Can a J-1 Scholar enroll in course credits?***

There is no regulation that prohibits a visiting scholar enrolling in class as long as the classes are incidental to his or her primary activity, the scholar continues to pursue the objectives for which he or she came, and the program continues to fulfill the objectives of the scholar category. A J-1 scholar should never be admitted to a degree-seeking program or enroll in classes on a full-time basis. If enrollment in classes or a degree program will become the primary activity, the scholar should change his/her visa classification before engaging in a full-time degree-seeking program.

***What is the 6-month bar?***

Anyone who has been on a J program (as a student/dependent/scholar) during the previous 12 months for 6 months or more is not eligible to begin a new J program in the Research Scholar/Professor category until 6 months have passed from the end of the previous J visa program. The only exception is someone who has been in Short-Term Scholar status or someone who is going to be in Short-Term Scholar status.

***What is the 2-year home residency requirement and can it be waived?***

The Department of State determines who will have to return home for 2 years after the J-1 program is completed. This determination is made based on government funding and/or the Exchange Visitor Skills List. This determination is noted on the visa and is sometimes incorrectly marked, therefore anyone who is interested in more information about the 2-year home residency requirement should see an advisor in GEO for more information.

***What is the J-1 health insurance requirement?***

J-1 visa holders and their dependents must have health insurance coverage at all times.

The health insurance must cover the following minimums:

- \$100,000USD per accident or illness
- \$50,000USD for medical evacuation<sup>3</sup>
- \$25,000USD for repatriation<sup>4</sup>
- Maximum \$500 deductible per accident or illness
- Include inpatient and outpatient coverage for sickness and accidents
- Worldwide coverage

Scholars who are officially employed by WCU may already have this coverage. Scholars who are not official WCU employees will need to secure these types of coverage for themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> Medical evacuation is coverage for transportation of the insured person back to the home country as recommended by the attending physician for medical reasons.

<sup>4</sup> Repatriation is coverage for transportation of the insured person's remains back to the home country in the event of death.



## **FORMS**

1. Scholar REQUEST (DS2019)
2. Scholar Invitation Letter TEMPLATE
3. Scholar NOTICE OF DEPARTURE

## DS-2019 REQUEST FORM

To ensure accuracy, please print. Include a copy of your passport; the name on the DS-2019 Form must match your passport.

### VISITING SCHOLAR INFORMATION

Family name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F

City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

**FOREIGN ADDRESS (WHERE YOU CURRENTLY RESIDE)** *A Form DS-2019 cannot be generated unless we have your foreign address.*

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Province/State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Is this the

address to which you prefer your DS2019 Form to be sent? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, please indicate the mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Are you married? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (please proceed to page 2)

If "Yes", will your spouse and/or children join you?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, they will join me now. (Please complete Dependent information on page 4.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, they will join me after I get settled. (Please complete Dependent the information on page 4.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I am married but my dependents will **not** join me. (Proceed to page 2)

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

1. Category for which you are applying:

\_\_\_\_\_ Research Scholar                  \_\_\_\_\_ Short-term Scholar                  \_\_\_\_\_ Visiting Professor

2. Have you ever previously been sponsored on a J-1 Visa?    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what Category?    \_\_\_\_\_ Research Scholar                  \_\_\_\_\_ Short-term Scholar    \_\_\_\_\_ Visiting Professor

If yes, list dates of previous J-1 Program: Start: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Occupation/Position in Home Country: \_\_\_\_\_

4. WCU Academic Department sponsoring your visit: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name of contact in WCU Academic Department: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Subject/Field of research while at WCU: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Brief Description of activities:  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY** 22 CFR 62.10(a)(2)

The U.S. Department of State required that the visiting scholar possess sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language. Therefore, WCU must verify an applicant’s English language proficiency through a recognized English Language test prior to the issuance of the Form DS-2019. The Department of State requires that evidence such as the score report be retained so that it may be available to the Department upon request. Please forward your score report to: [international@wcupa.edu](mailto:international@wcupa.edu)

**HEALTH INSURANCE** 22 CFR 62.14

All J1/J2 visa holders are required by federal regulation to carry sufficient health insurance at all times during their stay in the U.S. Scholars are asked to verify their health insurance coverage shortly after arrival. For more information on health insurance, please visit: <https://www.isoa.org>

- \$100,000USD per accident or illness
- \$50,000USD for medical evacuation<sup>5</sup>
- \$25,000USD for repatriation<sup>6</sup>
- Maximum \$500 deductible per accident or illness
- Include inpatient and outpatient coverage for sickness and accidents • Worldwide coverage

I understand that I must provide my English language score report to [international@wcupa.edu](mailto:international@wcupa.edu) prior to the issuance of the Form DS-2019. In addition, I understand that I am required to purchase health insurance and that if I have any dependents who will join me in the U.S., that they too must have health insurance.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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<sup>5</sup> Medical evacuation is coverage for transportation of the insured person back to the home country as recommended by the attending physician for medical reasons.

<sup>6</sup> Repatriation is coverage for transportation of the insured person’s remains back to the home country in the event of death.

**DEPENDENT INFORMATION**

If the participant will be accompanied by family, please provide the following details for each accompanying family member. If additional spaces are needed, please attach additional copies of the last page.

**Relationship:**  **Husband**  **Wife**  **Child**

Family name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  M  F

City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship:**  **Husband**  **Wife**  **Child**

Family name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  M  F

City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE: J-1 VISITING SCHOLAR INVITATION LETTER**  
**(Final letter on official WCU Provost letterhead)**

[Name of visiting scholar]  
[Address of visiting scholar]

Dear [Name of visiting scholar]:

On behalf of the [inviting department], I would like to formally invite you to West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCU) as a visiting [*choose one: professor / research scholar / short-term scholar*] from [month, day, year] to [month, day, year].

[Name and title] will be your faculty host during your time at WCU and will work with you as you engage in the following activities at WCU:

**[Describe in detail the individual or collaborative research/teaching, presentations and other activities; specify the academic field of research and specific courses which will be taught (as applicable).**

You [will / will not] receive any [stipend / salary] from WCU or any other U.S. entity. [*If a stipend or salary is offered, the exact amount must be stated in this letter and arrangements must be made through the Human Resources*]. You will be responsible for finding your own housing accommodations and providing your own room and board. [*If you are able to offer assistance in these areas, please specify the services you will provide; if a meal plan is included in the offer, indicate a U.S. dollar value*].

During your time at WCU, the following support and resources will be made available to you:

**[Describe in detail what will/will not be made available; example: You will be allowed to audit (without pay) three to four classes per semester (without credit or certificate). You will be provided with a shared office, phone, computer and all the facilities granted to faculty members including invitations to our department meetings and seminars.]**

Angela Howard, RO from the Global Engagement Office at WCU will assist you with your visa application and immigration procedures. If you have questions or concerns regarding immigration matters, please contact Ms. Howard directly via email: [ahoward@wcupa.edu](mailto:ahoward@wcupa.edu) or telephone: +001-610-436-3515.

We look forward to welcoming you to WCU. I am certain that you will have a productive and rewarding experience and we will gain much from your presence on campus. Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional assistance.

Sincerely,  
[Signature of Provost]  
[Name, Title]



Global Engagement Office | West Chester University | West Chester, PA 19383  
610-436-3515 | fax: 610-436-3426 | wcupa.edu/international

### J-1 NOTICE OF DEPARTURE

First Name:	Last Name:
WCUID:	SEVIS ID number:
E-mail:	Alternate E-mail:

**Departing the United States and ending current J-1 Program.**

If you are in the Research Scholar or Professor category, you will not be able to begin a new program in the Research Scholar or Professor category for the next two years.

End date of activity at WCU: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Date of departure from the United States.: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Keep your DS-2019(s) in a safe place! The GEO does not retain copies of all your documents. If you wish to return to the United States in the future, you may need to provide copies of your DS-2019(s).**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_