FAQs for Scholars (J-1 and H-1B)

International Scholar COVID-19 Information

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Getting Help from OISS

The OISS advising staff are working full-time remotely since the International Center is temporarily closed. Please contact your adviser directly to set up a phone call or Zoom appointment. Whenever possible OISS will be working with uploaded documents (please only correspond with PDF documents.) Should there be an urgent situation that requires an in-person meeting please discuss with your adviser. Staff are taking turns coming in to OISS daily – but you must set an appointment with your adviser in advance. Please note that getting a new travel signature on your DS-2019 is not necessary to leave the U.S. OISS can send you a new DS-2019 at the point you decide/you are able to return to New Haven.

J-1 Scholars at Yale who are not able to go home

Q: I planned to end my time at Yale and go home, but now I can’t. What should I do?

A: Please contact your home country embassy or consulate in the U.S. to let them know your situation. You may use the website here to find foreign consulates in the U.S. [3]

Also, please work with your Yale host department to see if you can extend your time at Yale temporarily. To extend your J visa you will need to have extended health insurance, funding at the Yale minimum levels and an extended academic appointment. The university is committed to assisting international scholars however we can, including making special arrangements whenever possible.

Q: My department cannot extend my stay – what should I do?

A: If you have not already, please contact your OISS adviser. OISS is working with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and various Dean’s Offices in order to explore ways in which the university might allow special extension provisions. In extreme cases it may be necessary to change visa status, and/or discuss other options with an immigration attorney. Please start by connecting with your OISS advisor.

Q: I have a Short-Term Scholar J visa only good for 6 months, but need more time – what do I do?

A: In some cases, OISS has been able to petition the U.S. State Department to make a special exception and allow Short Term Scholars to change to J-1 Research Scholars, which allow for more time. Please contact your OISS adviser to discuss. To process this type of request, OISS would need evidence of:

- An extended Yale academic appointment
- An explanation of how the research or teaching continues the original objective
- Extended funding at the same minimum amounts
- Extended health insurance
- Evidence that travel home is not possible at this time
- A payment of $367 to the U.S. State Department (paid by the department or the scholar)
J-1 Scholars at Yale departing/returning home early

Please coordinate any early departure (leaving before the end of your appointment / DS-2019 end date) with your Yale department. Once a departure plan has been established, please contact your OISS adviser [1] to confirm so that we can update your record with the government. It is important to report early departures to prevent difficulties in returning to the U.S. at a later time.

J-1 Scholars who have not yet arrived in the U.S.

Note: U.S State Department Suspending Embassy Appointments (3.18.2020) [4]

Given the state of the COVID-19 outbreak, the resulting uncertainties, Yale University guidance [5], and after careful review with the Office of the Provost, OISS is instituting the following protocols for J-1 scholars who have not yet arrived in the U.S.

Q: I was issued my J-1 DS-2019. Can I come to Yale right away?

A: No. The university is now delaying all start dates until at least June 1st, 2020. We will not mail out a new DS-2019 until closer to that date given travel restrictions and embassy closings. This will keep the Department of Homeland Security record active so that you will not need to pay the SEVIS fee again.

Q: I already received my J visa stamp, will now I have to apply for a new one?

A: No. If you have your J-1 visa stamp, please check how long it is valid for. In most cases you will not need to re-apply to a U.S. embassy or consulate, even though your arrival date will change (to June 1st at the earliest.)

Q: I just recently arrived in the U.S. with my new J-1 status. What should I do now?

A: Please send a brief email to Nathan Duddles [6] informing him that you have arrived so that we can do record keeping related to your J status. Next, please reach out to your department to see when you might be able to begin your appointment at Yale. Note: People coming from some countries may be asked to self-isolate before being able to begin their appointment at Yale. Please read any Yale Health updates here [5].

Q: My department at Yale is just starting to set up my new appointment (I don’t have a J-1 DS-2019.) Is there anything I should do now?

A: No. Yale departments will continue making new J-1 visa requests to OISS. OISS will process all requests, but amend the start dates to be June 1st or later. Your department may ask you for further documentation in the process of requesting a DS-2019.

Q: I need to make my travel plans in advance. Can I go ahead and plan on arriving on June 1st?

A: That is not advisable at this time since global events are changing daily. Please check with your Yale department about any arrival plans, even after June 1st. OISS will update our website as soon as we learn of any new protocols for visitors coming from outside the U.S.

Q: If I have decided to not come to Yale, is there anything I need to do?

A: Yes, please notify your Yale department, and send an email to Nathan Duddles [6].

H-1B Employees Needing an Extension of Time

Unfortunately an H-1B extension [7] is no quicker than a new H-1B, which takes about four months when there are no disruptions in the government. Given that we are now facing many changes to procedures related to COVID-19 it is best that scholars discuss options with their OISS adviser [1] directly.