

## Applying for the J-1 Student Visa

### When to Apply

You must apply for your visa well in advance of your arrival, as it can in some instances take several weeks and occasionally longer, to obtain the J-1 student visa.

Although J-1 and J-2 exchange visitors may be issued visas at any time before the beginning of their programs, OISS can only start the process to issue your immigration document after you accept your offer of admission and we receive your student record from your Yale school, which usually does not happen until March in most cases. Check the website of the consulate where you will apply for a visa for detailed instructions.

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### Pre-Application Checklist

Before you begin the visa application process, you must have the following documents:

#### [DS-2019 Form](#)

This will be sent to you in the mail from OISS after you have been admitted. Your original DS-2019 is required when applying for a J-1 student visa at an American embassy or consulate and for entry into the United States. This DS-2019 has been produced by Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and is an acknowledgement that your record is in the SEVIS system. The form includes your SEVIS ID number, which is the number in the upper corner above the bar code, (usually starts with an N).

#### [SEVIS Fee Receipt](#)

All new students coming in J-1 status must pay a one-time SEVIS fee prior to applying for your visa, and must submit the SEVIS fee receipt as part of their application. [You can find instructions about paying the fee on this page](#) [1].

#### [DS-2019 Forms for Spouse and Dependent Children](#)

Each J-2 dependent is issued an DS-2019 and has their own SEVIS ID. Additional SEVIS fees **do not** need to be paid for dependents.

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## The Application Process

### [1. Complete the DS-160](#)

The first step in applying for a U.S. visa is the online application DS-160. This application must be **submitted** several days prior to your visa interview date. If not submitted early enough to provide time for new screening processes, your appointment date may be canceled or delayed.

Access the DS-160 application at the [Consular Electronic Application Center website](#) [2].

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[Watch an overview](#) [3] of the online application process.

Read [Frequently Asked Questions about the DS-160](#) [4].

### Tips for Filling Out Your DS-160

Below are suggested answers you are welcome to use when you fill out this form. Please be aware that you are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of information you provide in this form.

#### U.S. Address or Point of Contact

- Use your department contact person's contact information and department address
- Or, use your [OISS adviser's](#) [5] contact info and OISS's address (421 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06511 Tel: 203-432-2305)

#### Address Where You Will Stay in the U.S.

If you know where you will stay, use that address. If you have not yet secured your housing at the time of your visa appointment you may choose one of the below:

- The address where you will stay is the University's address as listed on your I-20/DS-2019.
- Use your department or school's address. For Yale College, use 1 Hillhouse Ave, New Haven CT 06511.

#### Person/Entity Paying for Your Trip

List your primary source of funding as it appears on your I-20/DS-2019.

## [2. Schedule a Visa Interview Appointment](#)

The next step in applying for a U.S. visa is making an appointment at your closest U.S. embassy or consulate. At this appointment you will need to present the following documents:

- Your DS-2019 form
- The SEVIS Fee receipt (I-901)
- Your DS-160 confirmation page
- A copy of your financial support documents, i.e. evidence that you have sufficient funds to meet the expenses of studying at Yale, e.g. bank statement, financial aid award letter.
- A valid passport
- Passport-size photographs (that you uploaded in the DS-160 application)
- Completed required visa application forms (available on the U.S. consular websites.)

Check the website of the U.S. consulate/embassy where you are applying to see if there are other requirements.

An application fee and an interview will also be required. There have been (and continue to be) changes in the visa application process and these changes are usually reflected on the consular websites.

- [Find the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy](#) [6].
- [Find the visa appointment wait times at your local consulate](#) [7].

## [3. Attend Your Interview](#)

A student visa interview will be short, averaging 5 minutes. Questions will be focused on your academic plans and

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how they connect to your future career goals. Officers are also looking at how you plan to pay for your education and living expenses. You should be ready to explain in your own words why you chose Yale, how your studies will advance your career goals, and if relevant, provide a realistic plan for paying back student loans which demonstrates that you do not need to rely on future long term U.S. employment. You should avoid rehearsed or memorized answers and approach the interview as a conversation about your personal plans.

If the officer informs you that your application has been denied, ask for clarification and a written decision before you leave. This can be crucial information for understanding your next options. Note that some denials are only procedural in order to facilitate administrative processing and background checks.

[Here are additional points to remember when applying for a non-immigrant visa.](#) [8]

Insert when available: Recording link to a Pre-Arrival call on this topic.

Coming in late April 2025: OISS will present a Pre-Arrival online event on the topic of preparing for your visa interview. Students who have already received their immigration document prior to the event will be invited to attend, and a recording will be posted here when it becomes available.

### [4. Receive and Review your Entry Visa](#)

Check the visa in your passport to make sure that all the information on it is correct. If the information is not correct it can only be changed at the embassy or consulate that issued your visa.

Your DS-2019 should be returned to you. You will need it to [enter the U.S.](#) [9]

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## Special Notes

When applying for your student visa, pay careful attention to the following.

### [Timing Your Arrival to the U.S.](#)

You may enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 day before and no later than 30 days after to the starting date noted on the DS-2019 form (item #3). However if you cannot arrive in the U.S. by your starting date, you must get academic permission to arrive late. To start this process, please [get in touch with OISS.](#) [10]

### [Expiring Visas](#)

The expiration date on your visa may not match the end date of your degree program. If your visa expires before you complete your degree program, you will apply for a new visa on your first trip outside the U.S. after your current visa expires.

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## A Final Note

If the U.S. consulate has any questions regarding your studies at Yale, please [contact OISS](#) [5]. If your visa application is delayed or denied for any reason, please email your [OISS adviser](#) [11] immediately. Safe travels and we look forward to meeting you when you arrive in New Haven!

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### Source

URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/getting-started/new-students/applying-for-your-us-visa/applying-for-the-j-1-student-visa>

### Links

[1] <https://oiss.yale.edu/getting-started/new-students/applying-for-your-us-visa/applying-for-a-j-1-visa/paying-the-sevis-fee> [2] <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> [3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLxSobebKF0> [4] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application/ds-160-faqs.html> [5] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss> [6] <https://www.usembassy.gov/> [7] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html> [8] <https://www.nafsa.org/professional-resources/browse-by-interest/10-points-remember-when-applying-student-visa> [9] <https://oiss.yale.edu/getting-started/new-students/travel-arrival/arriving-in-the-us-immigration-inspection> [10] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss> [11] <https://oiss.yale.edu/node/1286>