
Maintaining Status for J-1 Scholars

It is your responsibility as either a J-1 or J-2 visa holder to follow all visa regulations and maintain legal U.S. immigration status. Failure to follow J visa regulations may have serious long-term consequences for your immigration status in the U.S. Here are simple steps you can take to ensure that your stay in the U.S. remains valid.

New Scholars

See the [Getting Started](#) [1] section for information specifically for new scholars, such as how to sign up for your [Virtual Orientation Session](#) [2], as well as [what to do in your first two weeks at Yale](#) [3] It is especially important that you complete the [New Scholar Check-in in MyOISS](#) [4].

Spouses & Dependents

If your spouse or dependent children will be accompanying you to the U.S., [learn more about J-2 visas here](#) [5].

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Expand All

General Requirements

The following sections provide some of the basic information you need to maintain your J-1 scholar status.

[Report any Address or Phone Changes](#)

You must maintain the following information during your J-1 program. **Any changes must be reported to your program sponsor within 10 days of the change.**

- U.S. residential address
- phone number
- email

If your J-1 is sponsored under Yale's J-1 program, you are required to [update this information in MyOISS](#) [6]. If you are sponsored by an outside entity, you must contact your J-1 sponsor to report this information.

[Make Sure Your Immigration Documents are Accurate and Up-to-Date](#)

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In addition to maintaining a valid passport, you must also be aware of the validity of your J-1 U.S. immigration status. This is not your visa expiration date in your passport; it is the program end/expected completion date on your DS-2019 form and I-94 record. Remember the visa expiration date in your passport might be different than the program end date on your DS-2019.

[Report Any Changes to the Information on Your DS-2019](#)

The form DS-2019 is a legal immigration document. If any of the information below changes, notify OISS through a MyOISS request. Once the update has been confirmed by OISS, a new DS-2019 will be issued and accessible through your MyOISS record.

- Name correction (section 1)
- Work address (section 1)
- Start date - you may not start your Yale appointment before the start date on the DS-2019.
- Expiration/ extension (section 3)- The end date on your DS-2019 should never expire while you hold an appointment at Yale. Take a moment to note the expiration date, mark it in your calendar, and remember to request an extension if you will stay longer. A request for extension must be initiated through the Yale host department and submitted to OISS at least 30 days before current expiration (Be sure you understand the maximum duration of your J-1 category.)
- Yale appointment title (section 4)
- Funding amount and source (section 5) - This amount is cumulative and reflects your total funding. This is the only activity you are permitted to be paid for is the one described here. You must consult OISS in advance if you wish to take up any other work during your stay, see information about [incidental employment](#) [7] for instructions.

[Maintain Full-Time Employment According to Your Program Objective](#)

The purpose of your time at Yale is described on your DS-2019 (research, study, teaching, etc.). To maintain your status, you must adhere to this original objective and must make progress to the successful completion of these goals. Your employment in the U.S. is limited to the activity and location on the DS-2019. For more information go to [Employment for J-1 Scholars](#) [8]. If there are any changes contact [your OISS adviser](#) [9].

[Keep Your Passport Valid for Up to 6 Months into the Future](#)

Your passport should be valid for a minimum of six months in the future. Some countries have an agreement with the U.S. that [automatically extends passport validity for 6 months](#) [10], for U.S. entry purposes only. Passports can be renewed by your embassy or consulate in Washington D.C., New York or Boston.

[Report a Lost or Stolen Passport](#)

If your passport is lost or stolen, be sure to obtain a police report for your records, and notify your home country consulate. You will need to obtain a replacement as soon as possible and can connect with your [OISS adviser](#) [11] about any additional concerns. Replacing a visa requires travel outside the U.S. and an appointment at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.

[Keep Copies/Files of All Immigration-Related Documents](#)

Save copies of ALL immigration documents you are given throughout the duration of your studies or research in the U.S. You may need them in the future:

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- to document your employment history and your compliance with U.S. immigration regulations
- for future USCIS and/or visa applications

Organizing digital copies of these documents is easy with Google Drive, iCloud, Box.com, or many other electronic options. It is a good idea to keep all original DS-2019s forms as you may need them in the future.

[Check Your I-94 Record Every Time You Enter the U.S.](#)

Every non-immigrant entering the U.S. will be issued a [Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record](#) [12] by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The data is entered at the port of entry and the I-94 confirms that you have been admitted to the U.S. in a specific visa status, and for a duration of time.

Be sure to check your I-94 record every time you enter the U.S. to make sure there are no errors. Remember to download and print a new I-94 record each time you exit and return to the U.S. The I-94 record is your evidence that you entered the U.S. legally, so it is important to keep the most current printed version with your passport at all times. [Learn more about the I-94 here](#) [13].

[Maintain Specific Health Insurance Coverage](#)

All J visa holders (including you and each family member) are required to have [specific health insurance coverage](#) [14] as determined by the U.S. Department of State. Willful disregard of these requirements will result in termination of your program and your J-1 status.

[English Proficiency](#)

All J-1 Exchange Visitors are required by the Department of State to have sufficient proficiency in the English language to successfully participate in their academic program and to function on a day-to-day basis in the United States. In arranging for your DS-2019 and J-1 visa you provided proof that you met this requirement.

Some scholars, upon arrival, find they need English language support to get started. There are many resources at Yale and in the New Haven Community for your English language proficiency. See our [English Conversation Groups page](#) [15] for more information about Yale and local programs.

[Spouse or Dependent Child\(ren\)](#)

The dependents (spouse or partner, and children under 21 years of age) of the J-1 scholar are eligible for J-2 status and may use this status to accompany the J-1 scholar to the U.S.

If the dependents are traveling with the scholar upon their initial entry, this must be conveyed by the host department when requesting the initial DS-2019 form. Be sure that the host department has the necessary information.

If the dependents will be joining the scholar after their arrival, a DS-2019 must be requested from OISS for each of them in MyOISS.

OISS will contact you when the new DS-2019 forms are ready for you to send to your family members. See the [J-2 Visas for Dependents](#) [5] page for more details, and contact your [OISS adviser](#) [11] with any questions.

[Learn more about J-2 visas here](#) [5].

Understanding Your J-1 Status

[Understand J-1 Status](#)

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of State (DOS). The program was founded in 1961 to encourage and promote cross-cultural activities to give participants the opportunity to learn about U.S. society and culture. Yale's Exchange Visitor Program is reviewed by the DOS every two years.

What J-1 Cannot Be Used For

The J-1 visa cannot be used for ladder-track or tenured appointments nor for Managerial and Professional (M&P) or Clerical and Technical (C&T) positions. It also does not allow any clinical activities or patient care except in the most limited circumstances and only with review and authorization by Yale OISS.

M.D. Scholars

Yale's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program does not allow any patient care or clinical activities without express permission from Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) and then under the most limited of circumstances. International medical graduates often use the J-1 visa sponsorship of the [Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates](#) [16] for clinical residency and fellowships.

U.S Department of State Resources

To learn more about the J Exchange Visitor Program, please read the U.S. Department of State's [Welcome Brochure](#) [17]. You can also watch [this short video](#) [18] or read [the information posted on their website](#) [19].

The Office of Private Sector Exchange Administration Academic and Government Programs (OPA-AG) monitors and enforces full compliance with Department regulations and policies with a focus on exchange visitor's health, safety, and well-being; and responds to complaints and incidents. At any point before coming to Yale, or during the program, scholars should feel free to contact the DOS using the information below:

- Telephone: (866) 283-9090
- Email: agalert@state.gov [20]

Cultural Exchange Opportunities

The cross-cultural component of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program gives participants the opportunity to learn about U.S. society and culture, as well as share their personal and personal perspectives with their Yale colleagues. In addition to your academic goals, Yale invites you to participate in the many cultural and social events offered around campus, including at OISS. Whether you are seeking an English language discussion partner or want to join a Speed-Friending event with other postdocs or visiting researchers, OISS offers [countless opportunities](#) [21] to network and socialize with the Yale community.

[Understand Your J-1 Scholar Category](#)

There are different categories of the J-1 Exchange Visitor program categories that facilitate study, training, research, and teaching, among others. While all categories adhere to some of the general J-1 requirements, each category has different maximum durations, funding requirements, and other specific requirements. For more information, look at the J-1 category below a specific title at [Visa Options for International Faculty and Researchers](#) [22]. Make certain you understand the requirements of your particular J-1 category.

Research Scholar/Professor

This J-1 Exchange Visitor category has a minimum stay of three weeks and a maximum continuous stay of five

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years (the five-year maximum stay for a J-1 research scholar/professor). The five-year “clock” begins with the start date on the Form DS-2019 and 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 Yale, the initial DS-2019 will be issued for the duration of the academic appointment and can be extended for the duration of the Yale appointment up to a maximum of five years. However, when the program at Yale is completed so is the J-1 status unless the scholar transfers immediately to another J-1 sponsor (see the “Transferring & Leaving Yale” section below).

Paid employment for J-1 research scholars or professors is permitted only if it is described on form DS-2019 issued to the J-1 visa holder. In most cases, a J-1 visa holder can't accept paid employment outside of Yale. However, there is a provision that allows for occasional lectures, if the permission is requested and granted by OISS before the event. Please [contact an adviser in OISS](#) [11] for details.

Research Scholar/Professor Category and the 12- and 24-Month Bars

There are restrictions that make some individuals ineligible to use the Research Scholar or Professor J-1 category, such as being subject to the 12- and 24-month bars (see the “12- and 24-Month Bars” section below).

Short-Term Scholar

The J-1 Short-Term Scholar category can be used when the academic objective for the visit can be completed within six months or less. This J category is often used for lectures, observations, consultations, or to participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, or professional meetings. The J-1 Short-Term Scholar may return to the U.S. again for a new Short-Term Scholar stay provided there is a substantial break in between and each visit constitutes a new objective. An advantage of using the Short-Term Scholar J-1 category is that the visitor may also return to the U.S. for a longer-term stay using the J-1 Research Scholar/Professor category without being subject to the 12- and 24-month bars (see the “12- and 24-Month Bars” section below).

Specialist

Specialists, for J-1 purposes, are defined as individuals who are experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skill coming to the U.S. to observe, consult, or demonstrate their special skills. A specialist may not fill a permanent or long-term position of employment while in the U.S.

This category is not intended for experts covered by the research scholar, professor, short-term scholar, or foreign physician in graduate medical education or training categories. The maximum period of stay is one year.

[Two-Year Home Country Residence Requirement](#)

Some Exchange Visitors are subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement. It requires you to return home for at least two years after your exchange visitor program ends. This 'two-year residence' requirement, which is explained on the back of your DS-2019, applies to you if you meet one of the following:

- **Receive Specific Funding:** You receive any funding (including nominal travel grants) from your home government or if you are named in a U.S. government grant or fellowship specifically designed for exchange.
- **On the EV Skills List:** The [Exchange Visitor's Skills List](#) [23] is a list of fields that have been identified by your home government as being in short supply. If your field is listed on the skills list for your home country you may be subject to this requirement.
- **Medical Training:** Your J status is sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates.

Check the [Exchange Visitor Skills List](#) [24] if you are not certain whether your country and/or field appear on this list.

At the conclusion of a J-1 program, the exchange visitor who is subject to this requirement must reside for an aggregate of two years (24 months) in their “home” country (see the 'Waivers of Two-Year Residency & Advisory

Opinions' section below) before being eligible for (1) an immigrant visa of adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident status; (2) an H temporary worker, L intracompany transfer) or (3) K (fiance) visas. Persons subject to the two-year home country residence requirement can return to the U.S. during this period in most other nonimmigrant statuses, including tourist status or on another J visa.

If you are considering applying for a waiver of the two-year home residency, please read the 'Waivers of Two-Year Residency & Advisory Opinions' section below for guidance. Speak to your [OISS adviser](#) [11] before you apply for any Waivers or Advisory Opinions.

[Waivers of Two-Year Residency Requirement & Advisory Opinions](#)

Waivers

Yale sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors considering an application for a waiver of the two-year home residency requirement [must meet with their OISS adviser](#) [11] before beginning the application process, so they can plan the entire process, including possible next steps switching to H-1B status. OISS will not be able to extend J-1 status once a waiver has been received, and/or you may no longer be eligible to transfer to another J-1 sponsor, so the **first step in applying for a waiver is normally to extend your DS-2019 to the end of your appointment**. International travel may also affect your waiver application.

Why Might You Need a Waiver?

J-1 visa holders are expected to complete their research, teaching or study objective within the time allowed on the J-1 visa. The two-year home residency rule enforces this expectation. On occasion a student or scholar's objective changes during their time on the J visa. If this is your situation, and you have identified that you are subject to the two year home residency rule, then you may need to request a waiver.

There are many different types of waivers, depending on how you are subject to the residency requirement. For example if your J visa was sponsored by a U.S. funding agency such as Fulbright, or if you were sponsored by the ECFMG, then the waiver process is different, and in some cases not possible.

Timeline & Overview of the Waiver Process

Waiver applications may take 12 months or longer* to be approved, depending on the circumstances. There are [five bases for a waiver application](#) [25] and not all are available to every J-1 Exchange Visitor. The most frequent basis is being on the [Exchange Visitor Skills List](#) [23] for their home country. Most but not all Exchange Visitors will seek a waiver based on a 'No Objection' statement from their home country.

The [U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Exchange Visitor website](#) [26] will guide you through the waiver process. The waiver application is a personal application and OISS advisers are not able to advise you on application details. Please review the steps carefully before starting the process.

Please note: Once an individual is notified that the U.S. Department of State (DoS) has sent a favorable recommendation that the waiver of the two-year home residency requirement be granted, per DOS the J-1 "exchange visitor is no longer considered eligible for an extension of program beyond the end date shown on the current DS-2019, even though they may not have completed the maximum duration of participation permitted for the category."

When the Department of State approves your request, a recommendation letter will be sent to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The final waiver, Form I-612, will be mailed to you from USCIS and is required for any change of immigration status application, such as moving to H-1B or U.S. Permanent Residency.

Advisory Opinions

An advisory opinion is a request to the Department of State's Waiver Review Division as to whether you are subject

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to the two-year home residency requirement or not. You should only request an advisory opinion after you have discussed your J status with your [OISS adviser](#) [27].

The [Advisory Opinion request](#) [28] includes a cover letter explaining why they believe they are not subject to the two-year home residency requirement, legible copies of all DS-2019 or IAP-66 forms, copies of all J-1 visa stamps from U.S. embassies (except for Canadian citizens) and in some cases evidence of funding received during their J-1 visa. This process may take 3 to 4 months.

**Processing times may vary and change at any time.*

[12- and 24-Month Bars](#)

The 12- and 24-month bars are different from the two-year home country residence requirement. The 12- and 24-month rule affects J-1 exchange visitors who have been in the U.S. on a J-1 visa previously and wish to return, using the J-1 Research Scholar. Any indication below that there is no “wait time” refers only to the 12- and 24-month bars. A J-1 visitor may have no wait time related to the 12- and 24-month bars - but is still subject to the two-year home residency requirement.

The bars prohibit certain “repeat participation” in the Research Scholar or Professor categories only. Depending on what your previous J category was, you may be subject to a 12-month bar, a 24-month bar or have no bar at all. Go to the [Understanding the 12 and 24 Month Bars](#) [29] page to see how long you would have to wait (the 12- or 24-month bar) before you could obtain a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor visa based on what your previous J status was. If you have never had J-1 visa sponsorship, then the bars do not apply to you.

Changes to Your Current Immigration Status or Category

See the sections below for specific examples of changes to report. Talk to your [OISS adviser](#) [11] if you are planning to change to another non-immigrant status or if you become a permanent resident (‘green card’).

[Extending Your Status](#)

To request an extension of your J-1 status up to the [maximum period allowable](#) [30] under the regulations, you must initiate your request **through your department**. You cannot initiate this request directly with OISS. The extension process (including obtaining a new DS-2019) must be completed before your current DS-2019 expires.

For more information, please [see our page on extensions](#) [30].

[Finishing or Ending Program Earlier than Expected](#)

Inform your OISS adviser if you will be ending your program more than 15 days before the end date on your DS-2019.

[Transferring & Leaving Yale](#)

A J-1 Exchange Visitor may change employers or schools, which is referred to as a “transfer.” They may transfer from one designated Exchange Visitor program to another designated program provided the J-1 time does not exceed the maximum permitted by their J-1 category (e.g. a Research Scholar J-1 category has 5 years.)

J-1 scholars intending to transfer to another program should discuss their plans with their [OISS adviser](#) [11], as well as with the international office (not just the hiring department) of the new school or employer, to make sure that the required transfer procedure can be accomplished. The transfer is processed through an update in the J-1 scholar's

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SEVIS record and must be completed prior to the end date as noted on the form DS-2019 or at the end of the Yale appointment. There can not be any gap in time between the two programs.

Scholars leaving Yale and transferring to another J-1 program must inform OISS of their intention to transfer to another J-1 program by filling out the [Transfer Release Form](#) [31] and uploading it to a “J-1 Scholar Transfer Out” request in their MyOISS account.

See the [Transferring & Leaving Yale](#) [32] page for more details and specific instructions.

[Taking a Leave of Absence](#)

Scholars may travel abroad throughout their stay at Yale. An extended absence from campus must be in accordance with their Yale academic appointment agreement and their original exchange program objectives. Scholars should contact their departments regarding more detailed information on leave of absence.

If you are considering a leave of absence, you must [consult with your OISS adviser](#) [11] before making your final decision. In most instances, you may not remain in the U.S. in J-1 or F-1 student status during a leave of absence, so you will need to either depart the U.S. in a timely manner or decide and make arrangements to obtain another non-immigrant status.

[Leave the U.S. Before the Expiration of your Immigration Status](#)

J-1 scholars and their J-2 dependents must depart the U.S. within 30 days of their DS-2019 expiration date or program completion date, whichever is earlier.

Leaving Yale

Read the [Leaving Yale](#) [33] page for helpful general information on leaving Yale.

Report Early Departures

Inform your [OISS adviser](#) [11] if you will be ending your program more than 15 days before the end date on your DS-2019.

Understanding Your Grace Period

This additional 30-day period is **NOT** for employment or study. If you travel outside the U.S. during your 30-day grace period, you forfeit the remaining grace period and **may not** re-enter the U.S. under J-1 status.

Please speak to your [OISS adviser](#) [11] if you have any questions about the grace period.

Employment and Tax-Related Requirements

[Work Only For Your Program](#)

In general, the only employment permitted is the activity (and location) listed on your DS-2019 form. Working remotely may have consequences for your immigration status. Be aware of [Yale's policies](#) [34] and be sure to discuss your situation with your [OISS adviser](#) [11] before making any decisions.

Scholars should not accept any new employment without first checking with OISS. This includes any kind of compensation (money, gift cards, etc...) for services, including clinical trials, guest lectures and in some cases

earnings from editorial work or royalties from publications. You may be reimbursed for expenses (such as hotels, trains, planes and meals) without needing any special permission.

Incidental Activities: Occasional Lectures & Short-Term Engagements (Professor/Research Scholar & Short-Term Scholar Categories Only)

Beyond the program objective as stated on the DS-2019 form, the only permissible employment for J-1 scholars is an occasional lecturer or short-term consultation. The authorization for this additional employment must be obtained from OISS prior to the beginning of the lecture or consultation. If approved, your OISS adviser Your J-1 Responsible Officer will issue this approval letter for work authorization. The inviting organization will need a copy of this letter in order to pay you an honorarium. You should also keep a copy for your permanent record.

OISS may grant work authorization for the occasional lecture or short-term consultation if eligible, but you may engage in such activity only with prior written approval. Your J-1 Responsible Officer will issue this approval letter for work authorization.

If sponsored by OISS, you must [submit the J-1 Occasional Lecture/Short Term Consultation Application Form](#) [35] via MyOISS in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

If your J-1 sponsor is an external agency or organization, you will need permission from this organization.

A request for authorization to engage in an occasional lecture or short-term consultation will be possible only if the proposed activity:

- Is directly related to the objectives of your Exchange Visitor program.
- Is incidental to your primary program activities.
- Will not delay the completion of your Exchange Visitor program.
- Is documented in SEVIS.
- You must be employed as an independent contractor as defined by [8 C.F.R. § 274a.1\(j\)](#) [36]

[Comply with U.S. Tax Filing Requirements](#)

Every international student and scholar must file a U.S. tax return, even if they had no U.S. income. Learn more on our [U.S. Taxes page](#) [37].

Travel-Related Requirements

[Travel with the Appropriate Documents & Travel Signature](#)

your travel documents must be up-to-date to avoid any problems when you are returning to the U.S. Visit the [travel pages for scholars](#) [38] well in advance of a planned trip to make sure you have all the required documents (DS-2019, U.S. visa, valid passport, etc.).

Travel Signature

Make sure your DS-2019 has a valid [travel signature](#) [39] on page 1. Travel signatures are valid for one year and good for multiple entries. Only Yale-sponsored visas will have Yale travel signatures. If your F or J visa is sponsored by a third party, your travel signature will be obtained through your visa sponsor.

Obtaining a New Travel Signature

If you need a new signature, please [submit a request in MyOISS](#) [40].

Other Requirements

[Do not Apply for or Accept Government/Public Assistance](#)

When applying for a non-immigrant visa, applicants have to document that they have the financial resources to support themselves and any family members with them. Accepting taxpayer-funded public benefits can jeopardize your legal status and future visa applications, change of status applications and admission to the U.S. if it is determined that you could become a public burden. Public benefits that count towards the “public charge inadmissibility” rule broadly include any Federal, State, or local cash assistance for income maintenance, SNAP (commonly known as food stamps), certain government housing programs, and Medicaid. Refer to the [Accepting Public Assistance page](#) [41] or [USCIS Public Charge Resources](#) [42] for additional information.

[Observe U.S. Laws and Yale Policies](#)

Comply with Yale's academic and conduct policies and all U.S. federal and state laws. Violating a Yale policy or U.S. law may have negative consequences for your U.S. immigration status. Learn more on our [Legal Considerations](#) [43] page.

Consequences of Not Maintaining Your Status

If you do not maintain your immigration status, your legal permission to remain in the U.S., as well as your ability to return in the future, may be in jeopardy. This also applies to your accompanying dependents. If you think you have violated your immigration status, immediately [contact your OISS adviser](#) [11] who may be able to help you navigate a status violation. If you have failed to maintain your F-1 student status and wish to return to, or transfer to Yale, you must apply for and be granted [reinstatement to F-1 student status](#) [44] by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

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