Applying for a Visa

The worldwide outbreak of the COVID-19 virus currently presents many challenges to the process of obtaining a U.S. visa and traveling to Yale to begin your studies. We are hopeful that both visa issuance and air travel will be restored so that you can arrive at Yale for the fall semester. As soon as routine visa operations resume at U.S. consulates around the world, it will be important to start the application for your student visa as soon as possible, as it can in some cases take several weeks and occasionally longer to obtain the visa. These wait times will likely be impacted by the suspension of visa operations during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Please know that both OISS and Yale University are closely monitoring the COVID-19 global health emergency and will stay in close communication with you about any updates or changes. You will find COVID-19 updates on the OISS website [1], as well as Yale University updates [2].

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. The Department of State has instructed U.S. consulates that they may issue a J-1 visa no more than 120 days in advance of the program start date. However, an application for a J-1 visa can be submitted more than 120 days in advance of the start date noted on the DS-2019 in order to accommodate long processing times. Check the website of the consulate where you will apply for a visa for detailed instructions.

The Application Process

Collect the Following Documents:

- **DS-2019** (Sent to you by OISS.)
- **SEVIS Fee Receipt** [3]. All new students coming in J-1 status must pay a SEVIS [3] fee [3] prior to applying for their visa. **Important Note:** Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, you may want to consider waiting to pay the $350 SEVIS fee until U.S. consular services are fully restored. At this time, SEVP will not issue a refund if you cannot come to the U.S. for any reason.
- **DS-2019 Forms for Spouse and Dependent Children.** Each J-2 dependent is issued an I-20 and has their own SEVIS ID. Additional SEVIS fees **does not** need to be paid for a dependent.

Apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

- Generally you will apply for a visa at U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country. To locate the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, click here [4]. You can find visa wait times here [5].

Complete the DS-160.

- With the documents listed above, go to the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application page to complete the DS-160. You can watch an overview [6] of the online application process called DS-160. There is a $220 visa application processing fee.

Schedule a Visa Appointment.

- Print the confirmation page from the DS-160 and schedule a visa appointment.
For the Interview, you will need the following documents:

- Your DS-2019
- The SEVIS Fee receipt (I-901)
- 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.
- Check the website of the U.S. consulate/embassy where you are applying to see if there are other requirements.

Arriving in the U.S.

You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the start date of your DS-2019 form (item #3). If you cannot arrive in the U.S. by this date, you must get academic permission to arrive late. To start this process, please get in touch with OISS. [7]

Please Note: 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.