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Program Specifics

What is the DS-2019?

After NWRA has received your completed application for a J-visa exchange, and has agreed to sponsor your exchange visit, the Responsible Officer will issue you, and each of your dependents, a DS-2019 form. This form is your certificate of eligibility for Exchange Visitor status and allows you to apply for a visa. Check this document carefully for accuracy and then sign and date it. The DS-2019 lists beginning and ending dates of your exchange program, the category of participation and the amount and source of your funding. Your DS-2019 must remain valid at all times and you should keep all DS-2019's ever issued to you as a permanent record. If you come as a repeat J visitor, a new DS-2019 must be completed for each visit.

What is SEVIS?

SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. This is an Internet-based system that provides tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on nonimmigrant students (F and M visas) and exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2 and J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications, via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State throughout a student's or exchange visitor's stay in the United States.

Types of Exchange Visitors

There are several types of Exchange Visitors, each with its own maximum duration of stay. At NWRA you may come on one of three types of exchanges: a Research Scholar, a Short Term Scholar or a Specialist. A Bachelor's degree is required for a Specialist position. The Short Term Scholar and Research Scholar require that the J Visa applicant have a Master's Degree or a Ph.D., or be enrolled in a Ph.D. program, in a closely related field. Documentation of degrees, and a translation if applicable, is required before you may be accepted to NWRA's program.

Research Scholar

The purpose of the Research Scholar is to foster the exchange of ideas and stimulate international collaborative teaching and research efforts, and to promote mutual enrichment and linkages between research and educational institutions in the U.S. and foreign countries. The Research Scholar will engage in research and may provide occasional lectures and consultations which are incidental to their primary research program activities. The maximum duration of stay is five years. A Master's Degree, a Ph.D., or enrollment in a Ph.D. program in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Research Scholars will be employees of NWRA.

Short Term Scholar

The Short Term Scholar will come to lecture, observe, consult and participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, professional meetings or similar types of activities. The maximum

duration of stay is six months. A Master's Degree, a Ph.D., or enrollment in a Ph.D. program in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Short Term Scholars who are anticipated to be at NWRA for less than three months will be consultants at NWRA. If staying longer than three months, they will be an employee.

Specialist

The Specialist category recognizes the value-added of an individual who contributes to a project as a supporting scientist or engineer but who may not have, nor need, a Master's Degree or Ph.D. to serve in that capacity. This individual would bring a technical specialty to the project derived from their experiences in their country, such as knowledge of a specific modeling code developed in their country or more generally, specialized skills in computing, math, or some other technical knowledge important to the success of NWRA's research endeavors. Maximum duration of stay is one year. A Bachelor's Degree in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Specialists who are anticipated to be at NWRA for less than three months will be consultants at NWRA. If staying longer than three months, they will be an employee.

English Language Proficiency

The prospective EV must demonstrate proficiency in the English language. This can be accomplished in one of four ways:

- You are a native English speaker. You will be asked to certify this on the J-1 Application.
- You have published first author papers in a peer-reviewed journal in English.
- You have received a total iBT TOEFL (internet Based Test, Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 80 points.
- You have received a total iBT TOEFL score of 60 points AND your supervising NWRA Principal Investigator certifies that he or she is fluent in your native language.

Two-Year Bar to Repeat Participation

When an exchange visitor has completed a J visa program as either a "Research Scholar" or a "Professor", they must wait for two years before they can reside in the U.S. as a J visa Research Scholar or Professor. Once two years have passed from the time you completed your J Research Scholar or Professor program, you will be eligible for another five- year period in either one of these J categories.

If the *Two-year Home Residency Rule* does not apply, previous J visa participants may enter and/or reside in the U.S. under another J visa category, such as a Short Term Scholar or Specialist, or any other visa category that they qualify for, such as an H1-b, tourist, etc.

Two-Year Home Residency Rule

In some cases, you will be required to return to your home country and reside there for two years before you can return as a J visa Research Scholar or Professor. You are **ONLY** subject to the Two-Year Home Residency Rule if one of the following applies:

1. You obtained government funding for your J visa program
2. Your home country government has designated you based on a pre-determined Skills List
3. You are participating in a J program for graduate medical training.

If you are subject to this rule, you must reside in your home country for an aggregate of two years, or obtain a waiver of the requirement. This means that during those two years you may not be in the U.S. on some other work visa, such as an H1-b, L visa or green card. You may enter the U.S. under some other visa category if you are eligible, however you must fulfill the requirement of residing in your home country for two years before returning as a J visa participant.

Dependents of J-1 Visitors

If you have a spouse or unmarried children under the age of 21, they may come with you to the U.S. as a J-2 dependent. Each J-2 dependent must have a DS-2019 form, issued by the NWRA Responsible Officer. J-2 dependents' status only remains valid while the J-1 is in the U.S. You should not leave your J-2 dependents in the U.S. if you leave the country, unless it is only for a few days. Check with the NWRA Responsible Officer before leaving the country for any reason. A child's J-2 eligibility expires when they reach their 21st birthday. J-2 dependents are allowed to work in the U.S., but they must receive permission from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Employment will not be authorized if it is needed to support the J-1. There are no restrictions on study for persons holding J-2 status.

Dependents are expected to reside with the J-1 during their stay in the United States.

Medical Insurance Requirement

Each exchange visitor is required to have insurance in effect which covers the exchange visitor and all J-2 dependents for sickness or accident during the period of time that the exchange visitor participates in the sponsor's exchange visitor program. Minimum coverage per individual is: 1) medical benefits maximum cannot be lower than \$50,000 per accident or illness; 2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7500, should you die in the United States; 3) medical evacuation to the home country in the amount of \$10,000; 4) a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness; 5) the co-insurance payable by the exchange visitor or dependents may not exceed 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness. The policy must be underwritten by an insurance company rated A- or above by A.M. Best. More information on medical insurance is covered later in this packet.

An exchange visitor who willfully fails to maintain the insurance set forth above while a participant in an Exchange Visitor Program shall be deemed to be in violation of the Exchange Visitor regulations and is subject to termination as a participant.

Payment of SEVIS Fee

The SEVIS I-901 fee is mandated by Congress to support the program office and the automated system that keeps track of exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the United States. The SEVIS fee will be paid by NWRA for each Exchange Visitor. J-2 dependents do not have to pay a SEVIS fee. NWRA will issue the EV a receipt showing payment of the SEVIS fee, which will be needed to receive the visa stamp at the consulate.

The SEVIS I-901 fee does not replace the visa fee that you pay at the consulate or border crossing. The visa fee is to defray the cost for machine-readable visas and to support the consulates.