J Scholar

Statement of Understanding
International Student and Scholar Services

General

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program promotes mutual understanding between US citizens and foreign nationals through cultural and educational exchange. It provides international students and scholars with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the US and then return home to share their experiences.

Maintaining J-1 Status

Maintaining legal status in the United States is critical, and it is your responsibility. Please comply fully with the guidelines below. Otherwise, you could lose your immigration status.

Health insurance: Maintain adequate health insurance coverage for yourself and your J-2 dependents at all times during your exchange program, as mandated by the US State Department. Report your insurance information through ISSS Link during your first week in the US. If you do not maintain insurance coverage, your exchange program participation will be terminated.

Contact information: Keep your personal information up to date at all times. If there is any incorrect information on your DS-2019, contact your ISSS advisor right away to get a corrected DS-2019. If your address, email, or phone number changes, report the change within 10 calendar days. Go to emory.edu/isss for instructions.

Immigration documents: Maintain valid immigration documents for yourself and your J-2 dependents at all times. This includes passports, DS-2019s, and I-94 records. Log in to ISSS Link to report any updates to immigration documents.

Visa expiration: You do not have to leave the US if the visa stamp in your passport expires while you are in the US. The visa stamp is for the purpose of entry only. As long as you have a valid DS-2019 with a future end date and an I-94 record designated “D/S” (duration of status), you can stay in the US.

Normal progress: You must participate full time (at least 32 hours per week) in your exchange program, make normal progress, and complete your activities by the end date on your DS-2019. You can participate in J-1 activities only between the start and end dates on your DS-2019. If there are any changes or delays in your program, contact your ISSS advisor right away so that your DS-2019 can be revised accordingly.

Occasional lectures and consultations: You can give up to two occasional lectures or consultation per month during the course of your exchange program. Contact your ISSS advisor immediately if you have been invited by another institution to give a lecture or consultation, as it must be authorized in SEVIS in advance.

Appropriate J-1 activities: As a J-1 scholar at Emory, you may conduct research, teach, or observe. You may take a class or two as long as it is incidental to your program and does not delay or interfere with your progress. Since you are here as a J-1 scholar and not as a J-1 student, you cannot enroll in coursework full time.

Tenure-track prohibited: J-1 exchange visitors are not permitted to be a candidate for or hold tenure-track positions.

Rules and regulations: Follow all rules and regulations governing your J-1 status. This includes all federal, state, and local laws, as well as Emory University policies. You are also required to file tax documents by April 15 every year. Contact Mary Andrews in the Controller’s office at mary.e.andrews@emory.edu with any tax questions.
Program Changes

Any change to J-1 program activities, location (department or physical address), objective, or funding must be approved by ISSS in advance. Please take special note of the following:

Sites of activity: If there are any changes or additions to the sites of activity where you perform your exchange program activities, contact your ISSS advisor. ISSS will need to approve the change or addition and issue you a revised DS-2019 before the change or addition can occur.

Extensions: If you will not finish your program by the end date on your DS-2019, your department should request an extension at least three months before your DS-2019 end date.

Leaves of absence: J-1 exchange visitors can request a medical leave of absence for up to 12 weeks. The hosting department must initiate the leave request in ISSS Link and get approval from ISSS in advance.

Transfers: Contact your ISSS advisor at least 30 days in advance if you plan to transfer from Emory to another US institution. Your advisor will guide you through the SEVIS process and coordinate with your new institution.

J-2 Dependents

Reporting requirements for J-2 dependents: J-1 scholars must report J-2 dependent information, including email, phone number, and residential address (if different than J-1’s residential address) and must report any changes within 10 calendar days in ISSS Link.

Employment: J-2 dependents can apply for employment authorization from USCIS. However, any employment earnings must not be used to support the J-1 exchange visitor but should only be used for recreational purposes. Before beginning employment, J-2s must apply for and receive an employment authorization document (EAD card).

Study: J-2 dependents can study in the US as long as it is not the primary reason they are here. J-2 children study full time at an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through 12th grade).

J-2 departure or status change: If your dependent changes status or decides to return home and will not return to the US, you are required to report their departure in ISSS Link within 10 calendar days so that their SEVIS record can be closed.

Travel

Travel checklist: Review the travel checklist on the ISSS website before traveling outside the US, and make plans as far in advance as possible.

Travel signatures: If you travel outside the US during your exchange program, you will need a travel signature from an ISSS advisor on your DS-2019 from within the past year. Visit ISSS during walk-in hours or schedule an appointment with your advisor to get a travel signature. J-2 dependents will also need signatures when traveling. Upon your return, present your signed DS-2019 and valid passport with valid visa stamp (if required) to the immigration officer.

Domestic travel: You do not need authorization from ISSS to travel within the US, but we recommend that you carry your passport, DS-2019, and I-94 information with you, particularly when traveling through airports and outside Atlanta.

Out-of-country activities: Under limited circumstances, you are allowed to perform J-1 activities while outside the US. Your hosting department will need to submit a request in ISSS Link, and your ISSS advisor must approve the activity in advance and report it in SEVIS.
End of Program

On-time completion: If completing your program on schedule, please complete an exit survey on ISSS’s website.

Early completion: If you will finish your program earlier than 30 days before the end date on your DS-2019, contact ISSS and work with your department to shorten your program officially.

Change of immigration status: Contact ISSS if you are interested in applying for a different immigration status.

Leaving the US: You must leave the US within 30 days of the end of your J-1 program unless you have already applied for a change of status.

Scholar Signature

ISSS will notify scholars concerning changes in laws, rules, regulations, and procedures that may impact your non-immigrant status, your ability to apply for certain benefits, or other relevant announcements during your time in the US. You may also monitor important announcements on ISSS’s website (emory.edu/isss).

I have read the above information about maintaining my legal status in the United States and I understand that I must comply fully with these regulations in order to remain in legal status. I further understand that this information is not exhaustive and that I should direct any additional questions or concerns about my legal status to an ISSS advisor.

PRINT NAME__________________________________________ SIGNATURE__________________________________________

TODAY’S DATE__________________________________________

Month / Day / Year