Review the ISSS website (emory.edu/isss) for information about the J-1/J-2 two-year home-country physical presence requirement, maintaining your status, housing, social security numbers, driver's licenses, banking, rights and laws, and more.

Review your Form DS-2019 and make sure your personal and program information, and program dates are correct. If you won’t arrive by your program start date, contact ISSS to update your DS-2019. If dependents are coming with you, each of them should have their own DS-2019.

Make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your start date. If any dependents are coming with you, their passports should be valid for 6 months, too.

Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee at least 3 days before your visa interview. Print the receipt and keep a copy for your records. (Citizens of Canada and Bermuda don’t need an entry visa, but they still have to pay the SEVIS fee before entering the U.S.) For more information, visit ice.gov/sevis/i901.

Schedule an appointment at the nearest US embassy or consulate to apply for your visa (except citizens of Canada or Bermuda). Visit travel.state.gov to find your nearest consulate and review the documents required for your interview. When you receive your visa sticker, please review it for accuracy.

Make travel arrangements after you get your visa. You can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date on your DS-2019 form. If traveling by air, fly into Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Let your department and ISSS know when you will get here. If you are sponsored by an organization other than Emory, let them know about your plans.

Review the J-1 health insurance requirements at emory.edu/isss. As an exchange visitor, you and any accompanying J-2 dependents are legally required to carry health insurance while you are in the U.S. You can expect to pay about $100-200 per month for insurance. If you don’t purchase adequate health insurance, your J-1 program will be terminated.

Get copies of important medical and dental records, x-rays, and prescriptions written in generic terms for you and any accompanying dependents.

Get copies of financial documents that show how you will be supported while you are at Emory. You might be asked for these at the U.S. port of entry. We recommend that you have ready access to at least $2,500 per month to cover your living expenses in the U.S.

Review your hosting department’s invitation letter for information about program activities, employment details (if applicable), and any program fees.
At the port of entry

☐ Present your original Form DS-2019 and your valid passport at the border when you enter the U.S.

☐ Make sure the date stamp shows “J-1” and “D/S” when you receive your passport back from the CBP officer after inspection.

After you arrive

☐ Report to your hosting department at Emory. Ask your department if you will have any orientations other than the one at ISSS.

☐ Attend your required orientation at ISSS within 7 days of your arrival, and no later than 15 days after your program start date on your DS-2019. Orientation sessions take place at 3 p.m. Tuesdays and 9 a.m. Thursdays. Sign up for a session online at emory.edu/isss/scholars. Please be on time and be prepared to stay for 2 hours. Bring your passport, DS-2019, I-94 (download and print from cbp.gov/i94 if you entered the U.S. by air or sea), and any other immigration documents. If you have any accompanying J-2 dependents, bring copies of their documents too.

☐ Do not apply for a driver’s license or a social security number until after you have checked in with ISSS. Your SEVIS record needs to be activated first.

☐ Start your J-1 activities at Emory on your start date as listed on your DS-2019. If your arrival in the U.S. was delayed, please check with ISSS to determine your proper J-1 program start date.