J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Handbook

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Acronyms used in this text:

ISA  International Student Advisor
RO  Responsible Official for the University of Hartford Exchange Program
USCIS  US Citizenship and Immigration Service
DOS  US Department of State (the US government agency responsible for the Exchange Visitor Program)
SEVIS  Student Exchange Visitor Information System
Introduction

The Exchange Visitor Program is carried out under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The purpose of the Act is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges. International educational and cultural exchanges are one of the most effective means of developing lasting and meaningful relationships. They provide an extremely valuable opportunity to experience the United States and our way of life. Foreign nationals come to the United States to participate in a wide variety of educational and cultural exchange programs.

The Exchange Visitor Program is administered by the Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Go here for more information about the Exchange Visitor Program.

At the conclusion of their program Exchange Visitor program participants are expected to return to their home countries to utilize the experience and skills they have acquired while in the United States.

Regulations regarding the exchange visitor visa class are subject to continuing change in operating instructions issued by the Department of State (DOS), and the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). The information below is current at this time, however, exchange visitors are requested to contact the International Center to insure that current transitions in the law have not affected particular segments of this guide.

The terms, "International Student Advisor," "ISA" and "Responsible/Alternate Responsible Officer are intermixed in this guide. At the University of Hartford, the Associate Director of the International Center is the International Student Advisor (ISA) for international students and scholars as well as the "Responsible Official" for our J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

Qualifying as an Exchange Visitor

The DOS has granted the University of Hartford approval to participate as a sponsor in the Exchange Visitor Program. That approval states that we may:“Provide courses of study, teaching, lecturing, research, or a combination thereof, in the various fields of USCIS instruction and research conducted by the University for qualified foreign students, professors and specialists to promote the general interests of international exchange.”

- **Students** - A student is an individual who is (a) studying in the United States, (b) pursuing a full course of study leading to or culminating in the award of a U.S. degree from a post-secondary USCIS instruction, (c) engaged full-time in a prescribed course of study of up to 24 months, (d) engaged in English language USCIS instruction, or (e) engaged in academic training.

- **Professors** - A professor is an individual involved primarily in teaching, lecturing, observing, or consulting at post-secondary USCIS instruction, museums, libraries, or similar types of USCIS instruction. A professor may also conduct re-search, unless disallowed by the sponsor.

- **Research Scholars** - This category is for a foreign national who enters the United States for
the primary purpose of conducting research, observing or consulting in connection with research projects at research institutions, corporate research facilities, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited academic institutions, or similar types of institutions. A research scholar may also teach or lecture, unless disallowed by the sponsor.

- **Specialists** - A specialist is an individual who is an expert in a field of specialized knowledge or skill coming to the United States for observing, consulting or demonstrating special skills.

- **Short-term scholars** - Short-term scholars (e.g. professor, research scholar) may participate in short-term programs for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training or demonstrating special skills.

**Overview – About the Exchange Visitor Visa**

A citizen of a foreign country, who wishes to enter the United States, generally must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. The type of visa you must have is defined by immigration law and relates to the purpose of your travel.

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides the exchange visitor (J) nonimmigrant visa category for persons who are approved to participate in exchange visitor programs in the United States. This means that before you can apply at an American Embassy or Consulate for a J visa you must meet the requirements, and be accepted for one of the Exchange Visitor Program categories through a designated sponsoring organization. If you are accepted as a participant in an exchange program, the sponsor will provide you with information and documents necessary to apply for the J visa to enter the United States.

Once the visa is issued it allows a foreign citizen to travel to the United States port-of entry, and request permission from the, Customs and Border Protection inspector to enter the United States. A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States.

**Qualifying for an Exchange Visitor Visa**

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is very specific with regard to the requirements, which must be met by applicants to qualify for the exchange visitor visa. The consular officer will determine whether you qualify for the visa. Applicants must demonstrate that they properly meet the requirements to be issued an exchange visitor visa, including the following:

- That they plan to remain in the U.S. for a temporary, specific, limited period;
- Evidence of funds to cover expenses in the United States;
- Evidence of compelling social and economic ties abroad; and other binding ties which will insure their return abroad at the end of the visit.

**What is SEVIS and SEVP? What should you know about it?**

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is designed to help the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State better monitor school and exchange programs for F, M and J category visitors. Exchange visitor and student information is maintained in the [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System](#) (SEVIS). SEVIS is an Internet-based system that maintains accurate and current information on non-immigrant students and exchange visitors.
and their dependents (F-2, M-2 and J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit mandatory information and event notifications via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State throughout a student or exchange visitor’s stay in the United States.

All exchange visitor applicants must have a SEVIS generated DS 2019 issued by a Department of State designated sponsor, which they submit when they are applying for their exchange visitor visa. The consular officer will need to verify your DS 2019 record electronically through the SEVIS system in order to process your exchange visitor visa application to conclusion. Unless otherwise exempt, you must pay a SEVIS I-901 fee for each individual program. The fee may be paid either through a special web site, via Western Union, or by mail. See SEVIS-901 Fee for further information on how to pay the fee.

Where and When Do I Need to Apply for My Visa?

Applicants may apply for their visa as soon as they are prepared to do so. Exchange Visitor visa applicants are encouraged to apply for their visa early to provide ample time for visa processing. Applicants for visas should generally apply at the American Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over their place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

Applying for an Exchange Visitor Visa - Required Documentation

As part of the visa application process, an interview at the embassy consular section is required for visa applicants from age 14 through 79. Persons age 13 and younger, and age 80 and older, generally do not require an interview, unless requested by embassy or consulate. The waiting time for an interview appointment for applicants can vary, so early visa application is strongly encouraged. Visa wait times for interview appointments and visa processing time information for each U.S. Embassy or Consulate worldwide is available at Visa Wait Times, and on most embassy websites. If you are authorized by your sponsor to be accompanied by your spouse (husband or wife) and children, they will also be given a Form DS-2019 and they can apply at the same time. During the visa application process, usually at the interview, an ink-free, digital fingerprint scan will be quickly taken. Some applicants will need additional screening, and will be notified when they apply. You may apply for your visa at an Embassy or Consulate any time before the beginning of your exchange program.

Each visa applicant must submit these forms and documentation, and submit fees as explained below:

- **DS 2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status.** You will need to submit a SEVIS generated Form, DS-2019, which was provided to you by your program sponsor. All exchange visitors, including their spouse and dependents must be registered in the SEVIS system. Your program sponsor is responsible for entering your information for the DS 2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status into SEVIS. Exchange visitors not part of a U.S. Government-sponsored program will also have to pay a SEVIS I-901 fee for each program. Questions regarding your exchange program should be directly to your program sponsor.

- **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** Form DS-156 must be, completed and signed.

- A Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-157 provides additional information about your travel plans. Submission of this completed form is required for all
male applicants between 16-45 years of age. It is also required for all applicants from state sponsors of terrorism age 16 and over, irrespective of gender, without exception. Three countries are currently designated as state sponsors of terrorism, including Iran, Sudan, and Syria (subject to change). You should know that a consular officer may require any nonimmigrant visa applicant to complete this form.

- A completed “Contact Information and Work History” Form DS-158
- A passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant’s intended period of stay in the United States. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must complete an application;
- One 2x2 photograph. See the required photo format explained in Nonimmigrant Photograph Requirements.

What are the Required Visa Fees?

- Nonimmigrant visa application processing fee - Each applicant for a visitor visa must pay a nonrefundable nonimmigrant visa application processing fee. Additionally, if the visa is issued, there may be an additional visa issuance reciprocity fee, if applicable. Please consult the Visa Reciprocity Tables to find out if you must pay a visa issuance reciprocity fee and the fee amount. If there is a fee for issuance for the visa, it is equal as nearly as possible to the fee charged to United States citizens by the applicant’s country of nationality.

Additional Documentation

- It is important that you refer to the Embassy Consular Section website to determine visa processing timeframes and USCIS instructions, learn about interview scheduling, and find out if there is any additional documentation required. Learn more here Embassy Consular Section.

- Applicants must demonstrate to the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning, and that they are coming to the United States for a temporary period. It is impossible to specify the exact form the evidence should take since applicants’ circumstances vary greatly.

My Visa Has Been Issued- When Can I Travel to the U.S.?

- Be advised of the Department of Homeland Security regulation which requires that all J exchange visitors, and J-2 spouse and dependents enter the U.S. 30 days or less in advance of the applicant’s program start date as shown on the Form DS-2019. Please consider this date carefully when making travel plans to the U.S. Customs officers may deny you entry into the United States at your expense if you attempt to enter more than 30 days before your program start date. The 30-day limitation does not apply to current exchange participants who are returning to continue with their exchange program.

- If you want an earlier entry in the U.S. (more than 30 days prior to the course start date), you must qualify for, and obtain a visitor visa, as explained below; however, this is strongly discouraged.
**Spouses and Children**

Spouses and/or children under the age of 21 who wish to accompany or join the principal exchange visitor (J) visa holder in the United States for the duration of his/her stay require exchange visitor visas (derivative J visas). The application procedure is the same as that for a primary visa applicant. The sponsor must approve the accompaniment of the spouse and/or children and who will each be issued their own Form DS-2019. This form is used to obtain the required visa and the spouse and dependents can enter the U.S. at the same time as the principal exchange visitor or at a later date.

*Work* - The spouse and/or children of an exchange visitor in the U.S. may work in J-2 status. If employment is desired, the appropriate work visa will be required. Before they can work, they must make an application to USCIS and be approved for permission to work. They must file Form **I-765 Application for Employment Authorization** with the USCIS. Learn more on **How do I get a Work Permit (Employment Authorization Document)**.

*Study* - The spouse and/or children of an exchange visitor visa holder who are in the U.S. on an exchange visitor visa may study in the U.S. without also being required to apply for a student (F-1) visa or change to F-1 status.

*Residing in the U.S.* - Spouses and/or children who do not intend to reside in the United States with the principal visa holder, but visit for vacations only, may be eligible to apply for **B-2visitor visa**, or if qualified, travel without a visa under the **Visa Waiver Program**.

*Family Members Following to Join the Exchange Visitor* - The spouse and children can also apply for visas after the principal applicant has already traveled. In general, they must present the following:

- Form DS 2019, SEVIS generated, and approved by the sponsor
- Proof that the principal applicant (the person who received the DS-2019) is maintaining his/her J visa status
- Copy of the J-1’s (principal applicant’s) visa
- Proof of relationship to the principal applicant
- Proof of sufficient money to cover all expenses in the United States

Spouses and children of exchange visitors may not enter the United States before the principal visitor enters for the first time.

**Two-Year Foreign Residency Requirement - an exchange visitor is subject, if the following conditions exist:**

- The program in which the exchange visitor was participating was financed in whole or in part directly or indirectly by the United States government or the government of the exchange visitor's nationality or last residence.
- The exchange visitor is a national or resident of a country designated as requiring the services of persons engaged in the field of specialized knowledge or skills in which the exchange visitor was engaged for the duration of their program.
- The exchange visitor entered the United States to receive graduate medical education or training.

If the exchange visitor is subject to INA 212(e) requirement, he or she cannot change his or status to that of H, L, K, or immigrant lawful permanent resident (LPR) until he or she has
returned to his/her home country for at least two-years or received a waiver of that requirement. Such waivers can be obtained under five separate bases: No Objection Statement, Exceptional Hardship or Persecution, Conrad Program, or Interested Government Agency. For more information, see Waiver of the J Visa Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement 212(e).

Can I enter on a Visitor Visa (B visa) and change status to an Exchange Visitor Program?

If you want an earlier entry in the U.S. (more than 30 days prior to the course start date), you must qualify for, and obtain a visitor visa; however, this is strongly discouraged. If you travel to the U.S. on a visitor visa, before beginning an exchange program, you must obtain a change of visa classification from the B status to that of J. You must file Form I-539, Application for Change of Nonimmigrant Status, with application fee, and also submit the required Form DS-2019 to the USCIS. Please be aware that you cannot start your exchange visitor program until the change of status is approved; in view of the processing time that it might take to change status in the U.S., you may be in danger of missing your entire exchange program while waiting approval of your request.

Exchange Visitors cannot travel without a visa on the Visa Waiver Program

Citizens from a country participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), who want to enter the United States temporarily, as exchange visitors traveling to the United States, must first obtain an exchange visitor visa to come to the U.S. They cannot travel without a visa on the Visa Waiver Program. Those travelers coming on the Visa Waiver Program to participate in an exchange program may be denied admission to the United States by a customs inspector at the port of entry. For more information on VWP, see Visa Waiver Program.

When can a Visitor Visa be used instead of an Exchange Visitor Visa?

Some activities that are done on exchange visitor visas are also permitted on business (B-1) or tourist (B-2) visas in certain circumstances. A short period of study or study which is recreational, and not vocational, and incidental to the trip is permitted on a visitor visa. The determining factor is the traveler's primary purpose in coming to the United States. Furthermore, any kind of study that would earn credit or certification is not permitted on a visitor visa. As an example, if you are taking a vacation to the U.S., and during this vacation you would like to take a two-day cooking class for your enjoyment, and there is no credit earned, then this would be permitted on a visitor visa. A consular officer will determine the visa category you will need based on the purpose of your travel and your supporting documentation.

Misrepresentation of a material fact or fraud

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Visa Denials

If the consular officer should find it necessary to deny the issuance of a visitor visa, the applicant may apply again if there is new evidence to overcome the basis for the refusal. Click here for additional information.
**Entering a U.S. Port of Entry**

A visa allows a foreign citizen coming from abroad to travel to a United States port-of-entry and request permission to enter the U.S. Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the US. The Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States. Exchange visitors must have their Form DS-2019 in their possession each time they enter the United States. Exchange visitors should review important information about Admissions/Entry requirements on the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection website. On arrival (at an international airport, seaport or land border crossing), you will be enrolled in the US-VISIT entry-exit program. If you are allowed to enter the U.S., the Customs Officer will determine the length of your visit on the Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94). Since Form I-94 documents your authorized stay in the U.S., it’s very important that you download the form and keep it with your passport. You may download this form here.

**Staying Beyond Your Authorized Stay in the U.S. and Being Out of Status**

- You should carefully consider the dates of your authorized stay and make sure you are following the procedures under U.S. immigration laws. It is important that you depart the U.S. on or before the last day you are authorized to be in the U.S. on any given trip, based on the specified end date on your DSP 2019 form. Failure to depart the U.S. will cause you to be out-of-status.

- Staying beyond the period of time authorized, by the Department of Homeland Security, in the U.S. is a violation of U.S. immigration laws, and may cause you to be ineligible for a visa in the future for return travels to the U.S.

- Staying unlawfully in the United States, even by one day results in your visa being automatically voided, in accordance with to INA 222(g). Under this provision of immigration law, if you overstay on your nonimmigrant authorized stay in the U.S. your visa will be automatically made void. In this situation, you are required to reapply for a new nonimmigrant visa, generally in your country of nationality.

**How long am I permitted to stay in the U.S. after my program am has ended?**

The initial admission of an exchange visitor, spouse and children may not exceed the period specified on Form DS-2019, plus a period of 30 days for the purpose of travel. The 30-day grace period is intended to be a period following the end of the exchange visitor’s program and is to be used for domestic travel and/or to prepare for and depart from the U.S., and for no other purpose.

**Requirements to Issue a "DS-2019" Form**

An exchange visitor coming to the University of Hartford to participate in a program of studies, research, or teaching, may enter the United States on a J-1 exchange visitor visa. To apply for this visa, a prospective exchange visitor must present a DS-2019 form issued by the University of Hartford, to an American embassy or consulate official. This form is required for verification of intended participation in an exchange program.

To issue this form, certain requirements must be met in accordance with University policy and
federal regulations. The materials listed under "required documents" should be gathered by the appropriate admissions office (for undergraduate or graduate students) or by the college or administrative office hiring the exchange visitor (for professors, scholars, lecturers, or researchers). The materials should be forwarded to the International Center. The Center will determine whether the request to issue a DS-2019 form has met all criteria, and if approved, will forward the completed form to the exchange visitor, who will then secure his or her visa for entrance to the United States.

Required Documentation

1. A University of Hartford DS-2019 request form.

2. If the exchange visitor is a student, a letter of acceptance is required which indicates the proposed program of study and the semester that studies will begin. If the exchange visitor is a professor or scholar, a letter of appointment is needed outlining the program to be undertaken.

3. Any financial aid or scholarship award letter or University salary compensation letters and contracts, including the amount and duration of such funds.

4. Financial documentation from the exchange visitor indicating his or her means of support while in the U.S. If the exchange visitor is a student, documentation should include the University's "Guarantor's Statement of Financial Support", as well as bank statements from the visitor's sponsor indicating that there are enough funds to provide for all necessary tuition and living expenses for a minimum of one year. If the exchange visitor is a professor, scholar or researcher, documentation must include supporting letters from the sponsor, as well as bank statements (if applicable) indicating that there are enough funds to cover anticipated program and living expense costs for one year.

5. If the exchange visitor is a student, a TOEFL test score is required (or other indication of satisfactory proficiency in the English language). The minimum University of Hartford requirement on the TOEFL test is 80 (some programs may require a higher score). Students who do not meet proficiency standards may be required to enroll in our English Language Institute.

6. To issue a DS-2019 form, the following personal information regarding the exchange visitor should be made available to the ISA:

   • Complete name of the exchange visitor (first, middle, last)
   • Birth date
   • City of birth
   • Country of birth
   • Citizenship
   • Legal residency
   • Current occupation
   • Gender

This information is required to successfully process a DS-2019 form. The material should be presented to the ISA in a complete package. The ISA's processing time is generally one to two days. Missing information will delay the issue of a DS-2019 and could impact on the exchange visitor's ability to arrive in the U.S. in a timely fashion.
Arrival to the University of Hartford

On arrival to a U.S. port of entry, an exchange visitor is required to present his or her passport, visa, and DS-2019 form to a Customs Officer. If found admissible, your entry to the U.S. will be granted.

On arrival to the University of Hartford, J-1 exchange visitors are requested to visit the International Student Advisor located in the International Center. At that time, the ISA will review all immigration entry documents and record the required information needed by the University. The advisor will give exchange visitors an orientation to immigration laws and University policies which affect their stay in the U.S. The ISA will orientate visitors to various University departments and administrative services offered on campus. In addition, the ISA will provide information regarding University life, student and administrative services, and special programming offered by the International Center. If the exchange visitor is a professor, scholar, or researcher, he or she will be directed to the sponsoring academic or administrative department and the Human Resource Department.

J-1 Limitations of Stay

Exchange visitors may remain in the United States only as long as necessary to satisfy their stated Objective as described in their DS-2019 form. The following limits on the period of time that an exchange visitor may remain in the U.S. are established by federal regulations:

- Students - Students enrolled in degree or certificate granting programs are authorized to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program as long as they are studying at the USCIS institution listed on their DS-2019 form, are pursuing a full course of study as determined by the University, and are maintaining satisfactory progress toward the completion of their academic program. Degree students may also participate in an academic training work experience not to exceed 18 months following the completion of their course of study. Non-degree seeking students are authorized to participate in an exchange visitor program not to exceed 24 months so long as they are participating full-time and are maintaining satisfactory progress toward the completion of their program.

- Professors and research scholars - Professors and research scholars may participate in an exchange visitor program for the length of time necessary to complete that program, though the duration may not exceed three years. Extensions of the three-year rule are possible only under exceptional or unusual circumstances.

- Short-term scholars - Short-term scholars may participate in an exchange visitor program for the length of time necessary to complete the program, though the duration may not exceed four months. Extensions under this category are not permitted.

- Specialists - A specialist may participate in an exchange visitor program for the length of time necessary to complete the program, though the length may not exceed one year.

Note:
- The minimum duration of an exchange-program must be at least three weeks (the only exception is made for short-term scholars who may participate in programs of less than three weeks duration).
- Exchange visitors must leave the United States within thirty days of completing their
In all the above categories (except short-term scholars) the University is required by the Department of State to provide exchange visitors with an orientation program and access to cross-cultural activities.

**J-1 Maintenance of Status**

Exchange visitors admitted to the U.S. on a J-1 visa are required by the Department of State and the US Citizenship and Immigration Service to maintain their legal status by carrying out the program described on their DS-2019 form. Failure to maintain status may require that an exchange visitor leave the U.S. prior to the completion of their program.

**Students**

An exchange visitor student is one who has come to the University of Hartford to either participate in a recognized degree or certificate granting program or to participate in a non-degree program of study. Students who are enrolled in an academic degree program (not including teaching or research) are required to attend class on a full-time basis. Non-degree students are required to attend their program of study on a full-time basis as prescribed by the University of Hartford.

The University of Hartford Policy and Procedure Manual defines the criteria to be used to determine full-time status for all matriculated students:

"A minimum load of twelve credits per semester is required to be classified as a full-time undergraduate student."

"A minimum load of nine credits per semester is required to be classified as a full-time graduate student."

Exchange visitor students, whose program requires that they participate in teaching or research activities, may be enrolled for less than the number of credits required to maintain full-time status. However, the combination of study, teaching or research must be equivalent to the full-time requirement. This fact must be substantiated and regulated by the student's academic advisor, and be in accordance with the program stipulated on the student's DS-2019 form. Programs established for non-degree students, though they may not offer standard credits for course completion, should be established as full-time programs according to normal full-time standards for degree seeking students.

Degree seeking exchange visitor students must be enrolled on a full-time basis from the beginning of a semester to its completion. Full-time enrollment is mandatory for the Fall and Spring semesters.

Students who are in their last semester of study prior to graduation, and who need less than the full-time credit load to complete their program, may attend part-time for that semester. Enrollment during the summer semester is optional, unless it is part of the described program on the student's DS-2019 form. Courses taken on an "audit" basis may not be counted toward the fulfillment of the full-time requirement. Students, who receive grades of "incomplete" or "no record" at the end of a semester, may complete the course(s) during the following semester in accordance with University policy; the course may not be counted toward the full-time requirement of the new semester. Exchange Visitor students, who attend non-degree programs, including summer exchange programs, must maintain their status in accordance with the program description on their DS-2019 form and must be enrolled on a full-time basis in accordance with
University policy and program description.

**Other Exchange Visitors**

The University of Hartford is authorized to bring to this institution exchange visitors to teach, lecture, and conduct research. Exchange visitors who fall into one of these categories are required to carry out the program described on their DS-2019 form. Failure to maintain the required status may result in the termination of an exchange visitor's program.

**Reporting requirements to the Department of State & the US Citizenship and Immigration Service**

Federal law requires the University to report to the DOS/USCIS the status of all exchange visitors who have either completed the program described on their DS-2019 form, or who have not maintained their program requirements in accordance with the program description. Therefore, the University requires that all exchange visitor students who are considering the possibility of carrying less than the required full-time load for their program, and all other exchange visitors who do not carry out their exchange programs as described on their DS-2019 form, to discuss this fact with the International Student Advisor before registering or withdrawing from courses, assigned teaching or research duties.

The ISA will determine the validity of the exchange visitor's reason(s) for part-time enrollment or reduced teaching/research load, and the affect that this decision will have on the visitor's immigration status. The ISA will advise exchange visitors regarding current immigration law and recommend a course of action best suited to their situation. The final decision to attend class on a part-time basis, or to withdraw from a teaching or research assignment, is left to the discretion of the exchange visitor. There are few reasons acceptable to DOS/USCIS for carrying less than the required full-time program load, and any exchange visitors who drop below this requirement, do so at their own risk. Exchange visitors may be considered "out of status" by DOS/USCIS and subject to the termination of their program if they fail to maintain the requirements of their exchange status.

Students enrolled in the Artist Diploma, DMA, or Psy.D program, may take a minimum of six credits per semester to meet the full-time requirement. The ISA may require documentation from a student's advisor authorizing a six-credit academic load.

Academic advisors are strongly encouraged, when signing a registration or drop/add form that will reduce the academic load of an exchange student to part-time status, to have the student speak to the ISA prior to signing. This intervention measure will insure that students understand the problems which may occur as a result of their action and allow time for possible alternative measures to be sought.

**J-1 Insurance Requirements**

The University of Hartford, as a J-1 exchange visitor sponsor, is required to ensure that each exchange visitor regardless of exchange category (e.g. student, scholar, professor or specialist) has medical insurance in effect which covers the visitor for sickness or accident during the period of time that he or she participates in our exchange visitor program. In addition, the accompanying spouse and dependents of an exchange visitor are required to be covered by insurance.

The University of Hartford requires that all J-1 exchange students be enrolled in the University's Health care coverage plan which exceeds the requirements set out by the DOS.

**Failure to maintain insurance coverage**

An exchange visitor who fails to maintain insurance coverage as described above or who makes
a material misrepresentation to the sponsor concerning such coverage, shall be deemed to be in violation of these regulations and subject to termination as an exchange participant. Termination of an exchange visitor may be made by the sponsor for failure to comply with insurance requirements.

**J-1 Program Change or Transfer**

An exchange visitor may transfer from one program of study to another, transfer from one designated program to another, or change exchange visitor categories. Exchange visitors may go from one program to another at the same school (e.g. from BSBA to MBA). They may also transfer to a different institution to continue the same program for which they were originally admitted, or they may transfer to a new school to begin a new program. In addition, under certain circumstances, an exchange visitor may change visitor category (e.g. from scholar to professor).

**Continuing from one program to another under the same program sponsor**

An Exchange Visitor, who has completed one program and intends to engage in another program under the same exchange program sponsor, may do so by obtaining a new DS-2019 form from that program sponsor.

Approval may be granted by the Responsible Officer of the new program. The Responsible Officer will notify the DOS/USCIS of the action taken by submitting an electronic copy of a new DS-2019 form.

Note: A request for program transfer should be submitted between 15 and 60 days before participation in the new program.

**Continue from one program to another under a different program sponsor**

Exchange visitors may wish to:

- Transfer to a different program sponsor while pursuing their original exchange program, or;
- Enter a new program under a new sponsor following the completion of their previous exchange program

Approval may be granted by the Responsible Officer of the new program. The Responsible Officer will notify the DOS/USCIS of the action taken by submitting an electronic copy of the new DS-2019 form.

Note: A request for program transfer should be submitted to the Department of State between 15 and 60 days before participation in the new program.

**If an Exchange Visitor is leaving the U.S. prior to changing programs**

An exchange visitor temporarily leaving the U.S. prior to beginning a new program under the same sponsor, or transferring to a new program under a new sponsor, is not required to seek DOS approval for the program change; instead, the exchange visitor uses a new DS-2019 form to re-enter the U.S. The program transfer is considered approved when the visitor is readmitted by USCIS. If an exchange visitor has an expired visa, a new one must be issued by an American embassy or consulate abroad prior to re-entry to the U.S. to begin a new program.

**Change of category or program objective**

An exchange visitor who wishes to change from one category to another (e.g. student to
professor) must secure Department of State approval. This type of request is normally considered
a change of program objective and requires that the exchange visitor show that the category
change is clearly consistent with, and closely related to, the participant's original exchange
objective. A request for a change of program must be submitted to the DOS for approval and
should include a written statement justifying the request as well as an DS-2019 form reflecting the
change in program objective.

J-1 Program Extension

Exchange visitors who have not completed the requirements of their exchange program within the
time limits established on their DS-2019 are required to request authorization for an extension of stay
from the DOS/USCIS to complete their exchange program.

Students

University of Hartford sponsored exchange students must request an extension of stay through
the International Student Advisor (ISA) if they have not completed their course of study during the
time limits stated on their DS-2019 form. Students who have completed one program and wish to
begin another, either at the same school or a different one, and who do not meet the above
requirements must also request an extension of stay to continue their present exchange program
or initiate a program transfer.

Note:
An exchange visitor student who has been issued an DS-2019 form from a program sponsor
other than the University of Hartford, must contact that program sponsor to request an extension
of stay.

Professors, Scholars, Lecturers, and Researchers

A professor, scholar, lecturer, or researcher who has not completed the requirements of his or her
exchange program and is in possession of an expired, or soon to be expired DS-2019 form must
request an extension of stay. University of Hartford sponsored exchange visitors must contact the
ISA. Visitors sponsored by other exchange programs must contact the Responsible Official of
their exchange program. Exchange visitors in the above categories who wish to begin a new
program or transfer to a different program must also request an extension of stay or program
transfer.

Under no circumstances may the Responsible Officer authorize an extension of stay request
which would permit an exchange visitor to exceed the permissible period of participation
authorized for his or her specific category (e.g. 3 years for a professor or scholar).

All extension of stay requests should be submitted to DOS/USCIS between 15 and 60 days
before the expiration of the exchange visitor's authorized stay.

J-1 Employment
Under certain circumstances, exchange visitors may be authorized on-campus or off-campus employment which is not directly related to their J-1 program description.

**Matriculated exchange visitor students requirements**

To be employed on or off-campus, an exchange visitor student must show that the employment is:

- Pursuant to a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship.
- Occurs on-campus.
- Occurs off-campus when it is necessary because of serious, urgent, or unforeseen economic circumstances which have arisen since acquiring exchange visitor status.

In addition:

- Employment may not cause the participant to reduce preparation and studies below the full-time requirement of his or her program.
- The student is in good academic standing according to University standards.
- The student is not employed for more than 20 hours per week while school is in session (during official school breaks and vacation periods, a student may be employed for more than 20 hours per week).

Note:

Approval for employment must be terminated when the above stated conditions are not met.

**Employment pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship**

An exchange visitor student enrolled in a full-time degree or certificate program may engage in employment for pay, if that employment is pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship. The employment must be on-campus and be directly related to the exchange visitor’s course of study. In some instances, employment may be on a full-time basis if that is a requirement of the program (e.g. Co-Op). The Responsible Officer should be made aware of any offers made to exchange students under these provisions.

**Non-Matriculated Exchange Visitor students**

Exchange visitor students who are enrolled in non-degree programs of study at the University of Hartford (e.g. summer or other short-term exchange programs), are prohibited from seeking on or off-campus employment while in the U.S. unless they meet the requirements as stated above for degree seeking students.

**Professors, Scholars, Lecturers and Researchers**

Exchange visitors under any of these categories may be employed by the University, but only in accordance with the program description on their DS-2019 form. Federal regulations stipulate that an exchange visitor who engages in activities that both produce income from U.S. sources and are unrelated to the participants program, ceases to maintain lawful status. Under certain conditions, exchange visitors in these categories may participate in occasional lectures or consultations off-campus and receive reimbursement for travel, lodging and other out-of-pocket expenses (these types of reimbursement are not considered to be "compensation" by DOS/USCIS). The occasional lectures or consultations must:

- Be directly related to the objectives of the exchange visitor’s program.
• Be incidental to the exchange visitor’s primary program activities.
• Not delay the completion date of the exchange visitor’s program.

Permission to participate in outside lectures or consultations must be granted by the ISA. An exchange visitor must present a letter outlining the terms or conditions of his or her employment offer (e.g. dates, compensation, and program description) as well as a letter from the appropriate department chairperson or college dean recommending the activity. The ISA will issue a letter to the exchange visitor indicating that participation has been approved by the University (if the individual is sponsored by the University of Hartford).

Note:
An exchange visitor may not engage in gainful employment that both produces income from U.S. sources and is unrelated to the visitor’s program except as stated above. Unauthorized employment is deemed a violation of exchange visitor status and a visitor’s program may be subject to termination

J-1 Academic Training

Under certain circumstances, an exchange visitor student may participate in an academic training work experience for a period not to exceed eighteen months. Students may participate in academic training either prior to the completion of a course of study or immediately following the completion of a course of study. The training may be with or without compensation to the student. Academic training authorization may be granted by the Responsible Officer of the program sponsor.

The Responsible Officer's authorization does not require further DOS/USCIS approval.

Participation Requirements

Exchange visitor students may participate in an academic training program provided:

• The student has been in the exchange visitor program for the preceding nine months.
• The student is participating in academic training that is directly related to his or her major field of study.
• If still enrolled in a program of study the student is in good academic standing, or, they have successfully completed the requirements of their program of study.
• The student will participate in an academic training program for the period necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training.
• The student receives approval in advance and in writing from the Responsible Officer of the program sponsor.

Evaluation Procedures

The Responsible Officer is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic training pursued by the student. Evaluations are required (at a minimum) at the mid-point and conclusion of the training period. Written evaluations must be provided to the Responsible Officer from both the student and the employer and must be signed by both. The Responsible Officer will evaluate these statements to ensure program integrity and compliance with Department of State regulations. The University of Hartford requires that students who have completed their course of study and have been authorized the full eighteen months of academic training, submit an evaluation report as stated above following the completion of the sixth, twelfth and eighteenth
month of training. Failure to comply with the evaluation requirement will result in the loss of further training.

Note:

• Students who have not completed their program requirements, but have been authorized to participate in an academic training program, may not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students may work full-time during vacation or break periods.
• Academic trainees must secure a Social Security number for employment purposes. J-1 trainees are not required to pay Social Security taxes. They may however, be required to pay federal and state income taxes. Exchange visitors must insure that their DS-2019 form is extended long enough to complete their academic training experience. If the exchange visitor's DS-2019 will expire before completion of training, a request for an "extension of stay" must be made through the Responsible Officer.
• Exchange Visitors must cease employment immediately following the conclusion of their academic training authorization. They are required to leave the U.S. within thirty days.
• Exchange visitor students who are under a program sponsor other than the University of Hartford are required to seek academic training approval from their exchange program Responsible Officer.

J-1 Visits Abroad and Re-entry to the U.S.A.

Foreign nationals in possession of a J-1 exchange visitor visa, who wish to leave the United States temporarily, and return to the University of Hartford to resume their exchange program, must possess the necessary documents to permit entry to another country and re-entry to the U.S.

Entry into another country from the United States

Exchange visitors who wish to visit their home country of citizenship or permanent residence, or who wish to travel to a third country (one in which they are not a citizen or permanent resident), should be in possession of the following documents:

• A valid passport
• A DS-2019 form properly endorsed by the program sponsor.
• An I-94 form.
• Evidence of financial support.
• Evidence of return transportation to the U.S.

Exchange visitors should carry sufficient funds for their stay abroad, particularly if travel is to a third country.

Depending on the country to be visited, exchange visitors may be required to obtain an entry visa. Visas may be obtained through foreign consular offices located in New York City, Boston or Washington. Addresses and phone numbers are available from the ISA.
Reentry into the United States

Exchange visitors must be prepared to present the following documents to a U.S. Customs officer upon re-entry to the United States following a temporary absence:

- A valid passport and visa (unless exempt from these requirements).
- A properly endorsed DS-2019 form.
- Financial support documentation.

Visa Revalidation

To re-enter the U.S., exchange visitors must be in possession of a valid (unless exempt) J-1 visa in their passport (exceptions may be made for exchange visitors re-entering the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, or some Caribbean islands). Consequently, exchange visitors who entered the U.S. in another nonimmigrant visa classification and have changed status to that of a J-1 exchange visitor, must obtain a J-1 visa before re-entering the U.S. It is not possible to obtain a J-1 visa inside the United States. J-1 exchange visitors, who need to obtain a visa in order to enter the U.S. after a temporary absence, must apply for a visa at a U.S. consular office abroad.

While it is possible for exchange visitors to secure an original or renewal of a J-1 visa in a foreign country other than their own, they may face more stringent requirements than in their home country of residence. In addition to proving eligibility for a J-1 visa, they may have to convince a consular officer that there is a legitimate reason for making the application outside the home country. In some instances, the consular officer in the third country will find it necessary to check with a consular officer in the visitor’s place of residence, to insure eligibility for a nonimmigrant visa. This can be time consuming and result in financial charges to the visitor if information is requested by cable rather than diplomatic mail. Travel plans should be made to allow for possible delays.

Note:
Exchange visitors should not leave the United States without first discussing their travel plans with the ISA. Arrangements should be made with the advisor at least one to two weeks before departure. An exchange visitor who leaves the U.S. without a current or properly endorsed DS-2019 form, may be denied re-entry to the U.S. to resume his or her program.

J-1 Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

Participants in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program assume specific conditions or responsibilities which may apply to them upon arrival to the United States. One of these conditions is commonly referred to as the “Two-Year Home-Country Residency Requirement.” Upon completion of their program in the U.S., exchange visitors may be required to return to their country of nationality or residence, and remain in that country for two years before applying for a U.S. immigrant visa, permanent residence, "H" temporary worker or trainee visa, or "L" intra-company transferee visa.

Compliance

Exchange visitors may have to comply with this requirement if:

- Their participation in a program was financed in whole or part, directly or indirectly, by an agency of the U.S. government or the government of the participant's nationality or last legal
permanent residence.
• They have acquired a skill which is in short supply in their own country, and that skill appears on the
  "Exchange Visitor Skills List."
• They have received graduate medical education or training.

The Waiver Application process

Under certain circumstances, the "Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement" may be waived. The DOS offers an advisory opinion in each case, with the final decision being made by the USCIS:

• Exceptional hardship - Applicants must demonstrate that exceptional hardship to a
  U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse or child of the exchange visitor would be
  caused by their departure from the U.S. and residence abroad.
• Persecution - The exchange visitor must show that the return to his/her home country of
  residence would subject them to persecution because of race, religion, political opinion,
  nationality, or membership in a particular social group.
• Interest of a U.S. government agency - If an exchange visitor is engaged in a program for
  or in the interest of a U.S. government agency, a waiver may be granted on the grounds
  of "national interest"; that the exchange visitor's absence would be clearly detrimental to
  the program or activities of interest to that agency.
• "Statement of No Objection" by home country - A waiver may be granted if the home
  country of the exchange visitor provides a "statement of no objection" to the exchange
  visitor's remaining in the U.S.
• Indication that an exchange visitor is subject to the two-year residency requirement will be
  found on the visitor's DS-2019 form.
• The processing of waiver applications may take up to nine months or more. Marriage to an
  American citizen or permanent resident will not void the residency requirement.
• Departure from the U.S., followed by re-entry under a different visa classification, will not void
  the residency requirement.

J-2 Dependent Status

The spouse and unmarried minor children of a J-1 exchange visitor may accompany the principal
J-1 visa holder to the United States or follow to join the visitor at a later date. The dependents will
be accorded J-2 status by a U.S. consulate or embassy official provided they establish their
eligibility for a J-2 visa.

Obtaining a visa

A J-1 exchange visitor's spouse/children must apply for a J-2 visa from a U.S. consulate or
embassy (unless exempt from passport and visa requirements). If the J-2 dependent(s) is to
accompany the J-1 exchange visitor to the U.S., he or she may obtain a visa along with the J-1
exchange visitor on the basis of the DS-2019 form issued to the principal participant by the
program sponsor. Dependent(s) who follow exchange visitors to the U.S. must obtain a DS-2019
form from their exchange-program sponsor for that purpose. Dependents may be required to
present other documentation to a consular official to substantiate their request for J-2 status. This
documentation may include birth certificates, marriage certificates, financial statements of support from a financial sponsor, and proof that they will return to their home residence following the conclusion of the J-1 exchange visitor's program. Only the spouse and unmarried children (under the age of 21) of an exchange visitor are eligible for J-2 status. Nationals of certain countries, who are exempt from passport and visa requirements, may bypass the visa application process and apply for admission directly at a U.S. port of entry.

**University requirements to obtain a DS-2019 for a J-2 Visa**

J-1 exchange visitors, who wish to bring their spouse/minor children to the U.S., must meet certain University of Hartford requirements before a DS-2019 form may be issued:

- Clearance from the exchange visitor's home government, international organization or U.S. agency which provides financial support or sponsorship for the principal participant.
- Satisfactory evidence of financial support for the dependent(s). This evidence may be presented to the ISA in the form of (a) an official statement of savings on deposit in a U.S. bank, (b) a certified guarantee from a sponsor, including bank statements showing that funds are available, (c) an official document from the exchange visitor's home government or sponsoring agency authorizing currency exchange for dependents, or, (d) a combination of the above.
- The ISA will make the final determination as to whether the documentation meets the financial requirements of the University. In some cases, additional documentation may be accepted or required.

**Employment**

A J-2 dependent may apply for permission to work while in the United States provided the income derived from employment is needed to provide support for the dependent(s) and not the principal exchange visitor. Financial need is not a criterion for J-2 employment permission, though the USCIS often requests the submission of a personal budget. The USCIS will review this budget to insure that the principal participant has adequate resources to support himself/herself.

The ISA may not grant on or off-campus work approval to a J-2 dependent. Approval may only be granted by the USCIS. A J-2 dependent may not work on-campus in the form of an assistantship or student employee unless enrolled as a full-time student.

Note: A J-2 dependent may not engage in employment until approval for such activities has been granted by the USCIS. If permission for employment is granted, the dependent may be employed full or part-time without restriction to occupation. Authorization for employment will be found on the dependent's *Employment Authorization Document,* Permission for employment will expire at the same time as the authorized stay noted on the principal participant's DS-2019 form or a period of four years (whichever is shorter). Extensions for employment may be requested at the same time an extension of stay request is made to continue the principal participant's program. J-2 employment earnings are subject to Social Security, Federal, and State income taxes.

**Extension of Stay**

An Extension of stay may be granted to a J-2 dependent for the same period of time that is allowed the J-1 exchange visitor. The J-2 extension request will be adjudicated by the USCIS at the same time as the extension request of the J-1 participant. The following documentation should be provided for an extension request. It may take up to three months or more for the
USCIS to process an extension of stay request.

**Visits Abroad and Re-entry to the U.S.**

J-2 dependents may travel outside the U.S. for a temporary visit to another country. The dependent must have the proper documents to enter the country being visited and to return to the U.S.

The dependent must be in possession of:
- A valid passport and visa (unless exempt from passport and visa requirements).
- A DS-2019 form; this form must be endorsed by the program sponsor (Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer) no more than 12 months preceding the date of re-entry, indicating that the J-1 exchange visitor is in status.
- A visa(s), if required, for entry to a third country.

A J-2 dependent may travel outside the U.S. with or without the J-1 exchange visitor.

**DOS Insurance Requirement**

J-2 Dependents are required to carry insurance coverage which meets the insurance regulations set by Department of State. The insurance requirements for J-2 dependents are the same as the principal J-1 exchange visitor requirements.

"**Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement**"

A J-2 dependent is subject to the "Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement," if the J-1 exchange visitor is subject to that requirement.

**School Attendance**

J-2 dependents may enroll in a program of study, including degree and certificate granting programs, as a full or part-time student. They may remain in a course of study for as long as the J-1 principal alien continues to maintain legal J-1 status. If a J-2 dependent wishes to continue studies beyond the expiration of the J-1 student's status, the J-2 dependent must apply to the USCIS for a change of nonimmigrant status that will allow for school attendance (generally either F-1 or J-1 visa).

**Departure or termination of program**

The status of a J-2 dependent is terminated upon the completion of the J-1 exchange visitor's program. A J-2 dependent is expected to leave the U.S. no later than the departure of the principal participant. A dependent may remain in the U.S. with the J-1 principal exchange visitor no longer than 30 days following the completion of the exchange program.