

J-1 VISA PROCEDURES AND PRE-ARRIVAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars (DCISS) is pleased to provide you with the attached Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019) for Exchange Visitor (J1) Visa status. This form certifies that the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) will sponsor your stay in the U.S. under its Exchange Visitor Program as designated by the U.S. Department of State. **Please refer to the steps below for information on how to apply for your J-1 Visa and requirements you must complete before and upon arrival at UCLA.**

STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR UCLA DS-2019

Look at your biographical information and program dates (item 3) on your UCLA DS-2019. Contact DCISS immediately if there are any errors on the form. Sign at the bottom of the DS-2019 form. *Contact DCISS immediately if you are currently in the U.S.*

STEP 2: PAY THE SEVIS I-901 FEE

You must pay the SEVIS fee before applying for the J-1 Visa. The SEVIS fee can be paid online at www.FMjfee.com. Print a copy of your payment receipt and have it with you when applying for your J-1 Visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate and when entering the U.S.

STEP 3: APPLY FOR A J-1 VISA

If you are outside the U.S. and do not have a valid J-1 Visa, follow the steps below to apply for a J-1 Visa (*Canadian citizens exempt*):

1. Pay the DS-160 / MRV (visa application) fee and schedule your visa appointment with a U.S. Embassy/Consulate online ceac.state.gov/genniv
2. Take your UCLA DS-2019, valid passport, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, DS-160/MRV (visa application) fee receipt, passport style photos (if applicable), evidence of strong ties to your home country, and financial documents to your visa interview appointment. *The following are examples of strong ties:* proof of close family ties in your home country; proof of ownership of real property including stocks & investments; proof of guaranteed employment in your country or any other document that supports your intent to return home at the conclusion of your activities in the U.S.

If you intend to apply for J-2 Visas for your spouse or children, you must provide evidence of their full names, relationship to you, residence, nationality, and DS-2019s. Visa applicants should allow enough time to apply for the visa, as some individuals may experience issuance delays due to security clearances. For more information about the visa application process, please visit usvisas.state.gov

STEP 4: ARRANGE HEALTH INSURANCE

As an exchange visitor you are required to enroll in a health insurance plan that meets both U.S. Department of State and UCLA requirements. The insurance must cover you and all accompanying dependents for your entire stay in the U.S. starting with the date of arrival and ending with the date of departure. Any exchange visitor who willfully refuses to comply with this requirement shall be considered to be in violation of their exchange visitor status. See the reverse side of this document for detailed information about health insurance requirements at UCLA.

STEP 5: U.S. ENTRY PROCEDURES

Visitors entering the U.S. on J-1 status using an initial DS-2019 form may enter the U.S. **up to 30 days** before, but **no later than 25 days** after, the start date on their DS-2019. Carry the following documents with you to present to immigration officials when entering the U.S.: *DS-2019, passport, financial documents, & SEVIS receipt*. Be sure that the immigration officer at the U.S. Port of Entry **stamps the date of entry** in your passport.

STEP 6: MANDATORY VISA CHECK-IN

All exchange visitors must report their arrival (*check-in*) to DCISS by completing the online J-1 Visa Check-in Application. The application must be completed no later than 25 days after the start date on your DS-2019. See the reverse side of this document for instructions on how to access and complete the online J-1 Visa Check-in Application.

STEP 7: BEGIN jPATH ORIENTATION

UCLA jPATH is a mandatory orientation designed to meet U.S. Department of State requirements and to help you adjust to life in the U.S. and at UCLA. jPATH consists of 4 online video modules: *J-1 Visa Workshop, Getting Started at UCLA, Getting Started in Los Angeles, and Cultural Adjustment*. There is a mandatory \$59 fee for jPATH. You can pay and access jPATH here: <https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/j-1-scholars/jpath-orientation>

MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

All J-1 Exchange Visitors at UCLA are required to enroll in one of the following health insurance plans depending on their UCLA appointment title:

(A) Visiting Scholar Benefit Plan (VSBP)

J-1 Exchange Visitors at UCLA such as Visiting Scholars and Visiting Student Researchers (VGRs) are required to enroll in the Visiting Scholar Benefit Plan (VSPB) through Garnett-Powers & Associates. Scholars may begin the enrollment process only after receiving the DS-2019 form. You can waive out of this requirement if you are already enrolled in a health insurance plan that meets the J-1 visa requirements. Postdocs and employees receiving medical benefits through UCLA do not qualify for this plan.

Information regarding eligibility, requirements, enrollment and the waiver approval process can be found on the Garnett-Powers site at <http://clients.garnett-powers.com/vs/ucla/>.

(B) Postdoctoral Scholar Benefit Plan (PSBP)

PSBP is the insurance plan for UCLA Postdocs. Information regarding eligibility, requirements, and enrollment process can be found on the Garnett-Powers site at <https://clients.garnett-powers.com/pd/uc/>. Your UCLA academic department will assist you with enrollment when you arrive as part of the hiring process.

(C) UCLA Employee Medical Benefits

UCLA employees, other than Postdocs, typically receive UCLA Medical Benefits. Your UCLA academic department will assist you with enrollment when you arrive as part of the hiring process. Medical benefits coverage for employees do not include repatriation of remains and medical evacuation. You can enroll in a supplemental plan that will cover only repatriation of remains and medical evacuation to meet J-1 visa requirements. Refer to the DCISS website for details.

If you are not sure of which category above you fall into, please contact your academic department for clarification.

MANDATORY ONLINE J-1 VISA CHECK-IN

All exchange visitors must report their arrival to DCISS by completing the online J-1 Visa Check-in Application. The application must be completed no later than 25 days after the start date on your DS-2019. Follow the steps on our website here:

<https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/j-1-scholars/j-1-visa-check-in>

You will be required to upload the following documents:

- **DS-2019 (Page 1)**
- **I-94 Admission Record***
- **J-1 Visa (except Canadian citizens)**
- **U.S. Entry Stamp in Passport**
- **Proof of Medical Insurance****

Access your I-94 Admission Record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/ only **after arrival to the U.S. This website is only accessible after your arrival to the U.S. If you receive a paper I-94 card at the port of entry instead, scan a copy of both the front and back sides of the card.*

***VSBP enrollment, paid invoice, or waiver confirmation will be sent to you by email. For those approved for the VSBP waiver, you will also need to upload proof of medical insurance used to waive. Postdoctoral scholars and UCLA Employees receiving medical benefits can access proof of their insurance enrollment on their UCPath account.*

If you have travel plans outside of the U.S. shortly after your initial arrival on J-1, make sure to complete the online J-1 visa check-in and receive a completion confirmation email from DCISS before departing the U.S.

Please Note: Failure to complete the visa check-in is a violation of your J-1 status. DCISS will make efforts to contact you during this period, but **it is your responsibility** to complete the J-1 Visa Check-in in a timely manner. If you fail to do this **within 25 days after the start date** indicated on your DS-2019, you will automatically fall out of J-1 status affecting your ability to participate in your research or studies and remain in the U.S.