

J-1 Visa Information for Students

What is the J-1 Visa (Exchange Visitor) Program?

The purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is to increase mutual understanding between people of the U.S. and people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges, thereby strengthening the ties between the nations. There are fifteen different categories under the J-1 visa program: you are here in a “student” category. The J-1 visa accommodates your travel to the U.S. to study full-time, explore, and be a “citizen ambassador.” Please see the Department of State’s [Welcome Brochure](#) or visit the website: <https://j1visa.state.gov/>

How to Apply for the J-1 Visa

1. **Obtain your DS-2019 Form (Certificate of Eligibility)** sent to you by Quinnipiac University.
2. **Pay the I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee online at** <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp>. For more information about the I-901 Fee, please visit, <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/>. Once you pay the fee, print the receipt showing payment.
3. **Apply for an Exchange Visitor J-1 Visa at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate** in your country of residence. <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. On the webpage for your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, visit “visa information” for instructions about how to make a visa interview appointment, pay the application processing fee, etc.

If you are married and/or have children you wish to bring to the United States with you, please contact international.student@quinnipiac.edu.

4. **Gather the following remaining documents:**
 - a. Passport valid for travel to the United States
 - b. Completed Online Form DS-160, nonimmigrant visa application
 - c. Form DS-2019
 - d. Confirmation of payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee
 - e. 2 inch x 2 inch passport photograph meeting these requirements: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>
 - f. Quinnipiac acceptance letter
 - g. Transcript or proof of enrollment at your home institution
 - h. Proof of funding for your stay in the U.S.
 - i. Other supporting documents – check the specific embassy or consulate website.

The wait time for an interview and processing for a J-1 Visa varies from country to country and is based on your individual circumstances. Learn more about interview wait and processing times by visiting <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html> and view Visa Wait Times (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>). We encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

J-1 Visa Information

Two-year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement

Exchange Visitors subject to the 212(e) [two-year home country physical presence requirement](#) must return to their home countries and be physically present there for an aggregate of two years before being eligible to return to the U.S. in H, L, or immigrant (permanent resident/green card) status. When you apply for your J-1 visa at a U.S. consulate or embassy, the U.S. consular officer will check a box on your DS-2019 to indicate whether or not this requirement applies to you.

Period of Authorized Stay

Your admission to the U.S. is for “duration of status,” that is, for the length of your J-1 status. J-1 status covers:

- Time between initial entry and the start of studies (you can enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days before the start date on your DS-2019)
- Study period when you are a full-time registered student making normal progress in your degree or exchange program studies
- Optional period of academic training following completion of studies
- 30-day “grace period” after completion of studies, to prepare to depart the U.S. or change to another status.

J-1 Document Overview

Federal law requires you to carry “registration” documents at all times: DS-2019, passport, and [I-94 record](#). Below is an overview of the documents related to your J-1 status. For day-to-day purposes, we suggest you keep these documents in a secure location and you should carry photocopies. However, if you travel outside of Connecticut you should carry the original documents with you. If you travel by air, train, bus or ship, you may be required to produce these documents before boarding. Keep photocopies and digital copies of all your documents in a separate location in the event your documents are lost or stolen.

- **Passport**
Your passport must be valid at all times. Keep your passport and other important documents in a safe place, such as a bank safe-deposit box. Report a lost or stolen passport to the police because your government may require a police report before issuing a new passport. To renew or replace your passport, contact your country’s consulate in the U.S.
- **Visa**
The visa is the stamp that the U.S. consular officer placed on a page in your passport. The visa permitted you to apply for admission into the U.S. as a J-1 student, and need not remain valid while you are in the U.S. If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., the next time you travel abroad you must obtain a new J-1 visa before returning to the U.S. Exceptions to this rule exist for short trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands.

- **DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility**

Issued by Quinnipiac University, this document allows you to apply for a J-1 visa if you are outside the U.S, apply for J-1 status within the U.S., enter and reenter the U.S. in J-1 status, and prove your eligibility for various J-1 benefits. The DS-2019 indicates the institution in which you are permitted to study, your program of study, and the dates of eligibility. The DS-2019 must remain valid at all times. Allowing the DS-2019 to expire before you complete your academic program is a violation of J-1 status.

The DS-2019 is a printout from your SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) record. SEVIS is an internet-based database that allows schools and federal immigration agencies to exchange data on the status of international students. Information is transmitted electronically throughout a J-1 student's academic career in the U.S. Each student has a unique SEVIS ID number, which is printed on your DS-2019 in the top right corner.

- **I-94 Record**

U.S. entry and exits are recorded electronically by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) through the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. This important record lists your entry date, port of entry, and admission status (like "J-1"). The I-94 record may be required as proof of status for J-1 benefits applications, employment verification, and other official purposes. When you enter the U.S. by airplane or ship you will be issued an online I-94 automatically. For entry crossing a land border, you will be issued a white paper I-94 card.

You might need a printout of your I-94 information to apply for various benefits such as a Connecticut State ID card or a Social Security Number. You can obtain a printout of your I-94 record at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>.

J-1 Health Insurance Requirement

Federal and state laws require that international students maintain adequate health insurance while attending Quinnipiac. While many other countries bear the expense of health care for their residents, individuals in the United States are responsible for these expenses themselves. A single day of hospitalization can cost thousands of dollars. A good insurance policy gives you access to excellent medical facilities and provides protection against the enormous costs of health care in the U.S.

As a J-1 Exchange Visitor, you and your J-2 dependents are required to have sickness and accident insurance, including coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains, for the duration of your J-1 program. This is a U.S. federal law. (U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Title 22 Section 62.14)

J-1 Exchange Students must enroll in Quinnipiac University's Student Health Insurance plan through Gallagher Health and are not eligible to seek a student health insurance waiver. The Quinnipiac student health insurance plan satisfies the J-1 visa insurance requirements. You can read more about the plan here: <https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/student-home.php?idField=1113>

Full-Time Registration Requirements and Exceptions

Full-Time Requirements

In general, J-1 students must be registered for a “full course of study.” Online classes do not count towards full-time enrollment. “Full-time” is defined as at least:

- 12 credits each semester for undergraduate students
- 9 credits each semester for graduate students

Exceptions to the Full-Time Enrollment Requirement

The J-1 regulations allow for some exceptions to the full-time rule. Any exception would require advance permission from your international advisor in the OISS. Do not register for fewer than the required number of credits or withdraw from a course without first receiving permission from the OISS. Part-time studies could jeopardize your stay in the U.S. and make you ineligible for J-1 benefits.

Employment

J-1 status allows **limited** employment, such as on-campus positions or Academic Training. You must always receive employment authorization **in advance** of applying for or accepting any employment. You must meet with your international advisor in the OISS.