



J Exchange Visitor Overview

Purpose: This handout is designed to provide a general overview of the J-1 Exchange Visitor classification. It will provide information for department faculty and staff to invite international scholars to the United States to teach, conduct research or perform other academic activities at Boston University. This handout does not address the J-1 student classification at Boston University.

The J Exchange Visitor Classification: The J Exchange Visitor Program is administered by the U.S. Department of State. The program was founded in 1961 to invite international students and scholars to the U.S. on a temporary basis in the interest of cultural, scientific and educational exchange.

Boston University has been designated as a program sponsor to facilitate non-clinical research and educational exchange. As a J Exchange Visitor Program sponsor, Boston University is required to comply with all program regulations and procedures. There are several categories of J Exchange Visitors. Boston University has been approved by the Department of State to sponsor students, professors, research scholars, short-term scholars and specialists. Professors and research scholars must be appointed for a minimum of three (3) weeks up to a maximum of five (5) years. A short-term scholar may be appointed for a maximum of six (6) months; there is no minimum stay required. A specialist must be appointment for a minimum of three (3) weeks up to a maximum of one (1) year.

J-1 Exchange Visitors are limited to employment at Boston University or, under certain circumstances, at Boston Medical Center as well. Occasional lectures and short-term consultations at other institutions may be approved with advanced written authorization from the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO).

J Exchange Visitor Eligibility: The J Exchange Visitor classification is designed to invite international professors and researchers who qualify for temporary, non-tenure track academic appointments. Please consult the Boston University Faculty Handbook for a description of these titles and positions. Boston University will sponsor instructors and researchers that have attained the academic equivalent of a U.S. master's degree. Our institution is not authorized by the Department of State to sponsor programs that are clinical in nature and involve direct patient care. Therefore, residency, clinical fellowship, technical and administrative positions do not qualify for J-1 Exchange Visitor sponsorship at Boston University.

In addition, the exchange visitor must demonstrate sufficient financial support for the duration of his/her academic appointment. Please refer to the most recent *Estimate of Expenses for J Exchange Visitors* for detailed information.

Finally, if the prospective scholar is outside the United States, he/she must be eligible for the J Exchange Visitor classification according to the grounds of admissibility to the United States determined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. If the scholar is currently in the United States, he/she must be eligible for a change to, or extension of, J immigration classification. Please contact the ISSO for more information.

J Exchange Visitor Application Process: The academic department should contact the ISSO as soon as they identify a prospective exchange visitor to discuss eligibility and appropriate visa classifications. The department and the prospective scholar must submit the documents requested on the [Department Checklist – International Scholar Processing](#) and the [International Scholar Application Checklist](#). We recommend that the department submit the J-1 application packet at least 60 days prior to the projected start date of the appointment as processing times at the U.S. embassy or consulate vary and could take several weeks.

The ISSO will review the application packet and, provided all of the information is complete and the scholar meets the eligibility criteria, prepare and issue a SEVIS¹ Form DS-2019 *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status* to the prospective scholar. If the prospective scholar is not in the United States, he/she must take the SEVIS Form DS-2019 form to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a J-1 visa stamp in his/her passport. Once the J-1 visa has been issued, he/she can then travel to the United States. If the prospective scholar is in the United States, he/she should contact the ISSO to discuss further immigration status processing.

Scholar Orientation: Federal regulations require that all J-1 exchange visitors report their arrival to the ISSO. Furthermore, the Department of State also requires that all J-1 exchange visitors attend an orientation upon arrival. The ISSO offers Scholar Orientation sessions every Monday morning at 11am and every Thursday afternoon at 3pm. During Scholar Orientation, the ISSO certifies the J-1 Exchange Visitor's arrival, provides information about immigration and insurance regulations, and informs the scholar about Boston University and the surrounding community.

Please note that all scholars who receive a salary from Boston University must also complete Form I-9 *Employment Eligibility Verification* at the ISSO prior to the end of their third day of employment. The ISSO will review and verify the I-9 form during Scholar Orientation.

Extensions: If the initial appointment is less than the maximum stay allowed in the J-1 exchange visitor's category, the department may request an extension of the exchange visitor's immigration status. There is no limit to the number of extensions allowed within the maximum period of stay.

Once the new SEVIS Form DS-2019 is produced, the ISSO will distribute it as the departments instructs on Form A. If the J-1 Exchange Visitor is on Boston University's payroll, he/she must also complete an I-9 form at the ISSO to extend the scholar's employment eligibility. Please note that this extension process and the updated I-9 form must be completed prior to the expiration of the current SEVIS Form DS-2019. Extension request should be submitted to the ISSO at least two weeks prior to the expiration of the current SEVIS Form DS-2019.

Health Insurance Requirement: All exchange visitors are required to maintain health insurance in accordance with guidelines determined by the Department of State. Refer to the *J Exchange Visitor Health Insurance Requirement* handout for specific information. Non-compliance will result in failure to maintain proper immigration status and could result in program termination.

J-2 Dependents: A dependent of a J-1 exchange visitor is defined as a spouse, or child under the age of 21. A J-1 exchange visitor may request a separate SEVIS Form DS-2019 for each dependant to enable them to apply for a J-2 visa stamp at a U.S. embassy or consulate. The dependents may accompany the J-1 exchange visitor to the U.S. or follow to join the scholar later in the program. The J-1 exchange visitor must submit financial documentation to demonstrate support for the dependents for the duration of his/her academic program.

All J-2 exchange visitors must also be covered by health insurance that meets the minimum criteria determined by the Department of State. Refer to the *Exchange Visitor Health Insurance Requirement* handout for more information. Finally, a J-2 dependents who are at least 16 years old may apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for work authorization after they arrive in the United States. The J-1 exchange visitor should contact the ISSO for more information.

Two-Year Home Residence Requirement: Because the J Exchange Visitor Program was designed to promote temporary, academic exchange, some J-1 and J-2 exchange visitors are required to return home to fulfill a two-year home residence requirement. This requirement varies depending on country of citizenship and source of funding. This regulation prohibits them from obtaining U.S. permanent residence and from applying for other non-immigrant classifications such as H or L, unless they fulfill the two-year home residence requirement or obtain an official waiver from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Please contact the ISSO for more information.

Studying at Boston University: A J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor is allowed to register for part-time classes provided he/she has met all department and program obligations. The J exchange visitor is required to pay all registration and tuition fees unless he/she qualifies for Boston University tuition remission as a full-time employee with benefits. Please contact the Office of Personnel for more information.

Boston University Scholars Sponsored by Other Agencies: Occasionally, an academic department may wish to invite a scholar who may already have a sponsor for J exchange visitor status. Because Boston University will not need to issue a SEVIS Form DS-2019 to this scholar, the department must contact the ISSO and forward a letter of appointment so the ISSO can maintain a file for the scholar. In addition, the scholar must report his/her arrival to the ISSO. If the scholar will be paid from Boston University payroll, the scholar will also need to complete an I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) within the first three days of employment.

Estimate of Expenses: In order for the ISSO to issue a DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status, the scholar and/or the host department must demonstrate financial support to meet or exceed minimum funding requirements for the full period of the scholar's academic appointment. These minimum funding requirements are reviewed by the ISSO annually, with the current estimates posted on-line at <http://www.bu.edu/isso/scholars/minimum-funding.html>.

Boston University salary, per diem, stipends, grants and other non-salary funding should be reflected in the appointment letter and on page 3 of the scholar's Form B. If funding from other sources is to be considered (e.g., private or family sponsor, ministry of the scholar's government, scholar's savings), **original** documentation must be submitted to the ISSO. All documents must be **translated into English** and figures **converted to US dollars**.

The minimum financial estimate is provided as a guide to visiting scholars (researchers, professors, short-term scholars and specialists) under the J Exchange Visitor Program at Boston University. Please keep in mind that these figures are estimates only; actual costs may be higher depending on lifestyle. The figures also include an estimate for the cost of health insurance.

For scholars in J-1 status who will be paid by Boston University, the ISSO funding estimate should not be used to calculate the scholar's salary. Researchers, faculty members and other visiting scholars paid by Boston University should be awarded a salary that meets department and university equity standards and is commensurate with the scholar's related experience.

1. "Student and Exchange Visitor Information System." The U.S. Department of Homeland Security database used to produce visa-related documents and to track international student and scholars.