

# J-1 Visa Trainee and Internship Programs



## PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION GUIDE

*"Reaching out to encourage a lifelong journey  
of global peace and understanding."* - Mission Statement

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Planning your visa interview and subsequent arrival into the United States can be overwhelming, so we'd like to offer you some information to help you organize your trip and to help make you aware of things to expect during your stay on program.*

*In this Pre-Departure Orientation Guide, we will outline the next steps in attaining your J-1 visa, plus expenses to consider before and during your program. CETUSA is happy to offer assistance in this process, and is available for any questions you might have.*

*Best Regards,  
Your CETUSA Staff*

## **J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM PURPOSE**

### **Program Purpose**

- \* Increase mutual understanding between cultures
- \* Create cultural and professional learning opportunities between citizens of the United States and citizens of other countries
- \* Provide you with opportunities for professional development, insight into American know-how in the professional field of your choice and a greater understanding of American society and culture
- \* Help American businesses and individuals learn about your expertise and the culture of your home country
- \* Share the cross-cultural and professional knowledge you have gained from this experience upon your return home

### **Program Entities**

J-1 Trainee/Intern – A non-U.S. resident applicant who meets the J-1 Trainee/Intern qualifying criteria. This is you.

Host Company – A U.S. based business entity willing to cooperate under J-1 Trainee/Internship Program rules and regulations. This is where you will be training.

Sponsoring Organization – CETUSA is the designated J-1 Trainee/Internship Program sponsor. As your sponsor, we are responsible for supporting and monitoring you during your stay.

## **U.S. VISA APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **Scheduling the Visa Interview**

Your first step in obtaining your J-1 visa is locating a U.S. Embassy or Consulate near you. Visit this website to find the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to you:

[www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov). Please ensure you closely follow requirements listed on the website and schedule your J-1 visa appointment without delay, as processing visa applications can take up to a few weeks. Check with your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate for approximate processing times and appointment availability.

Visa application requirements, forms, and fees vary between countries, but you must bring the following documents to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country to apply for the J-1 visa:

- \* DS-2019 Form - Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status
- \* DS-7002 Form - A Training/Internship Placement Plan (training plan)
- \* DS-160 Form - Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application
- \* Nonimmigrant Visa Application Processing Fee (CETUSA does not pay this fee)
- \* A passport valid for travel to the U.S with validity six months after the intended period of stay in the US
- \* One 2inx2in photograph (passport sized)
- \* I-901 SEVIS payment receipt (we supply this)
- \* Insurance certificate
- \* Documents demonstrating your intent to return home at the end of your program:
  - o Ownership of private property;
  - o Marriage/child birth certificates; or
  - o Intent of job offer
- \* Any other necessary documents (school transcripts, diplomas, or reference letters)

### **At the Visa Interview**

Once at the visa interview with your selected documents, the interviewer will ask questions pertaining to your planned program in the United States. Be sure to review your DS-7002 T/IPP (training plan) before your visa interview. Lack of knowledge or details regarding your training plan may lead to your visa being denied.

You must be able to explain how your U.S. training will be different from training you may encounter anywhere else. You should concentrate on new skills you will acquire,

rather than on skills you already possess. You should demonstrate professionalism and interest in your J-1 Trainee/Internship Program and be able to answer the U.S. Consular's questions very clearly by providing complete answers and sufficient proficiency in English language skills to convince the Consular of your capacity to take full advantage of training while in the United States.

You will also need to provide information showing your ties with your home country. The J-1 visa is an exchange visitor program, and as such, you are required to return to your home country after the end of your program.

Section 212(e) of the U.S. Immigration & Nationality Act, also known as the Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement, requires some J visa holders to return to their home countries for two years at the end of their programs.

Note: To see how the 212(e) rule may apply to you, take a look at Appendix A at the end of this orientation guide.

The purpose of this program is not work, but training. Trainees and interns on the J-1 program will not be placed in positions that displace full- or part-time employees.

You should mentally prepare yourself for the interview by asking yourself the following questions:

- \* What is the reason for your coming to the United States?
- \* Why do you want to participate in the J-1 Program in the United States?
- \* In what ways do you think this program will help you in your future career?
- \* How did you locate your U.S. host company?
- \* Have you ever been to the U.S. before and what was the purpose?
- \* Do you have any friends or relatives living in the United States?
- \* Tell me about your training program and how you think it will enhance your current career or experience?

### **After the Visa Interview**

You must notify your local CETUSA third-party agent and your CETUSA program administrator of the visa interview results. In the event of a visa denial, you must return your DS-2019 and proof of denial to the CETUSA office to receive any refund of paid program fees. SEVIS payments are non-refundable.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR DEPARTURE**

Immediately notify your CETUSA program administrator when you have information regarding your travel information, including:

1. Flight numbers
2. Airline
3. Departure date/time, and;
4. Arrival date/time

### **Living Accommodations in the U.S.**

Some host companies offer housing or assist you with finding housing, but with most J-1 programs you will be responsible for finding your own living accommodations. It is a good idea to start looking at options before you arrive.

Please refer to the 'Housing' section of your 'CETUSA Participant Handbook' on pages 17-22. The 'Housing' section offers a suggested search timeline and covers information on types of housing, leases & fees, and roommates.

CETUSA can assist you with securing suitable housing prior to your program start date by offering advice and helping by locating housing in the area you will be training in. Any information or leads offered by CETUSA are merely suggestions, and are not endorsed by CETUSA. We can additionally write a letter of support that you may offer to landlords that explains your circumstances as a J-1 exchange visitor.

If you choose to look for your housing after your arrival in the United States, please be sure to make a hotel reservation prior to leaving your home country.

### **What to Bring with You**

We suggest you research the city or town you will be training in and ask for information from your CETUSA program administrator or future host company supervisor in order to confirm that you are packing appropriately. Each airline has different luggage restrictions, so check to see if it costs more to check additional or overweight luggage, or what the carry-on limitations are. It is smart to think about:

- \* Workplace dress code -
  - Will it be business casual or professional?
  - What kind of shoes/pants/shirts are acceptable?
  - Will there be a uniform provided?
- \* City or town climate throughout the seasons

- \* Toiletries (toothbrush, shampoo, soap, etc.)
- \* Medications –
  - o Can you get your prescription while in the United States? or;
  - o Will your pharmacy fill your prescription in advance?
- \* Phone –
  - o Will your current cell phone work internationally, and at what cost? or;
  - o Will you be signing a contract with a U.S. service provider?
- \* Finances (consider initial costs, monthly expenses, and emergency cash)

### **Important Documents**

It is essential to put together a folder containing documents that are important to your J-1 visa and arrival in the United States. Keep these documents in a safe place because you may need them during your stay on program.

- \* Form DS-2019
- \* Form DS-7002 (Training Plan)
- \* Valid Passport w/ J-1 Visa
- \* Social Security support letter from CETUSA (or your social security card if you already have a SSN)
- \* I-901 SEVIS payment receipt
- \* Your CETUSA Participant Handbook
- \* International driving permit and home country driving license (if you want to drive)
- \* Copy of hotel reservation confirmation (if staying in a hotel at time of arrival) or;
- \* Copy of lease agreement w/ U.S. address and signatures

You may also want to make copies of your financial statements to use as proof of sufficient funds when applying for a credit card or housing.

### **Travel & Entry into the U.S.**

To learn more about arrival, customs and port of entry expectations, please read the attached U.S. Department of Homeland Security's 'Fact Sheet' (Appendix B).

Within the first 3 days of your arrival, please report your living address to your CETUSA program administrator. They will activate your program in the SEVIS database and send you your 'Arrival Orientation Packet.' Your 'Arrival Orientation Packet' will include information on typical U.S. customs, CETUSA monthly check-ins, your health insurance policy number, and the city or area you will be living in.

## **FINANCES & EXPENSES**

### **Funds for Arrival/Stay**

CETUSA requires every program participant (regardless of the stipend provided) to have a minimum of \$2,000 available at the time of arrival for initial costs. This money may be used to put down a deposit for housing, cover the costs of the temporary lodging, acquiring transportation, and food. Note: it takes 1-2 weeks after you begin your training before you will receive your first paycheck, and sometimes longer.

You should plan on a minimum budget of at least \$1,000 per month to cover rent, food, transportation and personal expenses. Your expenses will vary depending on the area's average rental fees and your personal spending habits, but it is a good idea to follow a budget and forecast monthly expenses. Please consult with your program administrator should you have questions or need help estimating your living expenses.

For more information on budgeting and managing your money, please refer to the 'Finances' section of your 'CETUSA Participant Handbook' on pages 25-27.

### **Program & Sponsor Fees**

Program Sponsorship Fee - CETUSA provides you with the DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility) which is used to apply at the U.S. Consulate for the J-1 Training and Internship Program Exchange-Visitor visa.

SEVIS Fee - The United States Department of Homeland Security maintains a database of non-immigrant visa holders during their time in the United States. All program participants must be registered in this database.

Accident and Health Insurance - All program participants must carry accident and health insurance in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of State.

If additional services are requested, other fees may include:

- \* Lost/Stolen DS-2019 Form Re-Issuance Fee
- \* Program Transfer Fee
- \* Program Extension Fee
- \* Expedited Application Processing Fee
- \* Site Visit Fee



## **MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Per State Department regulations for the J-1 cultural exchange program, as a program participant, you are required to have medical insurance coverage with the following minimum benefits:

- \* Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
- \* Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500
- \* Expenses associated with the medical evacuation to your home country in the amount of \$10,000
- \* A maximum deductible of \$500 per accident or illness.

As part of your program, CETUSA offers accident and health insurance coverage through United Healthcare from your start date to end date. The mandatory insurance coverage offered through CETUSA for your program starts and expires on the dates on your Form DS-2019, unless you requested the additional months of pre- or post-program insurance coverage.

For your own protection you must reveal in your medical form any health disorders and medication that you are currently taking. You should also always carry a copy of the medical form with you in case of emergencies. While the policy that is offered by CETUSA through United Healthcare includes adequate health and accident insurance, it does not cover pre-existing conditions. It is up to United Healthcare what is considered a pre-existing condition.

For more information on your healthcare insurance practices and policies, please refer to the 'Health & Safety' section in your 'CETUSA Participant Handbook' on pages 30-33.

## **CETUSA CONTACT INFORMATION**

You are welcome to contact the CETUSA program office regarding any issues or questions you may have. We are happy to help you. Please remember you must contact us within 72 hours after you arrival and provide us with your local U.S living address and contact telephone number.

### OFFICE HOURS & WEBSITE:

**Monday through Friday**

**Hours: 8 am - 5 pm (PST/PDT)**

**Toll Free: 1(888) 423-8872 -or- 1(949) 940-1147**

[www.cetusa.org](http://www.cetusa.org)

### PROGRAM STAFF:

Program Director - Kevin Watson – [kevin@cetusa.org](mailto:kevin@cetusa.org)

Program Manager - Olivia Grigorjeva – [olivia@cetusa.org](mailto:olivia@cetusa.org)

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Program Administrator - Lynsey Pennington – [lynsey@cetusa.org](mailto:lynsey@cetusa.org)

Program Administrator - Kristin Sanders - [k.sanders@cetusa.org](mailto:k.sanders@cetusa.org)

### MAILING ADDRESS:

CETUSA (Council for Educational Travel, USA)

110 Grand Avenue

Bellingham, Washington 98225

United States of America

## **EMERGENCIES**

An emergency is defined as:

- \* A life or death crisis such as critical injury or illness requiring hospitalization,
- \* You are a victim of a violent crime.

If you are in an emergency situation and need immediate help dial **911**.

You must notify a CETUSA program administrator of any emergency situation. We have a 24-hr emergency answering service for calls requiring assistance:

**1(877) 261-6576**

Make sure you answer all questions clearly and carefully to avoid delays in receiving help.

## **APPENDIX A – Section 212(e): Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement**

Section 212(e) refers to a two-year home-country physical presence requirement that applies to some J visa holders. The Consular Officer performing your visa interview will mark on your J-1 Visa and DS-2019 if you are subject to the 212(e) rule.

This rule applies to any J-1 visa holder who:

- \* Received any amount of government funding (from any country's government)
- \* Received graduate medical education or training
- \* Participated in a program with training that is listed on their country's Exchange Visitor (EV) Skills List. To view your country's EV Skills List check via this website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>

## **APPENDIX B – U.S. Department of Homeland Security Fact Sheet**

### **What an Exchange Visitor can expect upon arrival at a U.S. Port of Entry:**

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# Fact Sheet

*ICE Press Office*

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

Updated – June 30, 2004

Contact: SEVP Program  
(202) 305 2346

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), an office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and the Department of State, wishes to assist you in your entry into the United States.

Approximately 28 million nonimmigrants enter or leave the United States annually to conduct business, study, visit family, or tour the country. Legitimate visitors are most welcome and the U.S. government is committed to facilitating their travel. However, a critical need for tighter security requires that we enforce entry and exit procedures.

Careful planning and preparation by students and exchange visitors can ensure that the delay based on these procedures is minimal.

#### **If you are a nonimmigrant student or exchange visitor, here are some things you should do:**

- ✓ If you are an initial student or exchange visitor entering to attend school for the first time, you cannot enter the United States more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your I-20/DS-2019. If you are a continuing student or exchange visitor, including a student or exchange visitor who is transferring schools or programs, you may leave the U.S., and re-enter at anytime provided you have proper documentation from the school or program you will attend upon your return.
- ✓ Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and visa are still valid for entry into the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- ✓ Also, check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- ✓ When you receive your nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. You should not open this envelope! The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port of entry will open the envelope.
- ✓ When you travel, you should carry some specific documents on your person. Do not check them in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the Customs and Border Protection Officer and, as a result, may not be able to enter the United States.

**Here are the documents you should carry on your person:**

- **Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with visa**
- **SEVIS Form I-20 AB, I-20 MN, or DS-2019**
- **Evidence of financial resources**

In addition, SEVP recommends that you also carry the following:

- **Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts)**
- **Name and contact information for Designated School Official or Responsible Officer at your intended school or program**
- **Writing instrument (pen)**

If you are traveling by aircraft, the flight attendants on board will distribute CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms for immigration, before you land at your initial point of entry in the United States. Complete these forms while you are on the aircraft and submit them to the appropriate Customs and Border Protection Officer upon your arrival. **If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.**

Upon arrival at the port of entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers for inspection at one of the Department of Homeland Security stations. As you approach the inspection station, **have your:** passport, SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record, and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the Customs and Border Protection Officer. The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside (not the address of the school or program).

If you are entering through a land or designated sea port, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms at the port of entry. **If you do not understand a form, ask the Customs and Border Protection Officer for assistance.**

Like all entering visitors, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. **It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection Officer that you will be a student or exchange visitor.** Be prepared to include the name and address of the school or exchange visitor program where you will enroll/participate.

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will:

- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for F and J visa holders**
- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for 30 days beyond program end date for M visa holders**
- **Stamp the I-94 and staple it in the passport**

#### **SECONDARY INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS:**

If your information cannot be automatically verified by the inspector or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows Inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.

In the case your admission/participation needs to be verified, **we strongly advise** that you have readily available the **name and phone number of the foreign student advisor** at your school or the person responsible for your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. In the event you arrive during non-business hours

(evenings, weekends, holidays), you should have a phone number where this individual can be reached during non-business hours.

Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or exchange visitor admission into the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student or exchange visitor is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor". This form authorizes temporary admission into the United States and requires the student or exchange visitor to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained on these forms may result in denied re-entry.

### **US-VISIT:**

On January 5, 2004, US-VISIT, a comprehensive entry-exit registration system was implemented at all international airports throughout the United States, pre-clearance inspection facilities and designated seaports servicing cruise ships.

All nonimmigrant visitors holding visas (including students and exchange visitors) will participate in the program that involves obtaining a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph. Race, national origin, and religion **are not factors** in the US-VISIT program, as it applies to nonimmigrant visa holders.

For more information visit [www.dhs.gov/us-visit](http://www.dhs.gov/us-visit)

### **NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY-EXIT REGISTRATION SYSTEM:**

Some individuals will require additional scrutiny and will have to provide additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, or NSEERS. In the future, NSEERS will be integrated under US-VISIT. *Anyone* could be subject to additional scrutiny and should follow the directions of the Customs and Border Protection Officer if additional information regarding itinerary, length of stay, or other security questions is required. A packet of information will be available at the port of entry explaining the registration procedure.

For more information, search for NSEERS at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/index.htm>  
For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit:  
<http://educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/travel/customs.htm>

### **FOLLOWING ADMISSION INTO THE UNITED STATES:**

**Students** should report to their school as soon as practical and register for courses or validate their intended participation.

**Exchange visitors** should report to their exchange program Responsible Officer within (but no later than) 30 days after the "Program Begin Date" listed on their Form DS-2019, for validation of intended program participation with the Foreign Student Advisor.