

# *J-1 Exchange Visitors*

*(Faculty and Staff)*

The J-1 visitor exchange category was established by the U.S. government as a means to facilitate cultural, academic, and technical exchanges between the U.S. and other countries. As a J-1 exchange visitor (EV), you are required to abide by certain rules and regulations that govern this particular nonimmigrant category. The information contained within this document represents only a brief overview of those rules and regulations and should be used only as a general point of reference. If you have further questions pertaining to your status as a nonimmigrant, J-1 exchange visitor, please contact Kent Greer of the Wake Forest Center for International Studies.

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## ***Documentation of J-1 Nonimmigrant Status***

### **DS-2019**

All J-1 exchange visitors residing in the U.S. should be in possession of Form DS-2019. This was the form that you used to make an initial entry to the U.S. If it was not used for a transfer of programs, the form should contain a stamp made by the inspecting immigration officer on the left-hand side of page 1 that contains the following information:

- Date of entry
- Port of entry
- Nonimmigrant classification
- Classified until: D/S (Duration of Status)

***In order to be valid for travel, the form must be signed by a Responsible Officer (RO) or an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) on the campus of Wake Forest.***

### **I-94 Arrival/Departure Card**

This is the small white card that you received prior to your entry to the U.S. There is an 11-digit number listed at the top of the card. This is your I-94 number and is used by U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services (USCIS) to register you in their computer system as a nonimmigrant J-1 exchange visitor. This is a very important document, and should be stapled to a page in your passport.

### **Machine Readable Visa Stamp**

This is the multi-colored stamp obtained from a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad that is affixed to a page in your passport. You should be aware of the expiration date noted on the stamp. You will need a valid visa in your passport in order to make a reentry to the U.S. after a temporary absence.

You are allowed to reside in the U.S. with an expired stamp as long as you are in possession of a valid Form DS-2019 and you maintain valid J-1 nonimmigrant status. The visa stamp should be thought of as an “entry ticket” to the U.S. A J-1 visa stamp can not be revalidated within the borders of the U.S. A revalidation of your stamp can only be obtained at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad.

### **Exchange Visitor Insurance Requirements**

All J-1 exchange visitors are required by law to have a medical insurance policy that meets or exceeds the following numerical valuations:

**\$50,000 per illness**

**\$10,000 evacuation for medical emergency**

**\$7,500 repatriation of remains**

Upon arrival on the campus of Wake Forest, all exchange visitors must show proof of insurance to the Center for International Studies. For more information on health insurance for exchange visitors, contact Kent Greer.

### **Designated Length of Program**

The beginning and ending dates of your J-1 program are notated on the DS-2019 at item no. 3. As a J-1 exchange visitor, you should be aware of the ending date listed on the form. A request for program extension must be made prior to the ending date. All extensions of J-1 programs on the Reynolda Campus are performed by the Center for International Studies.

### **Maximum Length of Time in Category**

J-1 exchange visitors who come to the U.S. in the professor and research scholar categories can remain in the U.S. as a nonimmigrant J-1 for a total of five years. The overall length of the program, however, is decided by the sponsoring institution. Those exchange visitors who enter in the “short-term scholar” category have a maximum program participation time of only six months. Short-term scholars are not allowed to extend their programs beyond six months.

### **Two-Year Bar to Participation**

A person who enters the U.S. either in the “professor” or “research scholar” categories is automatically eligible for a five-year period of program participation. Once a person begins a program, he/she will be subject to a two-year bar to “repeat participation” in a future J-1 program under two circumstances:

- 1) A person is subject to the bar if the full five years of program participation is completed.
- 2) A person is also subject if his/her SEVIS record is not kept active by the sponsoring institution.

This means that a professor or research scholar can enter the U.S., complete a program in four months, and then be subject to the two-year bar if the program was completed and the SEVIS record was deactivated by the sponsoring institution. Because of this, it is imperative that you remain in close communication with the WFU Center for International Studies so that your intentions as they pertain to your program will be known. **Please be aware that the two-year bar to participation in a future J-1 program does not apply to those who enter the U.S. as a short-term scholar. The two-year bar also does not prohibit a person from changing to or entering the U.S. in a different visa category.**

### ***Keeping a Record Open While Abroad***

The WFU Center for International Studies can keep a J-1 record open and active if the exchange visitor will be traveling in and out of the country while participating in an on-going program. There is no set time limit that an exchange visitor can be outside of the country while remaining an active J-1 participant. This can be helpful, for example, for those exchange visitors who will remain employed in their home countries while participating in an on-going exchange/research program with WFU. Once your program has officially ended, however, your SEVIS record will be deactivated.

### ***Extension of Program***

An extension of current J-1 program status is a straightforward process that can be completed in a matter of minutes through the SEVIS system. In order to extend your program, you will need to bring the following documents to the WFU Center for International Studies:

- 1) Current Form DS-2019
- 2) Extension request form from department head or supervisor
- 3) Proof of current medical insurance

### ***Travel Abroad and Reentering the U.S.***

As a J-1 exchange visitor, you will need the following documents in order to make a reentry to the U.S. after a temporary absence:

1. A passport that is valid for at least six months
2. A valid visa stamp (machine readable visa stamp affixed to a page in the passport)
3. A valid form DS-2019 that has been signed at item no. 7 by a RO/ARO in the WFU Center for Int'l Studies

### ***Travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean***

You can reenter the U.S. on an expired visa if you are making a reentry from Canada, Mexico or one of the neighboring Caribbean islands (excluding Cuba) after a trip of 30 days or less. This visa waiver rule does not apply, however, if you traveled outside of Canada, Mexico or one of the neighboring Caribbean islands during your stay. The waiver rule is also invalidated if you apply for and are denied an extension of your current status or a change of nonimmigrant status at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

### ***Two-Year Home Residency Requirement (212(e))***

Some J-1 exchange visitors are subject to a 2-year home residency requirement when they obtain their J-1 nonimmigrant status. If you are subject to this requirement, USCIS regulations state that you are

not allowed to make a change of nonimmigrant categories within the U.S. until you have a) fulfilled the 2-year requirement or b) obtained a waiver of the requirement from the U.S. Department of State. For detailed instructions on applying for a waiver, contact Kent Greer of the WFU Center for International Studies.

**\*WARNING\***

*Those exchange visitors whose waiver request from the Department of State has been approved are no longer eligible to extend their J-1 status.*

## **J-2 Dependents**

The nonimmigrant status of a J-2 dependent is inextricably linked to that of the J-1 principle.

- If the J-1 exchange visitor loses or changes his/her status, the status of the J-2 will also experience a loss or change of nonimmigrant status.
- J-2 dependents are also held accountable to the 2-year home residency requirement if it applies to the J-1.
- J-2 dependents may pursue employment in the U.S. with permission from the USCIS. For information on the application procedure, contact Kent Greer.
- Insurance that meets minimum requirements is also required for all J-2 dependents.

## **Social Security Number**

All J-1 employees of Wake Forest University are required to have a social security number. In order to obtain this number, you will first need to obtain a letter that verifies your nonimmigrant status from the Center for International Studies. In addition to the letter, you will also be required to provide the following documentation:

1. Passport
2. DS-2019 form
3. I-94 card

*Due to current delays in the transfer of information from the BCIS to the Social Security Administration, all J-1 nonimmigrants are strongly encouraged not to make an application for a social security number until 10-15 days after making an initial entry to the U.S. This will not affect your eligibility to be paid by Wake Forest. A failure to heed this advice may result in unnecessary delays in the processing of your application.*

## **Change of Address Notification**

All J-1 nonimmigrants are required to inform the USCIS of any change of address. This can be done through reporting your new address to the Center for International Studies. The Center will, in turn, record the change in the SEVIS system. The USCIS requires a nonimmigrant to report a change of address within 10 days of such change.