Michigan Technological University

International Programs and Services

J-1 Scholars

FORM DS-2019: INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

The enclosed Form DS-2019 is your certificate of eligibility for J-1 status in the United States as an Exchange Visitor (J-1) in either the "Professor," "Research Scholar," or "Short-Term Scholar" category at the Michigan Technological University. This handout explains the steps you must take to comply with laws and regulations pertaining to J-1 status. Not doing so would jeopardize your status and could result in you having to leave the US.

Entry Visa

To enter the United States as a J-1 Visiting Professor, Research Scholar, or Short-Term Scholar under the sponsorship of the Michigan Tech University, you must have a valid J-1 visa stamp in your passport. To apply for your visa, you must first pay the visa fee and the $180 SEVIS fee. You will not be eligible to receive a J-1 visa unless these fees have been paid.

The quickest way to pay the SEVIS fee is to process your payment online with a credit card by going to: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/. The fee can also be paid through Western Union or through the mail. However, it will take longer if you pay by mail rather than online by credit card or through Western Union. For all methods of payment, you will need information from your Form DS-2019.

In the meantime, visit the website of the United States consulate or embassy nearest you and carefully study the information about J-1 visa application procedures. There you will find information on how to pay the visa fee. You will have to schedule an appointment; the lead time to the interview can range from a few days to several weeks. Please follow the instructions of the Embassy or Consulate carefully when preparing for your visa interview. Important—the Embassy or Consulate will require you to fill out additional paperwork. Please refer to the website of the Embassy or Consulate where you will apply to obtain the most recent information.

When you apply for your visa, be sure to take your passport, the enclosed Form DS-2019, and receipt of SEVIS fee payment with you. The Visa Officer may ask you to document funding that does not come directly from the University; you may be asked to present a letter of award or support, a bank statement, proof of income, etc. You may also be asked to present proof of payment of the visa application fee. (Please refer to the US Embassy or Consulate for more information on the payment of this application fee.) If your dependents will be accompanying you to the US, they will need J-2 visas, and you should take their passports and individual Forms DS-2019 with you to the consulate and be prepared to show proof of marriage to your spouse and proof of parenthood of each child. Your spouse will have to appear in person, and the same may be true of your children. Please note that J-2 dependents do not have to pay the SEVIS Fee.

Two special notes:

(1) Canadian citizens do not need visa stamps to enter the United States, but they do have to show Form DS-2019 and proof of SEVIS fee payment at the port of entry to obtain status as a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar, or Short-Term Scholar.

(2) Citizens of a number of countries (other than Canada) in the Visa Waiver Program may enter the United States without visas, but only as tourists for a maximum stay of 90 days. **Please do not enter in this category**, as it would render you ineligible to be at Michigan Tech for the purpose for which you are planning to come here. You would have to leave the US and begin the process all over again.

1-94 Departure Record and Form DS-2019

When you arrive in the United States, a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officer at the airport (or sea or land port, depending on your mode of travel) will endorse your Form DS-2019. The I-94 is now processed electronically so you will be able to print your I-94 when you arrive in Houghton.

Please safeguard your Form DS-2019 and your 1-94 Departure Record carefully. Your 1-94 Departure Record is the only proof of your status in the US. It must be carried with you at all times. Your Form DS-2019 is required for re-entry into the US after a trip abroad.

You should keep all original copies of Form DS-2019 permanently. It is also advisable, after your arrival, to photocopy the identification pages of your passport, your visa stamp, 1-94 Departure Record, and Form DS-2019. Keep the photocopies separate from the originals for use in applying for replacements if the originals should be lost or stolen.

Checking in with International Programs and Services (IPS)

As soon as you arrive at Michigan Tech University, please check in with the department where you will be working. You must also come to IPS in person to check in. The check-in process only requires a few minutes and you do not need an appointment. Please bring your passport, DS-2019, visa, and your local address. If you have brought dependents with you, please bring all of their documents as well. Without these documents, the check-in process cannot be completed.

If you fail to check-in with IPS, your SEVIS record will automatically be invalidated by the SEVIS system. This means that you will not be allowed to continue your program at the University and must return home.

When you check in, an IPS staff will have a brief orientation for you. Essential information regarding your status will be covered.

Local Address Requirement

Michigan Tech University is legally required to have your current US residential address on file during your program here. Please be prepared to provide us with your residential (not office or department) address when you first check in at our office, even if you are in a temporary location. Anytime you move to a new residence during your time here, you must inform us of the new address within ten days of the move.

Required Health Insurance

Federal regulations require health insurance as a condition of J-visa Exchange Visitor status in the United States and specify the types and levels of coverage. The requirement applies to all exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents for their entire stay in the US.

If you fail to carry the required insurance for yourself or your J-2 dependents, the University must terminate your participation in its Exchange Visitor program and report that termination to SEVIS. Termination would end your lawful presence in the US and therefore your affiliation with the University. **Compliance is your responsibility**.

Individuals in J-1 status qualify for coverage under the University's student health plan. Employees of Michigan Tech University may qualify for the standard employee benefits plan, which includes health insurance that meets the minimum requirements. Information is included in this mailing if you will not be a covered employee of Michigan Tech.

If you choose to buy your own insurance other than the Michigan Tech student plan, you must submit a copy of your insurance policy in English to the Michigan Tech Human Resources office. You will be granted an insurance waiver if student insurance personnel determine that your insurance meets the minimum requirements. The requirements are noted here:
https://www.studentinsurance.com/SI/Schools/source/PDFs/brochures/MI/MTU/MTUopt3bro18.pdf

Extending your permission to stay in the United States

Once the end date on your Form DS-2019 is reached, you must discontinue your program activities here. (Please see item #3 in your Form DS-2019.) However, you may remain in the U.S. for up to 30 days beyond that date, during which time you mav not be employed, conduct research, etc. If an extension is necessary, be sure to start arranging it at least 30 davs before the expiration date of your Form DS-2019 by asking your department or institute to renew your appointment at the University and to send a request for extension to IPS. If you have questions, contact us. Please note that your Form DS-2019 cannot be extended after the expiration date has been reached!

Transferring to another institution in the United States

You may transfer your J-1 sponsorship from the Michigan Tech University to another institution. This involves transferring your SEVI5 record to the new institution and must be done before you move from Michigan Tech to your new program sponsor. Make sure you communicate directly with both IPS and the international office at the new institution to determine the exact date of the transfer. You will not be able to start at the new institution until IPS releases your record. Once the date of the transfer is reached, and after IPS releases your SEVIS record to the new institution, your new sponsor will issue a new DS-2019 for your program there. Please access the Transfer-Out Request Form on our website at http://www.ips.mtu.edu/Forms/Immigration/transfer_out_form.pdf . Note that the current form is for students. Fill in as much of the information as you can and bring it to the Immigration Advisor.

Short trips out of the United States

To come back into the United States in J-1 status after a trip abroad, you must have the original Form DS-2019 endorsed by IPS confirming both your affiliation with Michigan Tech University and the continuing availability of your financial support. It is critical you obtain this "travel signature" before you travel. Please come to IPS with your valid DS-2019 to have it endorsed for travel.

In most circumstances, you also need a valid visa stamp in your passport to re-enter the US. If your visa has expired, you have to apply for a new one at a United States consulate or embassy abroad. At the consulate/embassy you have to present your Form DS-2019. If your current document will expire before your return to the US, you should contact IPS several weeks before your trip to arrange for the issuance of a new document.

Time limits

The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors in the "Professor" and "Research Scholar" categories is limited to five years. (Your category is indicated on your DS-2019.) Extensions beyond that time are not possible.

The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors is six months in the "Short-Term Scholar," category. Extensions beyond that time are not possible.

Grace period

Exchange Visitors may enter the US up to 30 days prior to the start date and leave up to 30 days past the end date indicated on the Form DS-2019. During this grace period following the end date on your DS-2019, you may not continue your program activities with the University (teaching, research, etc.)

The two-year home-country physical-presence requirement

Not all Exchange Visitors are subject to this requirement. Those who are, must return to their home country and spend at least two years there before being able to come to the US in H-IB, K, or L status; before becoming a Legal Permanent Resident, or before changing to one of those statuses as well as most other statuses. Both your Form DS-2019 and your visa stamp should indicate whether you are subject to this requirement, which is usually referred to as "212(e)" (for example, "Not subject to 212(e)" as a notation on your visa). If you have questions about the requirement, please raise them with the Consular Officer when you apply for your visa, or direct them to IPS.

The two-year repeat participation bar for "Research Scholars" and "Professors"

The US Department of State instituted the two-year repeat participation bar for those who are in the United States in the "Research Scholar" or "Professor" categories. The effect of this regulation is that Exchange Visitors who have completed their stays in the United States in either the "Research Scholar" or "Professor" category are barred/unable to apply for a stay in the United States in either the "Research Scholar" or "Professor" category for two years. This bar goes into effect when you either complete or leave the J-1 program, whichever is earlier. At that time, your SEVIS record becomes inactive and IPS will not be able to reactivate it.

This regulation applies to the "Research Scholar" and "Professor" categories only and has no effect on eligibility for any other visa category or status. It does not apply to individuals in the J-1 "Short-Term Scholar" category. However, this bar does apply to the J-2 dependents of individuals in the "Research Scholar" and "Professor" categories. This regulation is not indicated on the visa stamp or DS-2019 form.

Minimum Insurance Requirements

Minimum coverage shall provide:

1. Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness;
2. Repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000;
3. Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of $50,000; and
4. A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.

An insurance policy secured to fulfill the requirements of this section:

1. May require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions which is reasonable as determined by current industry standards
2. May include provision for co-insurance under the terms of which the exchange visitor may be required to pay up to 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness; and
3. Shall not unreasonably exclude coverage for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which the exchange visitor participates.

Any policy, plan, or contract secured to fulfill the above requirements must, at a minimum, be:

1. Underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A. M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-i" or above, a Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of "A-" or above, a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above, or such other rating as the Agency may from time to time specify; or
2. Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country; or
3. Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or
4. Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) or eligible Competitive Medical Plan (CMP) as determined by the Health Care Financing Administration of the US Department of Health and Human Services.