



Bloomsburg University of  
Pennsylvania

Exchange Visitor Program  
Pre-Arrival Information

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**Introduction**

In 1961 the Mutual Educational and Exchange Act, i.e., Fulbright-Hayes Act, established the J-Exchange Visitor visa category.

The US Department of State website states the purpose of the program “is to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges”.

The J-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa and, as such, the visa applicant must prove to the visa officer’s satisfaction (at the time of the visa interview at the US Consulate) that he or she will return home at the completion of his or her program.

**Pre-Arrival**

Bloomsburg University is a sponsor of the Exchange Visitor program as designated by the US Department of State. Bloomsburg University is approved to conduct an Exchange Visitor program and has been enrolled in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

If the potential J-1 visa holder (hereafter Exchange Visitor participant) is planning to bring his or her spouse and/or children, he or she MUST inform the Office of Global and Multicultural Education as soon as possible.

The Office of Global and Multicultural Education will require the potential Exchange Visitor participant to forward the following information to that office:

1. first name and last name (capitals);
2. date of birth (month/day/year);
3. place of birth;
4. country of birth;
5. country of citizenship;
6. home address, if different from the potential Exchange Visitor participant; and
7. relationship to the potential Exchange Visitor participant (i.e. spouse or child).

Bloomsburg University will issue each dependent a DS-2019 and, if successful in obtaining a visa at the US Consulate, the dependent will be given a J-2 visa. Dependent children 21 years of age or older do not qualify for a DS-2019, and must seek another US visa category if they wish to accompany their parents to the US.

Participants should note they may be subject to a two (2) year home residency requirement. If the home residency requirement is waived, it will be noted on the US visa page, i.e. not subject to §212(e). The waiving of the requirement allows the Exchange Visitor participant certain benefits, such as seeking a change of visa status within the United States.

The potential Exchange Visitor participant should make an appointment at the US Consulate in the country of his or her residence and ensure he or she

takes the following documents at the time of the interview:

1. Bloomsburg University issued DS-2019;
2. letter of leave from home institution or appointment letter from Bloomsburg University;
3. proof of financial support;
4. receipt for visa application fee; and
5. receipt for Student Exchange Visitor program fee.

A successful candidate who obtains a J-1 visa at the US Consulate, and a J-2 for his or her dependent(s) if applicable, must not attempt to make his or her entry into the US more than thirty (30) days before the start of the program as noted in the DS-2019. Please note that this rule does not apply to Exchange Visitor participants who are continuing their program at Bloomsburg University. **If the Exchange Visitor participant can not commence his or her program on the date noted in §3 of the DS-2019, he or she MUST contact the Office of Global and Multicultural Education immediately.**

Upon the Exchange Visitor participant's arrival at Bloomsburg University, he or she should report to the Office of Global and Multicultural Education. At that time, please bring the following documents:

1. Passport;
2. I-94 ([www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94));
3. DS-2019; and

#### 4. Proof of US Health Insurance

If the Exchange Visitor participant is accompanied by dependents, he or she should plan to bring these documents for the dependent(s) as well.

Under the guidelines, as set out by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bloomsburg University must register all Exchange Visitor participants within thirty (30) days of the start of the program date, as set out on the DS-2019. Failure on the part of the Exchange Visitor participant to report to the Office of Global and Multicultural Education within the first 24 hours on campus may result in his or her termination from the Exchange Visitor Program and other consequences to his or her non-immigrant status as set out by DHS regulations.

The Office of Global and Multicultural Education is your primary contact at Bloomsburg University regarding maintaining your Exchange Visitor status. The Exchange Visitor participant should contact that office if:

1. he or she wishes to teach, lecture or give a seminar at another institution;
2. he or she wishes to travel **outside** the US during his or her appointment period;
3. he or she wishes to transfer to another Exchange Visitor program sponsor;
4. he or she moves residence within the US; or

5. he or she has any questions or concerns regarding his or her status under the program or that of his or her dependents.

### **Travel**

During one's stay in the US, the Exchange Visitor participant **MUST** see the PDSO/DSO **BEFORE** traveling outside the United States. Under the regulations propagated by the Department of State, the DS-2019 must be endorsed for travel by one of the responsible officers at least once a year **BEFORE** the Exchange Visitor participant travels outside the United States. The travel documents that the Exchange Visitor participant must have to present upon his or her return to the United States are as follows:

1. Valid passport;
2. Valid J-1 visa; and
3. Valid DS-2019 signed for travel.

The Exchange Visitor participant must carry these documents on his or her person and be prepared to present them to a DHS Officer at a US Port of Entry. This also applies to accompanying dependents.

### **Transportation Options to Bloomsburg**

Please advise the Office of Global and Multicultural Education of your travel plans, so that you may receive advice regarding possible transportation options available upon your arrival in the United States.

### **Housing**

The Office of Global and Multicultural Education will assist the Exchange Visitor participant in finding housing in the area surrounding the university. **At this time Bloomsburg University has NO graduate on-campus housing.** Upon arrival, if the Exchange Visitor participant requires temporary accommodation (i.e. for a few days until his or her more permanent accommodation is available), he or she may wish to visit: <http://www.buhuskies.com/index.aspx>

### **Medical Insurance**

The Department of State requires that Exchange Visitor participants maintain certain minimum health insurance coverage. The following are the minimum provisions that an Exchange Visitor participant and dependent(s) are expected to maintain while in the program (effective 5/15/2015):

1. Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness – deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness;
2. Repatriation of remains, \$25,000; and
3. Expenses associated with medical evacuation, \$50,000.

Bloomsburg University strongly advises the Exchange Visitor participant and his or her dependents (i.e. J-2s) **DO NOT** enroll in health insurance plans that are administered from overseas, as these plans may not meet the Exchange Visitor program requirements. **Exchange Visitor participants should make provisions to take out sufficient health insurance**

coverage prior to their departure from their country of residence that will cover them until they are enrolled in a US Health Plan.

#### **Extensions**

Exchange Visitor participant program extensions are dependent upon:

1. The sponsoring Department within Bloomsburg University and/or Government organization; and
2. Exchange Visitor participant designation (e.g. Professor and Scholar).

#### **Please note:**

1. **No extensions will be made unless a written request is received and approved by the Office of Global and Multicultural Education from the sponsoring Bloomsburg Department and/or Government organization;**
2. **Professors and Scholars may have their programs extended in one (1) year increments, for a total period of five (5) years – calculated from the start of the program, as listed in §3 of the DS-2019; and**
3. **Short Term Scholars may NOT have their program extended beyond the six (6) month period granted them to complete their program at the University.**

#### **Driver's License**

Due to new provisions in the driver's license regulations, the majority of Exchange Visitor participants do not qualify for driver's licenses since the length of their program is less than one (1) year by the time they present themselves at the appropriate State Department of Motor Vehicles. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Exchange Visitor participants obtain International Driver's Licenses BEFORE departing their country of residence. This section also applies to the accompanying dependent(s).

#### **Social Security**

**Only those participants who are being funded by Bloomsburg will qualify to immediately apply for a social security card.** When applying for a social security card, the applicant **MUST** provide the International Student Office with the following documents:

1. Passport;
2. Arrival Record, I-94;
3. DS- 2019; and
4. Bloomsburg appointment letter

The Social Security Administration will only accept and process applications for those Exchange Visitor participants who can demonstrate that a social security card is required for employment. Therefore, dependents (i.e. J-2s) will not be eligible for social security cards.

### **Importation of Food Items**

It is strongly suggested you do not attempt to bring food items with you when you come to the US. Due to health and safety concerns, food items, i.e. plants and meat products, will be seized at the port of entry for destruction.

### **Weather**

In the Bloomsburg area temperatures generally are moderate and rarely go below 0 Fahrenheit or above 100 Fahrenheit. For more information about local weather conditions, please see [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### **Websites**

Department of State – J Exchange Program  
<http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/>

US Department of State – US Consulates  
<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Visa Wait Times at US Consulates  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors\\_wait.php](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php)

Checklist of documents to be carried on person:

1. Passport;
2. DS-2019;
3. Receipt of SEVIS Fee Payment.

Bloomsburg University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status in its programs and activities as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies.