



## J-1 Scholar Pre-Arrival Checklist

### STEP 1: Obtain J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa

#### Applications for J-1 Visas require:

- Valid unexpired passport (valid for at least six months beyond your intended stay)
- Form DS-2019
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Evidence of financial support
- Visa application fee receipt
- Recent "2x2" U.S. passport-style photograph
- Additional forms and/or documents as required by the embassy/consulate at which you will apply
- Additional information on visitor visas is available at the Department of State website:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

### STEP 2: Pay the SEVIS Fee

#### What is the SEVIS Fee?

The SEVIS I-901 fee (<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>), implemented by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is a fee intended to defray costs associated with the administration of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). This rule took effect on September 1, 2004. The current fee for exchange visitors (J-1) is \$220.

#### Who Must Pay the SEVIS Fee?

1. Students & Scholars seeking an F-1 or J-1 visa from a U.S. consulate abroad for "initial" attendance at a U.S. school
2. Students seeking a J-1 visa from a U.S. consulate abroad to commence participation in a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program
3. Persons applying for a change of status to F-1 or J-1
4. Canadians exempt from the visa requirement who are seeking entry at a U.S. port of entry for "initial" attendance at a U.S. school or Exchange Visitor Program
5. J-1 students applying for a change of program category within the U.S.
6. J-1 students transferring from fee-exempt Federal Government sponsored programs (such as Fulbright) to other J-1 programs
7. J-1 students transferring from reduced-fee J-1 programs to full-fee J-1 programs
8. J-1 students applying for reinstatement

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## Who Does Not Pay the SEVIS Fee?

1. J-2 dependents
2. J-1 students and J-1 scholars who are seeking an extension or transfer
3. J-1 students and J-1 scholars who have previously paid the fee and are applying for a visa to return to the U.S. as continuing students in the same course of study
4. J-1 students and J-1 scholars who have paid the fee but have been denied a visa who are reapplying for the same visa within 12 months
5. Persons who have paid the SEVIS fee but have been denied a change of status to J-1 and who are reapplying for the same status within 12 months after being granted a motion to reopen the case
6. J-1 participants in fee-exempt Federal Government-sponsored programs (such as Fulbright)

## Options to Pay the SEVIS Fee

1. Electronic submission of Form I-901 to DHS using credit card or other electronic means of payment accepted by DHS: <https://www.fmjfee.com>
2. File Form I-901 (available at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>) with DHS by mail along with a check, money order, or foreign draft drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency
3. Western Union Quick Pay (See [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu\\_instr.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm) for instructions)

You must have a DHS fee receipt before applying for a visa or change of status. Third parties may pay the fee on behalf of the student or scholar. Additional information on SEVIS I-901 Fee can be found at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq>

## STEP 3: Assemble Immigration Documents

**Passport** – Your passport should be valid at least six months into the future when you apply for your visa. Your passport must remain valid while in the U.S. If your passport will expire, you must contact your embassy to renew it.

**Form DS-2019** – Also called "Certificate of Eligibility" is required to obtain a J-1 visa and used to enter the U.S. It indicates your length of stay in the U.S. on your J-1 program, authorizes you to participate in Kentucky State University J-1 Exchange Visitor program, and is used for travel outside and re-entry to the U.S. Scholars should keep all copies of DS-2019 issued to them. When you receive your KSU DS-2019, you need to carefully review the form for accuracy: information must be identical to your passport.

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**Visa** – The stamp that a U.S embassy or consulate affixes to the passport to indicate the kind of nonimmigrant status that a person is seeking. The only time you are required to have a valid visa is when you enter the U.S. You need to carefully review your visa for accuracy: information must be identical to your passport and DS-2019.

**Form I-94** – CBP (Customs and Border Protection) has automated the I-94 process for applying for admission at U.S. ports of entry. Air travelers no longer need to complete paper Form I-94. The I-94 number is used to record your arrival and departure from the U.S. Using this number, CBP authorities can determine your arrival date into the U.S., the port-of-entry and your immigration status as a J-1 visa holder. You can obtain your I-94 number by visiting <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov> after you have entered the U.S.

## STEP 4: Obtain Health Insurance

The U.S. government requires all J-1 scholars and their dependents to have health insurance coverage for the entire duration of their stay in the U.S. You must provide proof of health insurance to OISE within 10 days of arrival. Suggested insurance companies are listed at <http://nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8823>. Your health insurance policy must meet the following minimum coverage: \$50,000 per sickness or accident, \$10,000 for medical evacuation, and \$7,500 for repatriation of remains to your home country. These are requirements from the U.S. Department of State for anyone on a J visa.

## STEP 5: Pack Appropriately – What to Bring

### Immigration and Travel Documents

- Passport, valid at least six more months
- J-1 visa
- Form DS-2019

Important! Please put all these documents (passport and DS-2019) in your carry-on luggage, not your checked suitcase. Also, we recommend that you make copies of all of these documents and place the copies in your checked luggage.

### Money

- Amount brought with you should be enough to cover at least one month's expenses, as well as any necessary items such as cellular phone, etc. You can bring the money in

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the form of/via:

- Cash
- Wire transfer ○ Traveler's checks
- Credit card(s) accepted in the U.S.

Please note that passengers flying on international flights carrying \$10,000 or more in cash must declare the cash amount to Customs and Border Protection and fill out the appropriate form.

### Important Numbers and Addresses

- Your address in your home country and phone number(s) to call in case of emergency
- Your U.S. address and/or phone number, if already available
- Host Department phone number, address, and contact person
- International Affairs: (502)597-6327

### Other Important Documents (with official English translation)

- Marriage certificate

### Personal Items: What You Should Bring to the U.S.:

- Any prescription medications
- Your medical history with English translation
- Note of any life-threat allergies with English translation

### Additional Information

#### Arrival Notification

J-1 scholars must report to Kentucky State University once they arrive in the U.S. Please bring your immigration documents with you when you come to International Affairs to check in. You will need to make an appointment with the Director of OISE: 105/109 Cooperative Extension Building.

#### Climate and the Right Clothes

Frankfort has a humid subtropical climate with four distinct seasons. Winter is generally cool with some snowfall. Spring and fall are both mild and relatively warm, with ample precipitation and thunderstorm activity. Summers are oppressively hot and humid. That means a student will

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need a variety of clothes for both warm and cold weather. Events may occur around campus requiring semi-formal attire, so students should have clothes for both casual and dress-up situations.

Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 26°F (-3.3°C) to 86°F (30°C) and is rarely below 9°F (-12.8°C) or above 93°F (34°C). The average temperature in Frankfort is 41°F (about 5°C) in the winter and 71.3°F (about 22°C) in the summer. The hot season lasts for 3.8 months, from May 26 to September 21, with an average daily high temperature above 77°F (25°C). The hottest day of the year is July 21, with an average high of 86°F (30°C) and low of 68°F (20°C). The cold season lasts for 3.0 months, from November 30 to February 28, with an average daily high temperature below 51°F (11°C). The coldest day of the year is January 29, with an average low of 26°F (3.3°C) and high of 42°F (5.6°C).

Consider the climate of Kentucky when deciding what clothes to bring with you. Kentucky has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons; it is quite humid in the summer. Warm clothing for the winter could cost from U.S. \$400–\$600 if purchased new after you arrive. Used clothing can be purchased for much less. There is a wide temperature range for each season.

## Money for Initial Expenses

You should bring with you at least U.S. \$1,000–\$1,500, even if you will be receiving KSU funding. You will need this money to pay for temporary housing, moving-in expenses for long-term housing, food, transportation, books, supplies, and other necessary items during your first few weeks in the U.S. (Payments to graduate students on assistantships and visiting scholars begin about four to six weeks after arrival.):

- Bring most of your money in traveler's checks that you can easily replace if they are lost or stolen. Obtaining traveler's checks may seem troublesome, but it is an important security measure. Traveler's checks can be replaced—cash cannot!
- If you are bringing a bank check, have it made out to yourself—not the university—so that you can deposit the funds in a bank account here and then arrange for tuition and other payments. The University cannot accept checks greater than the amount of the first semester's tuition.
- Bring some cash—U.S. \$100–\$200 in small bills (\$10 and \$20 bills) and several dollars in coins (especially "quarters," worth \$0.25). Automatic teller machines (ATMs) frequently have a \$300 per day limit on cash withdrawals.

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- Carry your money, traveler's checks, and valuables in several places on your person, such as a wallet or purse, a separate pocket, and a pouch worn around your neck, waist, or under your clothing. That way, if your bag, wallet, or purse is stolen, you have not lost everything.

### Other Items

- Passport, visa, SEVIS Fee receipt and DS1029
- Financial Documents in case they are requested at port-of-entry
- Extra copies of your visa documents in case you lose your originals (keep in a separate place)
- Letter of admission or offer from Kentucky State University
- Medical Records
- Transportation Voucher for airport pick-up
- Phone numbers/addresses of important contacts in the U.S.
- Emergency contact information for others to reference
- Medications and basic First Aid kit
- Original academic documents from your previous school if required on your letter of admission
- Home country driver's license
- Basic toiletries
- Credit Card
- Food/snacks to hold you over until you can shop

### Travel/Airport

**Book your flight.** Book a flight all the way to the Blue Grass Airport (LEX) in Lexington and Muhammad Ali International Airport (SDF) in Louisville from your home country, but allow several hours between U.S. flights so that you have enough time to clear immigration and customs before going to your connecting flight. This is much easier than arranging a flight or other ground transportation to Frankfort after arriving in another U.S. city. Avoid arriving in the U.S. on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> or January 1<sup>st</sup> because many businesses and offices are closed in December/January for the holidays.

**We look forward to meeting you at Kentucky State University!**

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