

# **Pre-Arrival Guide**

## **J-1 Student Interns**

### **Illinois State University International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)**

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# Welcome to Illinois State University!

We look forward to meeting you and becoming a part of your higher education journey. In this guide, you will find information to help you prepare for your internship in the United States. Please read everything carefully.

## IMMIGRATION PAPERS ENCLOSED:

**DS-2019:** Your mailed packet will include a two-page document with your name and personal information on it. This is your immigration form called a “Certificate of Eligibility” or a “DS-2019”. You will need to have your DS-2019 when you apply for a J-1 visa.

Please be sure that the information on the first page of your DS-2019 is correct and read Page 2.

You will sign the bottom of Page 1—write the date and the location where you are signing your form (for example: if you are standing in Paderborn, Germany when you sign your DS-2019, write “Paderborn, Germany” in the space where it asks for location).

**DS-7002:** Your packet should also include a four-page document called the “Training/Internship Placement Plan”. This form is specific to J-1 interns. You will see your internship supervisor's and my own signature on the document. Please read this entire form and sign on page one if you understand everything and agree to the terms.

## Important Immigration Information

Before you travel to Illinois State University, there will be many things to do. The most important is to receive your J-1 visa in order to enter the United States. Please see the information below about this process:

1. To participate in our internship program, you must apply for a J-1 visa. This type of visa is specifically granted to students, scholars, and interns who wish to engage in Exchange Programs in the U.S.
2. A visa is a document issued by the United States government that will allow you to enter the country.
3. You may apply for your visa at any U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but it will be easier to apply in your home country. The following website can help you find a U.S. Consulate or Embassy near you:  
<https://www.usembassy.gov/>
4. All students must pay two fees:
  - **A visa fee:** You will pay a visa fee to attend a live interview with Consulate representatives as part of the visa application process.
  - **A SEVIS fee:** You will pay an I-901 SEVIS fee. You must pay the SEVIS fee before you attend your visa interview. You will bring a receipt of your payment to your interview. SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is an internet system/database that helps the United States keep track of international visitors. It is maintained by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau. As a university that sponsors international visitors, we are required to use SEVIS to enter information about you before and during your stay in the U.S. We use the SEVIS system to create your DS-2019 and DS-7002.

Please visit Study in the States for more information on how to pay your SEVIS fee:

<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-your-i-901-sevis-fee>.

You may pay the fee here: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>.

During your visa interview, you may be asked to show a variety of documents such as:

- DS-2019 “Certificate of Eligibility” from Illinois State University
- DS-7002 “Training/Internship Placement Plan” from Illinois State University
- A valid passport
- Visa application forms
- Documents to show you will have enough money for your time in the U.S.
- Documents to show ties to your home country (plans to return home after your program)

If your visa application is approved, the officer will print or stamp a visa in your passport. Your visa will state how long it is valid and the number of times you may enter the U.S. with it. It will also be noted whether or not you are subject to the Two-year Home Residency Requirement. Your passport/visa and DS-2019 immigration documents will then be given back to you. **Remember to carry these documents when you enter the U.S.**

## Exchange Visitor Laws

While you attend ISU, there are federal immigration laws that you must follow in order to not fall out of status with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. Please know these J-1 visa laws:

### 1. Exchange Activities:

- Attend all of your intern activities. If you are ill or must miss an event, contact your supervisor.
- Student interns must be immersed in their internship full-time. You also must stick to the internship describe on your DS-7002.
- If any internship goals or procedures change, you must notify ISSS immediately.
- You must submit a concluding evaluation prior to leaving the U.S.

### 2. Immigration Documents: Do not let your passport, I-94, or DS-2019 expire. Keep documents in a safe place.

### 3. Health Insurance: All J-1 students must have health insurance that is approved by the Department of State.

### 4. Change of Address/Name: Whenever you move (or change your name), you must report your new address/name to ISSS within 10 days.

### 5. When to Enter the U.S. and When to Leave: Your DS-2019 form shows a “Begin” date and an “End” date. You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before your start date and you may exit up to 30 days after your end date.

### 6. Checking In with ISSS: Upon your arrival to campus, you must report to ISSS so that your J-1 SEVIS record can be validated, your immigration documents can be collected and you can go through a brief orientation. Please email Aubrey Wagoner at [arwagon@ilstu.edu](mailto:arwagon@ilstu.edu) upon your arrival to schedule your check-in appointment.

## Additional Information for Exchange Visitors

- Some visitors may be subject to a Two-year Home Country Residence Requirement. This law says that visitors must return to their home countries and be physically present there for two years before being able to return to the U.S. You will be subject to this requirement if you have received government funding or possess skills that your government needs. Your visa and DS-2019 will say whether or not this requirement applies to you.
- J-1 visa holders may not change category while in the United States. For example, a student intern may not change to a degree-seeking student.
- You are always welcome to contact or visit International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) when you have questions, especially about immigration. When it comes to immigration matters, please don't rely on friends or family for information. Since immigration laws can change, it is always best to talk with Aubrey Wagoner for the most current information and advice.

## Traveling to Illinois State University

Once you are sure of your travel plans and when and how you will arrive at ISU, please let us know by e-mailing your plans to [arwagon@ilstu.edu](mailto:arwagon@ilstu.edu). Make sure to state in your email that you are a Student Intern.

Illinois State University is located in the Town of Normal (next to the City of Bloomington), in the state of Illinois. The two most convenient ways to travel here are by air and bus.

- **Air-** We have a convenient local airport in Bloomington called Central Illinois Regional Airport. It is a 15 minute drive from ISU. Since it is a smaller airport, you must take a connecting flight from a larger airport (such as Chicago O'Hare). You may access specific airline information on the web at [www.cira.com](http://www.cira.com). (Please be sure that you are flying to Bloomington, ILLINOIS.)
- **Bus-** You may also take the Peoria Charter bus from O'Hare International Airport in Chicago to our University. This is the most popular option. The drive takes about 3 hours. From O'Hare, your destination is Uptown Station, located right next to ISU's campus in Uptown Normal. For departure times and costs, please visit: [www.peoriacharter.com](http://www.peoriacharter.com).
- **Taxi/Uber -** This is a very expensive option.

## Health Insurance for J-1 Visa Holders

Exchange Visitors are required by the U.S. Department of State to have very specific types of medical insurance for the entire length of their stay. **Since this is an Immigration law, all J-1 students must have the necessary insurance or they will not be allowed to attend their program.** Should a student choose to use insurance from home, the policy must abide by these rules in order to be compliant with J-1 Immigrations laws and must include:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness
- **“Medical Evacuation” insurance- \$50,000 is the minimum coverage allowed** (to pay for transportation back to home country, or elsewhere, in the event of serious illness or injury)
- **“Repatriation of Remains” insurance- \$25,000 is the minimum coverage that students may have** (to pay for transportation back to home country in the event of death)
- Deductible should not be more than \$500
- Insurance must cover pre-existing conditions at start of policy
- Co-payment that doesn't exceed 25% co-pay by the exchange visitor and/or does not exclude benefits for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange visitor's program
- Must be underwritten by an insurance company that meets the rating requirements of the USIA.

## International Student and Scholar Contacts at Illinois State

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