

SEVIS Q&A

1. Can I bring a dependent to the U.S. during my exchange?

You are allowed to bring a dependent to the U.S. on the J visa if the dependent is your spouse or child. More information about this situation can be found on our website at:

http://www.isep.org/handbooks/usa/visa_other.html#dependent.

Your dependent will be able to enter the U.S. on a J-2 visa. It is important to remember that ISEP benefits will only be provided for you during your exchange. You will need to provide proof of sufficient financial means to support dependents. It is your responsibility to purchase ISEP health insurance coverage for all dependents. Health insurance costs can be found at <http://www.isep.org/insurance/enroll.html>.

As noted, you will need to prove that you currently have financial means to support yourself and your dependent while in the U.S. Dependents can apply for authorization to work on the J-2 visa, but they will need to apply directly through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Please see their website www.uscis.gov for more information about the work authorization procedure. The current application fee with the I-765 form is \$175 and the process can take several months to be processed.

2. What does number 5 on the DS-2019 mean?

Number 5 on the DS-2019 shows how much the tuition is for a full year at your host University, how much in personal funds you should have for the duration of your exchange, and the total amount. Since you are on an exchange, the university tuition is covered. However, you will be asked to show that the personal fund amount is available to you either through your personal account or your family.

3. How early before my program can I enter the U.S.?

Current regulations allow students to enter the U.S. on the J-1 visa up to 30 days before the program start date, as listed on their DS-2019. Please remember that students cannot enter on a tourist visa, F-1 visa, or any other J-1 visa (ex. Camp Counselor, Summer Work and Travel-SWAT) and then switch to the ISEP J-1 visa. If your student is being denied their J-1 visa on grounds that they want to travel to the US in that 30 day grace period, please contact Linda Stuart (lstuart@isep.org) or Jessica O'Brien (jobrien@isep.org) as soon as possible.

4. Can I work in the U.S. after my exchange is over? (for students – cc host coordinator)

All ISEP students are eligible to participate in Academic Training starting no later than 30 days after their exchange ends. This training allows students to participate in an internship that will further enhance their study abroad experience in the U.S., in the academic field they are studying. More information about Academic Training can be found online at: http://www.isep.org/intl_students/intl_acad-trng.html. Your ISEP coordinator will be able to provide you with the application and guidelines, which they download from the Coordinator's section of the ISEP webpage (Under Guidelines & Forms).

A few notes about Academic Training:

* Academic Training is usually a paid internship that ISEP students do after their exchange. The job must be directly related to their "field of study" while in the U.S. as listed on their DS-2019 – not their major at their home university.

* Students must show that they will be receiving/paid at least \$600 a month since they no longer receive ISEP benefits for housing, room and board after their exchange with their host university ends.

* The Academic Training application must be submitted to the ISEP Central office for approval BEFORE employment begins and by the deadlines as listed on the Application.

Please read over the information provided online about Academic Training and contact your home ISEP coordinator for the Application and Guidelines.

5. My student is extending their placement in the U.S. What happens regarding their visa?

Extension DS-2019s are issued each year in April for fall semester extensions and November for spring semester extensions. The DS-2019s will be sent to the ISEP coordinator's office to be distributed to the student.

As long as students stay inside the U.S. for the remainder of their program, they do not need to take any further steps to finalize the extension of their program. However, if students wish to travel outside the U.S., and the visa stamp in their passport has expired, they need to apply for an extension J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate. To do so, they must present the new DS-2019 along with their valid passport. More information about this process can be found online at:

http://www.isep.org/handbooks/usa/visa_other.html#extend as well as attached to the extension DS-2019.

Students will need to call the U.S. embassy to make an appointment to get the extension J-1 visa before they leave the U.S. This process usually takes 1-3 days (unless a background check is needed – then it can take 14 days).

6. My visa expires at the end of May, but I've heard it may be possible to renew it just by going to Mexico and coming in again... Is it true?

The regulation that you may have seen about renewing your J-1 visa is this part in the ISEP handbook: http://www.isep.org/handbooks/usa/visa_other.html#depart

“Exception: If you travel to Canada, Mexico or certain Caribbean islands, excluding Cuba, for a period under 30 days, an expired visa will be automatically revalidated at the border upon re-entry to the U.S. if you are returning to continue your program under ISEP. “

As you can see, the expired visa can be automatically revalidated if you are returning to the U.S. to continue the program in ISEP and the DS-2019 reflects this extension. Since all of our students (who are here for semester terms) end their program by May 31, there is usually no way for students to revalidate their J-1 visa this way. Once your program is over and J-1 visa expires on May 31, you cannot leave the US and reenter on the J-1 visa.

If you want to leave the U.S after May 31 and reenter for your flight home, vacation, etc, you need to know that you should reenter on a tourist visa. Most tourist visas can be acquired at the border if your home country is a visa-waiver country. You can check with the U.S. embassy in your home country or the local immigration office for this information.

Remember that starting January 12, 2009, the new Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) requires foreigners from visa-waiver countries (including most European countries as well as Japan and South Korea) to register online at least 72 hours before departure and get clearance from U.S. authorities to enter the country. The requirement applies to anyone planning to stay in the U.S. less than 90 days, and who is not required to obtain a visa.

7. I understand that I can travel in the U.S. for 1 month after my program ends.

The extra month of the J-1 visa is the 1 month grace period that Homeland Security allows for students to use to leave the U.S. after their J-1 visa expires. For one month past the program end date on the DS-2019, you can stay in the U.S. and travel. Once that time is over, you will have to leave the U.S. During the grace period you can not leave the U.S. and reenter on the J-1 visa. **Once you leave the US after the program end date (as listed on your DS-2019), your J-1 visa is no longer valid and you cannot reenter on it.**

8. My student would like to travel around the U.S. for longer than 1 month after the program end date. Can I have their visa extended?

The J-1 visa under ISEP can only be extended if the student is extending their placement for another semester at the host university or if they are participating in Academic Training. Otherwise, they need to

change their status to a tourist (B-1/2 visa). In most cases, they can leave and reenter the U.S. on a tourist visa given at the port of entry; however you can also check with your local immigration office to see what needs to be done to switch visas while in the U.S. All students may not be able to do this; they may want to check with the U.S. embassy in their home country as well to see if they qualify for a tourist visa under the visa-waiver program.

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http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/faq_vwp.xml#GeneralInformationontheVisaWaiverProgram

9. What should I do if my passport is lost or stolen?

If your passport and I-94 are lost or stolen, you must get them replaced immediately. There are a number of steps you need to take as follows:

- **Police Report** Go to the local police station and report your document(s) lost or stolen. If available, you will need to provide copies of the original documents. You will be issued a police report detailing the incident. Don't forget to make an extra copy of the report for your own records.
- **Request Replacement of a Lost/Stolen Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94)** Replacement of a lost or stolen Form I-94 falls under the responsibility of Department of Homeland Security (DHS). To file for a replacement I-94, see [Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document](#) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Website and see [Arrival-Departure Record](#) at the DHS, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Website.
- **Report your Passport Lost/Stolen to Your Embassy** Contact the local Embassy or consular section for the country of your citizenship, for information on the procedure to replace a lost or stolen passport. Most countries have Internet web sites with contact information.
- **Report your Visa Lost/Stolen to the U.S. Embassy Abroad** Fax the Consular Section or Consul General at the Embassy abroad which issued your visa, to report it lost/stolen. Go to the [Embassy Consular Section Website](#) to locate the Fax number and contact information. Specifically state whether the visa was lost or stolen. Be sure to include your full name, date of birth, place of birth, address in the U.S., and an email address (if available). If you have a copy of the passport or visa, fax this to the Embassy or consular section. Otherwise, if known, report the category of visa, and the passport number from the lost/stolen visa. If you have already reported your visa lost/stolen to the U.S. Embassy abroad, and then you later find your misplaced visa, please note that the visas will be invalid for future travel to the U.S. and you must apply in person at the Embassy or Consulate abroad for a new visa.
- **Applying for a Replacement U.S. Visa** Lost/stolen U.S. visas cannot be replaced in the U.S. For replacement of a visa, you must apply in person at an Embassy or Consulate abroad. When applying for the replacement of a visa, you will need to provide a written account documenting the loss of your passport and visa.

The above information was taken directly from the United States Department of State travel website. (www.travel.state.gov)

10. Can I enter the U.S. on a J-1 visa under another program (J-1/camp counselor or Summer Work/Travel) and then request that my J-1 visa sponsorship be transferred to ISEP?

You should only enter the United States as a J-1 exchange-visitor using the DS-2019 issued by ISEP. Do not enter as a tourist (with a B-2 visa or no visa), as an F-1 student, or as a J-1 exchange visitor under another program, such as a Camp Counselor Program or Student Work and Travel-SWAT. If you enter the United States on a visa other than ISEP's J-1/DS-2019, you must leave the United States and re-enter on ISEP's J-1 visa/DS-2019. If you have difficulty obtaining your visa, contact ISEP before you depart your home country for the United States.

11. What do I do if my DS-2019 is missing the date of entry stamp?

Even if you do not plan to travel, it is best to get the DS-2019 stamped. There are 70 Deferred Inspections Sites throughout the United States and the outlying territories where you can get your DS-2019 stamped. For information on Deferred Inspection Site locations and procedures to follow, go to the following link:

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/contacts/deferred_inspection/overview_deferred_inspection.xml

12. Do I need a visa to travel to Puerto Rico?

Travel to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and U.S. territories and possessions- Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and certain other U.S. territories and possessions are part of the United States, so a J nonimmigrant does not need a visa to travel to those locations from within the 50 United States, or to return to the 50 United States from those locations. However, students and scholars should always carry full documentation (passport, DS-2019, and I-94) during such travel. Also, exchange visitors should be careful to verify that their travel does not involve transit through or short stays in other countries, since full documentation (including a visa) for return to the U.S. may be necessary.