

J-1 Exchange Visitor Travel Information **To all Countries except Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean Islands**

You must always maintain a valid passport. Be sure that you have all of the documents required by the country that you intend to visit, especially if you are not visiting your home country.

In addition, **make sure that you have a valid, unexpired J-1 entry visa in your passport.** If you do not have one, you must obtain a new J-1 visa from an American Consulate or Embassy while outside of the United States. Contact the American Consulate or Embassy in the country which you plan to visit to inquire about visa(s) to enter the United States (<http://usembassy.state.gov/>). If you are not in your home country, ask the Consulate if they will allow visa applications from third country nationals. Find out if you need an appointment, how long it takes to get a visa, and which documents they will want to review. Book a flight that allows sufficient time for you to obtain a visa. **Additional security or technology checks are in place, as well as requirements for in-person interviews, which can result in delays of 30 to 120 additional business days or more in some cases.** In addition to the required visa application forms and documentation, you should also bring the items listed below as evidence that you have maintained your immigration status. For more information on visa applications, go to <http://travel.state.gov/>.

When applying for a visa from an American Consulate, please note that NIH-sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors (i.e. your Form DS-2019 was issued by the NIH) are exempt from paying fees associated with the visa application. Include the “**J-1 Fee Notice**” with your visa application, available at <http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/J-1%20Fee%20Notice.pdf>. If the Consulate uses an automated appointment scheduling system that does not exempt you from paying these fees, contact the Consulate directly to schedule an appointment, such as through their expedite email or visa referral system (available on the Consulate’s web site).

The documents required vary from country to country so please check with the American Consulate in the country you plan to visit before you leave the U.S. to determine whether or not the Consulate will allow you to apply for a visa, the specific documents required, the applicable fees, and the general length of time needed for visa processing. Neither the Department of State (DOS) nor the Division of International Services (DIS) can expedite your visa application, so please plan your travel carefully. However, please notify the DIS if your application is pending more than 30 days from your interview date so that we can keep a record of visa delays.

As a cautionary note, those who have applied for a waiver of INA Section 212(e), the J-1 2-year foreign residence requirement, or have applied for a change of immigration status, should consult with DIS directly on this issue prior to making travel plans.

Please inform the DIS of your travel plans at least 2 weeks in advance so that we can endorse your SEVIS Form DS-2019 for travel. Please notify the DIS if you will be applying for an entry visa while you are abroad.

When reentering the U.S., the documentation to present should include:

- 1) Valid passport
- 2) Valid visa
- 3) Original, valid DS-2019 with travel validation signature
- 4) Identification Badge (ID) badge
- 5) Current letter of verification to confirm your award/assignment /appointment with NIH; the letter should include a brief description of your research activities at NIH (request from your Institute/ Center; a sample can be found at <http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/SampleLetterTravel.doc>)

Upon your re-entry to the U.S., check your passport admission stamp and electronic Form I-94 (and any family members) to ensure they are annotated properly. Guidance about the electronic Form I-94 is available at http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/Automated%20I-94_Flyer.pdf. You must fax to the DIS a copy of your new admission stamp, printout of your electronic I-94 record, and new visa (if applicable).

REMINDER: If you are not traveling to your home country, you may need an entry visa to enter the country that you plan to visit. Please contact the appropriate consulate of that country for information regarding this matter.