

# RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Center for  
Global Education and  
Engagement

## **J-1 INTERNATIONAL VISITING EXCHANGE SCHOLAR**



### **PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE**

The Radford University Center for Global Education and Engagement assists with immigration matters for J-1 Scholars. In this document you will find all of the information you need to obtain your visa, arrive to the United States and start your J-1 program. Please read all information.

Topics include:

*J-1 Exchange Visitor Program purpose*

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*Housing Arrangements*

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*Arrival and Check-in Requirement*

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## **J-1 Exchange Visitor Program**

Congratulations on your acceptance as a J-1 international exchange visitor at Radford University. The J-1 program is administered by the United States Department of State, and Radford University is one of many institutions which is designated as a J-1 sponsor. The U.S. Department of State, administrator of the program, can be reached at:

U.S. Department of State  
Office of Designation  
Academic and Government Programs Division  
ECA/EC/AG – SA-5, Floor C2  
2200 C. Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20522-0582

### **J-1 Exchange Visitor Program purpose**

The purpose of the exchange visitor program, as defined by the U.S. Department of State, is to foster global understanding through educational and cultural exchanges. All exchange visitors are expected to return to their home country upon completion of their program, and to share their exchange experiences with others.

Some J-1 exchange visitor participants will be subject to a two-year home residency requirement based on funding or specialized knowledge of skill. If subject, the participant is ineligible to change immigration status in the U.S. or apply for an H, L, or K visa or green card until s/he has spent two years in the home country (cumulative – not consecutive) or obtained a waiver of the requirement. This restriction does not apply to all exchange visitors. It also does not prevent a person from returning to the U.S. on a student or tourist visa. More information is available on this topic during the J-1 orientation meeting upon the J-1 visitor's arrival.

Radford University is pleased to welcome you to our campus. The city of Radford is located in a beautiful area called the New River Valley, with many opportunities for outside activities. We encourage you to become familiar with our community. More information about this small, rural area of the New River Valley can be obtained at <http://www.explorenewrivervalley.com/>. Information for the City of Radford is available at <http://www.radfordva.gov/>.

Temperatures in the New River Valley in the summer can range from the 70s to the high-90s during the day, and 60s in the evenings. The winter temperature is typically in the mid-30s to high 40s F, but sometimes as warm as the upper 50s and as low as sub-zero for short periods of time. There is the possibility of moderate snowfall during the winter.

### **What to do now**

Now that you have received your DS-2019, you should complete the following steps prior to your departure:

1. Read this pre-departure packet thoroughly
2. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and DS-160 fee (see instructions herein)
3. Make a visa interview appointment (see instructions herein)
4. Attend the visa interview
5. Research housing and health insurance while you wait to receive your visa (see information herein)
6. Receive your visa. If your visa is delayed, or you cannot arrive within 30 days of your start date, please contact the Radford University CGEE at [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu)
7. Scan your immigration documents (DS-2019 and visa) so you will have an electronic copy of them while traveling and when you arrive
8. Arrange your travel to the United States, and arrange any ground transportation necessary to arrive to campus. Do not purchase flights until you have your visa in hand
9. Contact the Radford University Host Department and the CGEE to notify us of your planned arrival date

### **Applying for the J-1 visa:**

1. Check your DS-2019 information to ensure that all information is correct (name, birthdate, etc.) and matches your passport. If you find errors, contact the CGEE at [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu)
2. Pay the I-901 SEVIS fee. Instructions are included herein
3. Complete the DS-160 form and pay the DS-160 fee. Information about the DS-160 visa application form and fee is available at: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv>. Some consulates/embassies require that you pay this fee at a local bank. Please visit the website of the consulate/embassy where you will apply for the visa to determine how you should pay the DS-160 fee. For a list of consulates/embassy websites, go to <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. To complete the application on-line you can go to <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
4. Make an appointment at the U.S. consulate/embassy. It is usually best to apply for the J-1 visa in your home country. Please visit the website of the consulate/embassy where you will apply for the J-1 visa to find instructions on how to schedule an appointment and what documents to bring to your appointment. For a list of consulate/embassy websites, visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
5. Gather the documents for your visa interview. The website of the consulate/embassy will better tell you what documents to bring, however, you usually are required to at least bring the following documents:
  - a. Passport
  - b. DS-2019
  - c. SEVIS I-901 receipt
  - d. DS-160 receipt
  - e. 2 passport photos
  - f. Funding documents (bank statements, letters of support, etc.)

- g. Invitation letter from Radford University
  - h. Other documents as required by the consulate/embassy
6. Attend the visa interview. During the visa interview, you will be asked to demonstrate your non-immigrant intent by providing evidence that you have ties to your home country, and that you plan to return to your home country at the end of your program. You will likely not receive the visa the same day of the interview. Some visas require additional security processing. Please do not purchase your plane tickets until you have the visa. Please email Teresa King at [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu) if the visa processing time will delay your arrival by more than 30 days past the start date on your DS-2019. While Radford University can do nothing to speed up the visa processing, if notified in advance, we can make necessary changes to your DS-2019 to avoid invalidation if your visa is delayed beyond the 30 days.
7. J-2 Dependent visas are required to undergo the same process for obtaining a J-2 visa, however, they are NOT required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee. Dependents bring their own documents and copies of the J-1s documents if applying for their visa separately. Dependents should also bring proof of the relationship to the J-1 visa holder, such as birth certificate or marriage certificate.

### **Paying the SEVIS I-901 fee**

SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is the data-base of the U.S. Federal Government Department of Homeland Security that keeps records on F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors in the United States. Federal law requires that this database be supported by exchange visitors and students thus there is a fee called the SEVIS I-901 fee. Information on SEVIS and the fee can be found at [www.ice.gov/sevis](http://www.ice.gov/sevis).

You are required to pay the I-901 fee to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) before you apply for the J-1 visa. The fee for J-1 exchange visitors is \$180. J-2 dependents do not pay the SEVIS fee. After paying the SEVIS fee, you will receive a receipt electronically which you must print out, or you will receive a paper receipt. You must present the receipt when you go for the visa interview. The SEVIS fee cannot be paid at the consulate but it must be paid before you apply for the visa. For more information see [www.ice.gov/sevis/i901](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901).

There are four methods to submit your SEVIS I-901 fee payment:

1. Payment by Credit Card Online – recommended method! Go to <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee> at least three days before your visa interview. Select “*Proceed to I-901 Form and Payment.*” Select “*DS-2019*” and click ok. On the next screens, enter all requested information exactly as it appears on your DS-2019. When given the option, click on *Credit Card* and enter the requested information. Click the “*submit payment*” button. If your credit card is accepted, you will get a screen that you can print out as your fee receipt. Take the receipt to your visa interview.
2. Payment by Check Online – Complete the steps above in Payment by Credit Card Online, except select “*Check or Money Order*” when that option appears. Follow directions as indicated on the screen.

3. Payment by Western Union “Quick Pay” Service – Go to [www.ice.gov/sevis/i901](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901) and select “*payment by Western Union Quick Pay Instructions*” under the heading of the same name. Follow the instructions carefully. The Western Union receipt serves as your fee receipt for the visa interview.
4. Payment by mail with check or money order – Go to [www.ice.gov/sevis/i901](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901) and click PDF beside “*Paper Form I-901*” (*pdf*) and read the instructions to complete the form. Paper forms are scanned and read by a machine. When using the paper form, print clearly and complete all fields. Your information must match the information on your DS-2019 exactly. If information is missing or difficult to read, the processing of your form could be delayed or returned for correction. Next, obtain a check or money order in U.S. dollars payable to “I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee”, drawn on a U.S. bank. Mail the form and payment to one of the following addresses:

To send by regular mail:

I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing  
P.O. Box 970020  
St. Louis, MO 63197-0020  
U.S.A.

To send by I-901 courier (UPS, FedEx)

I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing  
1005 Convention Plaza  
St. Louis MO 63101  
U.S.A.

## Housing Arrangements

International visitors are required to secure their own housing arrangements off-campus. Short term housing is very difficult to find in the small city of Radford, Virginia. Start looking for housing early. The following resources may be of assistance:

A list of some rental realtors includes:

Bondurant Realty	<a href="http://www.bondurantrealty.com/">http://www.bondurantrealty.com/</a>
Giesen-Caldwell	<a href="http://www.giesencaldwell.com/">http://www.giesencaldwell.com/</a>
Price-Williams	<a href="http://pricewilliamsrealty.com/">http://pricewilliamsrealty.com/</a>
Gilbert Real Estate	<a href="http://www.gilbertrealestaterentals.com/">http://www.gilbertrealestaterentals.com/</a>
McCraw Real Estate	<a href="http://www.mccrawrealestate.com/">http://www.mccrawrealestate.com/</a>
BCR Property Management	<a href="http://www.bcrpropertymanagement.com/">http://www.bcrpropertymanagement.com/</a>
CMG Leasing	<a href="http://www.cmgleasing.com/">http://www.cmgleasing.com/</a>

Your Radford University host department will be helpful in recommending housing for you as well, or helping you contact local realtors to identify available rental properties.

Temporary Housing is available should you need a temporary place to stay when you arrive, before you find long term housing. Consider staying in a hotel that offers weekly rates.

<https://www.google.com/maps/search/Lodging+in+Radford,+VA/@37.119401,-80.558281,13z?hl=en>

## Health Insurance Requirement

All J-1 visitors and their J-2 dependents MUST have health insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of State during their entire stay in the United States. Health insurance is vital in the U.S. due to the high cost of health care. The following are a few examples of some common costs of health care without health insurance:

Birth of a Child	\$6,000 - \$15,000
Appendectomy (appendix)	\$12,000 - \$15,000
Doctor's visit for cough or cold	\$200 - \$300

The U.S. Department of State requires the following coverage:

- Major medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness (not total coverage, per accident);
- Repatriation of remains to home country of \$25,000;
- Medical evacuation of \$50,000 per accident or illness; and
- Deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
- Insurance policies are permitted that include provisions for co-insurance under the terms of which an exchange visitor is required to pay up to 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness.

To comply with the requirement, you must enroll yourself and any accompanying dependents in health insurance that meet the requirements above. Then, you must submit proof of coverage to the CGEE as part of your check-in process upon arrival, or to purchase insurance through the CGEE office's provider - CISI.

The CGEE has partnered with CISI for coverage meeting the above requirements. You may purchase insurance for the duration of your stay within the first week of your arrival to campus.

Insurance policies other than CISI will require a thorough review process, and must be submitted prior to arrival for approval. To submit optional insurance, please submit proof of coverage/details of the policy to [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu).

## Traveling to the U.S.

All J-1s are given a 30 day grace period before and after their DS-2019 start date to arrive and check-in at Radford University. J-2 dependents may accompany the J-1 or may arrive any time after the J-1 visa holder.

International Exchange Visitors should fly into the Roanoke Regional Airport in Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.A. The airport code is ROA. This is the closest airport to Radford, Virginia, which is approximately 40 minute drive to campus. Washington D.C. driving distance is approximately 4.5 hours and Charlotte International Airport about 2.5 hour drive. Transportation from the Roanoke Regional Airport to Radford University may be arranged via taxi from either Fascab (540-605-0204) or FAT Taxi (540-999-8294). Taxi fare is approximately \$50. Your

Radford University host may offer to pick you up at the airport, depending on your time of arrival. If arriving late in the evening, you may need to secure a hotel room overnight and arrive to campus the following morning. Many hotels near the airport offer free shuttle service to and from the Roanoke Regional Airport.

Everyone arriving in the United States must go through inspection by the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer at the first U.S. airport stop. You should have your documents (DS-2019, passport, funding documents, invitation letter, and SEVIS I-901 receipt) ready to present to the CBP Officer. The CBP officer will inspect documents and stamp your passport and/or DS-2019 with your arrival date and immigration status. Inspection may take several hours, so be sure you have enough time to go through inspection for your next flight in the United States. Make sure you carry all documents in your carry-on luggage, not your checked bag(s). Please make sure that your passport or DS-2019 is stamped J-1 D/S if you are a J-1, and J-2 D/S for dependents.

If the CBP is unable to verify your information, or you do not have all of your documents, you may be sent to secondary inspection. At secondary inspection, you may be given a Form I-515A which allows you to enter the United States temporarily, with a requirement to provide documents within a short period of time. If you receive a Form I-515A, please notify the CGEE at [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu) immediately. Assistance will be provided to ensure your requirement to respond with additional documentation is completed.

In the past, travelers received a paper I-94 Arrival/Departure record. In 2013, this document is no longer provided. Instead, CBP will create an electronic record of arrival which must be downloaded by the traveler after arrival. The I-94 document is accessible at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94).

## **Arrival and Check-in Requirement**

J-1 regulations require Exchange Visitors to not only arrive within 30 days before or after the start date listed on the DS-2019, but to also check-in with their host institution, Radford University. Check-in is completed in the Center for Global Education and Engagement (not in your host department), locate in room 105 of Cook Hall. Please contact the CGEE upon your arrival to schedule an appointment to complete your check-in process. Email [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu), or call 540-831-6200 to arrange your check-in appointment.

Please do not wait to schedule your check-in if you arrive before your start date. Regulations state that you should check-in with your host institution within 10 days of your arrival, but not later than 30 days after your start date. If you do not check-in within 30 days after your DS-2019 start date, your J-1 status will be invalid and you will not be allowed to start your J-1 program until you apply and pay for reinstatement to valid status. The processing time for reinstatement is about one month, but can take up to three. There are no guarantees the Department of Homeland Security will approve a reinstatement application. The reinstatement fee is \$246.00.

J-2 dependents are not restricted by the 30 day rule for arrival. J-2 dependents may arrive with the J-1 or at any time after the J-1 has arrived, but J-2s cannot arrive prior to the J-1's arrival. Dependent DS-2019s will have the same start date as the principle J-1 DS-2019.

Upon check-in, you will receive an information package to help with your transition and adjustment to Radford and Radford University. You will also be scheduled to attend a mandatory J-1 orientation program, or be provided this orientation upon check-in. Your host department may also require a check-in and orientation specific to your role in the department.

### **Post Arrival To-Do List**

1. Download a copy of your I-94 record (arrival/departure record) from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94).
2. Complete the check-in process (contact CGEE, 105 Cook Hall, 540-831-6200 or [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu) to schedule appointment for check-in)
3. Attend a J-1 Orientation meeting with the CGEE (scheduled at check-in)
4. Locate housing if you have not already done so.
5. Visit your host department and complete any forms and procedures for your host department
6. Apply for your Radford University ID card and email account. Your host department will assist you with these processes.
7. If parking on-campus, purchase a Radford University parking pass. Your host department will assist you with this process. If driving, you will also need to obtain a Virginia driving license.
8. After 10 days of check-in with the CGEE, if you are employed by Radford University, you must obtain a Social Security Number. More information about this process is provided at your J-1 Orientation program.
9. Open a bank account. There are many banks around town, and three that are in walking distance from the university. Chose one that is convenient for you.
10. Attend Mandatory J-1 Orientation Program

### **MORE QUESTIONS?**

The Center for Global Education and Engagement is delighted that you will soon be at Radford University. Please don't hesitate to visit us in Cook Hall, room 105. You are also welcome to visit our website at <http://www.radford.edu/content/international/home.html>, contact us by email [tking54@radford.edu](mailto:tking54@radford.edu), or by phone at 540-831-6200. Best wishes as you begin your journey.

