

DS-2019 Application for J-1 Exchange Visitors

Plans to invite an individual in J-1 status must begin early as it may take anywhere from 1 to 4 months to complete the entire Exchange Visitor Process.

About the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa is designed to foster the exchange of students, visitors, and academics between the US and foreign countries. Several categories exist under the J-1 Visa. Through its designation by the Department of State, MTSU is authorized to issue DS-2019 documents for the following categories: Professor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, and Student. The J-1 visa is not appropriate for tenure-track positions.

MTSU Visiting Scholar Sponsorship can be granted for a maximum stay of 5 years, and can be used for the following types of positions:

- Post-Doctoral appointments (grant or state-funded)
- Faculty or administrators coming pursuant to an exchange agreement
- Academics and professionals coming to fill visiting positions (e.g. visiting instructors)
- Self- or government-funded visiting academics (e.g. colleagues coming to collaborate on research, academics on sabbatical, etc.)
- Foreign graduate students at institutions abroad coming to MTSU to conduct dissertation/thesis research

Exchange Visitor (J-1) status is not appropriate for individuals who will:

- Engage in any research position that does not require the minimum of a Bachelor's degree as part of the educational requirement;
- Hold tenure-track or tenured faculty appointments;
- Pass through the formal recruitment and hiring process with MTSU University's Office of Human Resources;
- Pursue US Permanent Residency (Green Card).

J-1 Visa (DS-2019) Request Process

- Step 1: The department completes the J1 MTSU Department Sponsor Form, issues an invitation letter (sample letter attached), and requests an MTSU Affiliate Banner ID (Affiliate ID is only necessary if the visiting scholar is not employed at MTSU). The Department sends the J1 Sponsor Form and invitation letter/copy of the appointment letter to Cindy Habara in International Affairs.
- Step 2: The visiting scholar completes the MTSU Scholar Information Form and sends it, along with a copy of the passport identity page and documentation of funding (if not solely MTSU funded) to Cindy Habara in International Affairs.

- Step 3: International Affairs issues DS-2019, prepares a Pre-Arrival packet (includes an invitation letter, J-1 visa application instructions, etc.), and returns it to the department to send to the scholar.
- Step 4: The scholar applies for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate in his/her country.

Fees: There are no fees that the department must pay.

- SEVIS Fee (\$220): This government fee may be paid either by the department or by the scholar. Generally, departments only pay this fee if the scholar will be employed by the University.
- Visa Application Fee (\$160): This government fee is always paid by the scholar.

International Affairs (IA) does not determine the employment category of a prospective Exchange Visitor (J-1). No immigration documents will be issued without an appropriately issued and signed offer letter.

The inviting department must ensure that the individual will be paid any stipend or salary promised to the individual. **MTSU-International Affairs is not involved in payment issues.**

Postdoctoral Fellow or Visiting Research Scholars: Send this form and supporting documents with appropriate employment documentation to:

Cindy Habara
The Office of International Affairs
PO Box 120
Cindy.Habara@mtsu.edu (o) 615-494-8643

A Complete Application Includes:

- Completed application signed by the J-1 Applicant, her/his future supervisor and Dept. Chair;
- Properly issued and signed invitation/appointment letter (sample attached);
- Documentation of sufficient funding (see page 5 of this application for more information);
- English Language Proficiency documentation;¹
- Copy of J-1 [and J-2] Exchange Visitor's passport photo page;
- Copy of all diplomas earned by J-1;
- Copy of J-1's current *curriculum vitae* or *resume*;
- Copies of all previously issued immigration documents (from the United States ONLY)
- Documentation of insurance coverage that meets US Dept. of State criteria for J-1 and any accompanying J-2 dependents for the **duration of the appointment letter.**²

¹ A new provision requires sponsors to use one of the following "objective measurements of English language proficiency" to determine an applicant's language proficiency:

- A recognized English language test (TOEFL, IELTS, or ITEP)
- Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school; or
- A documented interview conducted by the sponsor either in-person or by videoconferencing, or by telephone if videoconferencing is not a viable option

² Insurance requirement: Exchange visitors are required to have medical insurance in effect for themselves and any accompanying spouse and minor children on J visas for the duration of their exchange program. At a minimum, insurance coverage shall include for each person: \$100,000 per accident or illness; repatriation of remains \$25,000; medical evacuation and repatriation \$50,000; and a maximum deductible of \$500 per accident or illness

Section 1: Departmental Information

Department Name	
COMPLETE Department Address:	
Contact Name in Department:	
Email Address:	
Secondary Contact Name:	
Email Address:	
Name of J-1 Applicant:	
Area of research/scholarship (Aerospace, History, etc.):	

Does department agree to provide support services (including obtaining MTSU ID), office space and collegial contact to ensure applicant’s successful experience at MTSU? Yes No
 Is the applicant proficient in spoken English? Yes No
 Is the applicant proficient in written English? Yes No

What steps has the Department taken to assess applicant’s English ability to ensure they will benefit from the exchange program?	
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Section 2: Requested Exchange Visitor category

- Professor (3-week minimum, 5-year maximum) – teaching, observing, lecturing
- Research Scholar (3-week minimum, 5-year maximum) -- conducting research, observing, or consulting
- Short-term Scholar (no minimum, 6-month maximum, no extensions but not subject to 24-month bar) – lecturing, conducting research, observing, or consulting
- Specialist (3-week minimum, 1 year maximum but not subject to 24-month bar) -- observing, consulting, or demonstrating his/her highly specialized knowledge or skills

Please note: Exchange Visitors in the “Research Scholar” or "Professor" category will be unable to engage in another J-1 Research Scholar and/or Professor program for 24 months once they complete their J program. **Please note that the two-year bar is different from the two- year home residency requirement.**

Section 3: Location Where J-1 Will Engage in Program Activity

Complete Address where J-1 will engage in research, teaching, etc. :	
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Will J-1 Applicant Be Expected to Engage in any Program Activities Off Campus? Yes No
 If J-1 activity will occur at a non-MTSU site, department must also attach a letter from the MTSU Department Chair which includes the following:

1. Dates of Visit (Scholar is required to arrive on campus by the start date listed on the DS-2019)
2. Nature of activities
3. Site of activity, including full address
4. How the J-1 activity will be closely tied to the MTSU department’s on-going research projects/programs
5. Relationship between the MTSU department and the non-MTSU site of activity
6. Name and title of MTSU faculty who will supervise the J-1 program activity throughout the J-1’s stay in the US
7. Funding arrangements

Section 4: Financial Documentation

The J-1 must be able to document a minimum of \$21,000 per year. Submit all financial documentation in English. J-1 must include extra financial documentation for dependents: \$4,000 for a spouse and \$2,500 per child	
SOURCE	AMOUNT
MTSU	
U.S. Government [ONLY if funds are specifically for applicant, not funds paid to MTSU or MTSU affiliate]	
International Organization	
Exchange Visitor’s Government	
All other organizations	
Personal	

Department must attach documentation from one of the Options below:

- Bank Statements in Scholar’s Name**
 - Most recent 3–4 Months in English of recent bank statements (per account) on bank letterhead
 - Must demonstrate that funds are readily available to meet scholar’s expenses

- Bank Statements in Sponsor’s Name and Letter of Support**
 - Most recent 3–4 Months in English of recent bank statements (per account) on bank letterhead
 - Sponsor must write a letter explaining relation to J-1 Scholar and declaring support for J-1 while s/he is participating in a J program in the US

- Funding from MTSU**
 - Funding from MTSU must be listed in the Appointment/Invitation Letter

Funding from a University Abroad

- Letter from institution stating amount and terms of stipend/salary on University letterhead and signed by a University Official indicating that J-1 will be participating in an Exchange Program at MTSU

Scholarship from a Company or Institution

- Most recent 3–4 Months in English of Company’s recent bank statements (per account) on bank letterhead
- Must include a statement from a company employee, not related to the scholar, indicating the amount of funds that have been set aside for your scholarship and the specific details of what expenses will be paid by the scholarship
- Must indicate that J-1 will be participating in an Exchange Program at MTSU

Scholarship from a Government

- IA must receive a clear copy of the formal award letter from the government
- Letter should clearly state stipend/salary and any covered expenses, including living expenses, health insurance, etc.
- Must be dated within 3 months
- Must indicate that J-1 will be participating in an Exchange Program at MTSU

Section 5: Information to Be Completed By J-1 Applicant

Last (Family) Name:			
First Name:		Middle Name:	
Email Address:			<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy):			<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married
Address Outside the US:			MTSU ID#
Phone #:		City of Birth:	
Province of Birth:		Country of Birth:	
Country of Permanent Residence		Country of Citizenship:	
If Applicant is currently in the US, which status do you hold: <input type="checkbox"/> J-1 <input type="checkbox"/> J-2 <input type="checkbox"/> H-1B <input type="checkbox"/> F-1 <input type="checkbox"/> B-1/2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			
If you currently hold J-1 status, what is the Program # of the Institution that issued your DS-2019?			
When does your current immigration status expire?			
Have you applied for a J-1 waiver? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Have you applied for a green card? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Most Recent Position in Home Country (Student, Faculty, etc.)			
Name of Employer/University in Home Country where applicant works/worked or studies/studied:			
Applicant's current employer in Country of Permanent Residence is: <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> State/Regional Government <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government <input type="checkbox"/> Central Government			
What program goals do you hope to accomplish during your exchange program in the US?			
Highest Degree Earned to Date:		Field of Study on Diploma:	
Have you applied for US Permanent Residence [a green card]? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Have you previously participated in a J Exchange Visitor Program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Were you subject to the Two Year Home Residency? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, have you received a Waiver Recommendation from the State Dept.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If you did not file for a waiver, have you spent 2 years in your home country? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			

Will spouse and/or children travel with applicant now YES NO?

On a separate sheet of paper please indicate the following for each dependent: Family Name, First Name, Middle Name, Date of Birth, City of Birth, Country of Birth, Country of Citizenship, Gender and Relationship to Applicant. CHILDREN MUST BE UNDER 21 AND UNMARRIED.

TWO-YEAR HOME RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT: Depending upon your funding and skills, you may become subject to the Two Year Home Residency Requirement by entering the US in J-1 status. This means that you may be required to spend at least two years in your home country before coming back to the United States to work in H-1B or L status. You would not be eligible to receive a green card until you have spent two years back home and you would not be eligible to change your status in the US to another non-immigrant status. Some Exchange Visitors may be granted a waiver for the Two Year Home Residency, but this is timely and costly.

TWO-YEAR BAR: An individual who participates in the J Exchange Visitor Program as a Professor or Research Scholar becomes subject to a Two-Year Bar on "repeat participation" in those particular categories after completing his or her program even if the program lasts less than five years. The US Department of State has taken the position that the Two-Year Bar will also apply to J-2 dependents of J-1 Professors or Research Scholars if the J-2 subsequently wishes to return as a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar. This is a separate requirement from the Two Year Home Residency Requirement.

INSURANCE STATEMENT: I understand that the US Department of State mandates that I have sufficient health insurance for myself and my accompanying J-2 dependents from **my program start date to my program end date**. Exchange visitors are required to purchase insurance through MTSU.

By signing this form, you agree to comply with MTSU policy and US State Department regulations.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Section 6: Departmental Declaration

Please note that the information contained in this application will be transferred to a controlled US Government Document; any falsification of information may subject the University to sanctions and/or penalties.

By signing below and submitting this application, we agree to abide by all applicable MTSU University policies and US Department of State regulations. We authorize IA to issue a Form DS-2019 on behalf of our department for the person named in this application to participate in the program as described in this application. Moreover, we agree to:

- Notify IA if J-1 applicant will not arrive in the US before the DS-2019 start date so that IA may amend applicant’s SEVIS record;
- Ensure that department contacts IA to schedule an appointment for the J-1 to meet with a Responsible Officer no later than five (5) days after J-1’s arrival in the US;
- Ensure that the J-1 and all J-2 dependents have purchased the required medical insurance coverage for the duration of the J Program;
- Assist J-1 with all Human Resources paperwork;
- Assist J-1 with housing in the Murfreesboro area, setting up an office, obtaining computer access, securing library privileges, and
- Immediately inform IA if J-1 does not come to MTSU or if J-1 leaves MTSU before the end date on Form DS-2019.
- Notify IA PRIOR to any changes made to applicant’s J Program (change of title, funding, etc.)

We understand that if the J-1 does not meet with IA to validate Form DS-2019 with proof of the required health insurance within five (5) days of J-1’s arrival date, the J-1’s SEVIS record will be terminated and the J-1 must return home.

Dept. Chair’s Name:	
Dept. Chair’s Signature	Date:
College Dean's Name:	
College Dean's Signature	
Vice Provost for International Affairs Name:	Date:
Vice Provost for International Affairs Signature:	
Provost	Date
Provost	Date

Contact The Office of International Affairs at ISSS@mtsu.edu or 615-494-8643 with any immigration questions.

Sample Departmental Invitation letter

Departmental Letterhead

Date

Dear Name of Scholar:

We hereby invite you to the Middle Tennessee State University as a title of position (e.g. post-doctoral research associate, visiting professor, research scientist, visiting researcher, etc.) for period of time: list dates.

During your stay, you will...Description of the scholar's duties here (e.g. conduct research in..., teach courses in..., lecture on..., perform tests on..., cooperate with our professors/researchers on..., etc.) The description should be somewhat specific but clear to someone who does not work in the field. It only needs to be a couple of sentences.

Description of why this scholar has been invited (e.g. research specialty, credentials, experience, specialized knowledge, etc.). Again, 1-2 sentences will suffice.

Description of any funding provided to the scholar, office space (be specific as to which department will provide office space as the letter cannot simply state that MTSU will provide office space), etc. Health insurance, a requirement of J-1 status, is/is not included and therefore you will need to/ not need to purchase it prior to your arrival in the US. Information on the insurance requirement is provided in the enclosed pre-arrival guidebook.

As you will come to us on the J-1 visa, International Affairs here at the University has prepared your DS-2019: the document you will need to obtain a J-1 visa at the US Embassy or Consulate. Should you have any immigration or visa related questions please feel free to contact The Office of International Affairs (international@mtsu.edu). Upon your arrival, I or a member of my staff will assist you with the necessary paperwork and check-in procedures. We look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Name of inviting faculty or Chair of Department

Title of inviting faculty

J-1 Visa Categories

- Professor*: Visiting professors, instructors, or lecturers. If one is coming in the professor category, his/her primary purpose here should be instruction; research is also permitted however. A doctorate is not required. Valid for periods of stay of 3 weeks to 5 years.
- Research Scholar*: Visiting researchers or other academics if their primary purpose here will be to engage in research; instruction is also permitted. Valid for periods of stay of 3 weeks to 5 years.
- Specialist: Persons with specialized knowledge coming to observe, consult, or demonstrate specialized skills (e.g. museum curator). It is not interchangeable with the professor, researcher or short-term scholar categories. Valid for periods of stay 3 weeks to 1 year.
- Short term Scholar: Academics, administrators, researchers, etc. whose stay will be 1 day to 6 months.
- Student Intern: Students enrolled abroad coming to perform a full-time internship/practicum. Valid for up to 1 year.

*Important information about the Professor/Research Scholar categories 12 Month Bar: Scholars who have been in the United States in a J-1 program are ineligible for the Professors or Research Scholar category for 12 months from date of end of previous J-1 program. Exceptions: Scholars: (1) who participated in an exchange visitor program for six months or less; (2) whose previous J-1 stay was in the US. Short Term Scholar category; (3) who is transferred to the sponsor's program. NOTE: The one-year bar also applies to J-2 spouses of the principal J-1 alien.

5 year rule/2 year bar: A scholar may be in the J-1 Professors or Research Scholar category for up to 5 continuous years (5 years from start date of the J-1 Professors or Research Scholar program). Upon completion of those 5 years, or if he/she should complete the program earlier (e.g. after 3 years) and his/her SEVIS record goes inactive (i.e. it is not transferred to another institution to finish out the 5 years), from the date it goes inactive, the scholar is ineligible for another J-1 program in the Professors or Research Scholar category for 24 months.