

J-1 Scholar Program Guide

International Student Services



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We recommend you read through the slides in order, to get the most out of them as you prepare to travel. To use this guide as a reference tool once in Rochester, click on a topic to go to a slide.

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Welcome to RIT!

We're so glad you'll be joining the RIT community.

Please review these slides as you prepare to travel to Rochester, NY. Once you have arrived, you must schedule your mandatory immigration check-in and orientation session with International Student Services.

To schedule: call ISS at 585-475-6943 or email issj1@rit.edu. Appointments are required. Sessions typically last 45 minutes.

During your check-in and orientation, we'll discuss the topics covered here, plus any additional questions you may have.

We look forward to meeting you soon!



ISS & Emergency Contact Information

Primary ISS Contact: **Megan Kless**, Alternate Responsible Officer for RIT's J-1 Program

Please **call or email to schedule an appointment** to meet with Megan— we cannot guarantee walk-in advising availability for J-1 scholars: issj1@rit.edu or 585-475-6943

ISS Office: Student Alumni Union (Building 4), Suite 2330

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm

Emergencies outside of ISS hours: contact RIT Public Safety at **585-475-3333** to be connected to the ISS advisor on duty. Emergencies include: hospitalization, medical or mental health emergency, arrest, detention, being stuck at the border.

Public Safety Contact Information: <https://www.rit.edu/fa/publicsafety/aboutus>

In the US, call 911 if you are in danger, if you need medical assistance, need to report a crime, or need to report a fire or accident.

The J-1 Program

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program was created by the **US Department of State**. J-1 records are handled through **SEVIS** (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System). RIT is your J-1 program sponsor and manages your SEVIS record.

J-1 is for **educational** and **cultural** exchange

- Be sure to explore and experience US culture, and share your home culture with Americans!

J-1 is for **temporary exchange** in a **specific field of study** at a **specific location** for a **specific duration**

- Be sure your DS-2019 and SEVIS record are always up-to-date!

The **Form DS-2019** is your Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status. ISS has issued this form for you in SEVIS.

For more info: [J-1 Visa Program](#)



Travel Documents

Together, these documents allow you to request entry to the US in J-1 status, and verify your ability to live and work in the US under your J program. If you travel outside of Rochester, even if staying in New York State or within the US, be sure to take all of these original documents with you.

- **Passport**
 - Must always have at least 6 months' validity remaining
- **DS-2019**
 - Eligibility form for J-1 visa
 - Grace period: permission to stay up to 30 days beyond program end date on DS-2019 (once you depart the US during the grace period, your J-1 status officially ends)
 - Travel signature: when you check in with ISS, an advisor will sign your DS-2019 for travel
- **J-1 visa**
 - Must be valid for reentry to the US, but is allowed to expire while you are in the US as long as your DS-2019 is valid
- **I-94 Admission/Arrival Record**
 - Once in the US, a copy of your I-94 record is also part of your travel documentation. I-94 should show your admission as “J-1” for “D/S” (duration of status). After entry to the US, access your most recent record here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>



Keep one set of copies of these documents in your work bag, and one set of copies safe at your Rochester home.

Bring your original documents any time you're traveling or at a travel hub (bus station, train station, airport).

SEVIS Fee & Visa Application

While you wait for your DS-2019 to arrive, you may proceed with your next steps.

- First, **pay your SEVIS fee** at www.fmjfee.com Print and save a copy of the payment confirmation. No additional fees are required for J-2 dependents.
- Then, **complete your online DS-160 visa application**:
 - Info and instructions: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html>
 - DS-160 visa application: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
- You may also **schedule your visa appointment** for your interview, but you must have the DS-2019 in hand for your visa interview, so please bear that in mind when scheduling your visa appointment. You cannot use a scan or copy of the DS-2019 in your interview or for travel.
- **Documents needed** for visa interview: DS-2019, valid passport, RIT invitation/offer letter, proof of financial support. Dependents also need to bring their marriage certificate (for spouse) or birth certificate (for children).

J-1 Rules, Bars, & Requirements

The next few slides will discuss various rules, bars, and requirements that come with participation in a J Exchange Visitor Program

- Requirements for health insurance
- Bar on Repeat Participation (Research Scholar/Professor categories only)
- Address/contact information reporting
- Work Authorization limits and requirements
- Program end date changes and transfers
- J-2 dependent work authorization

We will discuss the rules, bars, and requirements that apply to you during your check-in and orientation. Please review them carefully in advance as these are complicated concepts with direct impacts to your program and future plans.

Health Insurance Requirements

- **All J-1 scholars and any accompanying J-2 dependents** must have health insurance that meets the J requirements, for the duration of their stay in the US.
 - **Medical benefits** of at least **\$100,000** per accident or illness
 - **Repatriation of remains** in the amount of **\$25,000**
 - Expenses associated with the **medical evacuation** of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of **\$50,000**
 - A **deductible** not to exceed **\$500** per accident or illness.
- Failure to maintain adequate insurance can be grounds for terminating your J-1 program.
- It is YOUR responsibility to obtain proper health insurance and ensure it meets the J requirements.
- You may also be subject to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For more information: https://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Browse_by_Interest/International_Students_and_Scholars/The_Affordable_Care_Act_And_Nonimmigrant_Students_and_Scholars/
- *You are not required to have such insurance prior to applying for your visa. Submit the ISS Insurance Understanding & Compliance Confirmation during your Check-in/Orientation (form included with DS-2019).*

Health Insurance Options

If you are **paid by RIT** and eligible for employee benefits:

- Coverage from 1st of month AFTER hire date if not hired as of the first day of the month
- Need supplemental insurance for **medical evacuation** and **repatriation of remains**. One option:
 - <https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/emergency-evacuation/>

If you are **not paid by RIT**, you can purchase a plan.

- Commonly used options include:
 - www.isoa.org
 - <https://www.inext.com/plans/travel-to-usa/work/>
 - <https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/j1student/>
 - <https://www.insubuy.com/j1-visa-health-insurance/>
 - <https://www.americanvisitorinsurance.com/visa-insurance/j1-visa.asp>



*RIT is **not** endorsing any of these companies or their insurance products, but providing a list of possible options to assist your own research.*

When looking for insurance options online:

- It's ok to purchase a plan once you've arrived in the US and have attended your check-in session.
- When comparing plans, remember that the cheaper policy may not be better: what is most important is meeting the J insurance requirements.
- Be sure you understand the terms of the policy you are purchasing. Is it renewable? What does the plan cover? What does the plan NOT cover? How do you make a claim if you get sick or injured? How are claims paid?

24-month Bar on Repeat Participation

- **Who is subject?** J exchange visitors in categories Research Scholar or Professor. Short-Term Scholar participants are NOT subject to this rule.
- **What does this bar mean?** It means that whenever your J-1 program in the Research Scholar or Professor categories ends, regardless of how long your program has been, you cannot begin another J-1 program in the Research Scholar or Professor categories until 24 months have passed.
- **Does that mean I'm barred from the US?** No, the bar just governs when you are eligible for another J program in these categories
- **So can I still come to the US?** Yes, while the 24-month bar is in effect, you may still be able to travel to the US in either another J category or another nonimmigrant visa category, such as B-1/B-2.
- **Is there a waiver of the 24-month bar?** No.

212(e): The Two-Year Home Residency Rule

- **What does this rule mean?** This rule means that before you are eligible for certain applications (H, L, or K visas; US permanent residency; change of status within the US), you must first satisfy the rule by living in your home country for a total of 2 years, or successfully obtain a waiver of the rule.
- **Who is subject?** J-1s (and their J-2 dependents) who have **government funding** (US or home government) or whose DS-2019 field of study is on their home country's **Skills List**
- **What if my DS-2019 and visa notations don't match?** Regardless of whether your DS-2019 and visa notations match or are correct, if you meet the criteria to be subject to 212(e), you are definitely subject. In some instances, requesting an **Advisory Opinion** on whether you are subject or not may be appropriate. Speak with an ISS advisor prior to requesting an Advisory Opinion.
- **Can I apply for a waiver of 212(e)?** Maybe— it depends on your situation and why you are subject to the rule. Make an appointment to talk with an ISS advisor about waivers and application instructions. Waivers can take 6-12 months and have important consequences.
- **What happens when I apply for a waiver?** Once you apply for a waiver of 212(e), your J-1 program cannot be extended or transferred, and if your visa has expired, travel outside the US is not recommended.

The 24-month bar & the 2-year residency rule 212(e) in action

24-month bar

End of J-1 program (DS-2019 end date)

24 months in between end of J program (RS/Prof) and start of new J program (RS/Prof)

**Your specific timelines and eligibility for a given visa program may differ from the example on this slide. Contact your Alternate Responsible Officer for specific guidance.*

Eligible for a new J program in categories of Research Scholar or Professor.

212(e)

Arrival back in home country

12 months in home country

4 months in home country

8 months in home country

Aggregate 2 years of residency in home country met. 212(e) satisfied.

J-1 Work Authorization

Your J-1 status provides you work authorization that enables you to engage in your program activities. This work authorization is specific to RIT and any changes to your work activities, or adding any **incidental employment** or **occasional lectures** at RIT or another location require updated work authorization in advance. For example, to receive an honorarium as part of presenting your research at another university, you need additional authorization from ISS in advance.

Even if you will not be paid for additional employment activities, work authorization may be necessary to ensure you do not violate your J-1 status. **Contact ISS in advance of beginning any additional activities**, to determine what documentation will be necessary for you to engage in those activities. You may need a new DS-2019 and/or a letter of permission from ISS to engage in those new activities or to be paid.

- **It is illegal to work in the US without authorization.**
- J-2 dependents may obtain their own work authorization once in the US. This option can be discussed during check-in.

J-2 Dependents

Generally, the rules that apply to J-1s also apply to any J-2 dependents, such as 212(e) and the 24-month bar. Please note the following important reminders:

- Children of school age must be enrolled in school.
- All J-2 dependents must meet the same health insurance requirements as J-1s. No insurance is required for J-2s for any time spent outside the US while the J-1 is in the US.
- You must notify ISS if a J-2 dependent makes their final departure from the US prior to your J-1 program ending (if they will not return to the US before your program ends)
- J-2 Spouses may apply for their own work authorization, once in the US. Applications typically take up to 3 months for approval. Work authorization is tied to the DS-2019 program end date.
- J-2 spouses are permitted to study full or part-time, but if a J-1 plans to study full-time, their own student non-immigrant status (such as F-1) may be more appropriate.

Talk with an ISS advisor. J-2 dependents are welcome to contact ISS directly or request appointments with an advisor.

Program End Date Changes & Program Transfers

As long as you have time remaining in your category (5 year max for Research Scholars and Professors; 6-month max for Short-Term Scholars), you may be eligible for a Program Extension or Program Transfer.

Extensions require:

- Continued support of your RIT host department
- Continued insurance that meets J requirements
- Proof of funding to cover period of extension
- Completed J-1 Scholar Extension Request (via your host department)

Transfers require:

- Invitation or offer from another US institution that can sponsor J-1s in your category
- That you conduct work in support of your original program objectives
- Contact the new institution for transfer procedures.
- ISS will assist with the transfer, but the request must come from the new institution.

If you will complete your program early:

Completing your program **more than 15 days** before your DS-2019 end date requires you to notify ISS with your new program end date. ISS will update your SEVIS record and issue you an updated DS-2019. Email issj1@rit.edu

International travel during your J program

As long as you have notified your RIT host department of your travel, no special authorization is needed from RIT to travel internationally during your J-1 program.

***EXCEPTION:** If you will be out of the US for 4 weeks or more, for either personal or professional reasons, please email issj1@rit.edu to get advice on how to protect your J-1 program while you are away, and facilitate your travel back to the US.*

Be sure to check your travel documents are in order before you leave the US, to ensure a smooth reentry to the US:

- **DS-2019**– Will it be valid when you seek to reenter the US? Do you have a valid travel signature? If not, email issj1@rit.edu to schedule a time to obtain a new signature.
- **J-1 visa**– Will it be valid when you seek to reenter the US? If not, you need to apply for a new J-1 visa. Talk to an ISS advisor in advance about applying for a new visa.
- **Passport**– Will there be at least 6 months' validity on it when you depart and return to the US? For passport renewals, contact your home country embassy in the US.

Visiting a country other than your home country? Be sure to check if you need any visa or travel documents to enter that country. ISS is unable to advise on non-US visa/immigration regulations.

- Citizens of certain countries are required to have a **Canadian entry visa** to visit Canada. Check here to see your requirements:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=416&top=16>
- Even if you don't need a visa, you may still be required to submit an eTA (**electronic travel authorization**) if travelling to Canada by air. Check here for more information:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>
- Be sure to **take your DS-2019** with valid travel signature along with your passport with J-1 visa to be able to return to the US after your Canadian adventures! You may not reenter the US in J-1 status after your DS-2019 program end date.
- Travel to Canada with an expired J-1 visa (but valid DS-2019) may be possible— speak with an ISS advisor about **Automatic Revalidation** of your visa for eligible travel.

Travel to Canada



Living & Working in the US

The next few slides will introduce you to applications, processes, or resources that will help you get settled in Rochester. If you have questions about living in Rochester that these slides do not address, please email issj1@rit.edu. ISS will be happy to provide you with further information or point to the appropriate resource or contact.

- Social Security Numbers
- Taxes and GLACIER
- RIT Resources
- Travel during the J-1 program
- Tips to protect yourself
- Transportation & Driving in New York State
- Cultural exchange



Social Security Numbers

- **What is the SSN?** This is a unique ID number used by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for tax purposes.
- **Am I eligible?** Yes, all J-1 scholars are eligible to apply for an SSN. An SSN is required if receiving funds from RIT. J-2 dependents are only eligible for their own SSN if they obtain J-2 work authorization
- **How do I apply?** Obtain application and instructions from ISS during your check-in. Wait at least 10 days after arrival in US to apply.
- **IMPORTANT!** Keep your social security card at home in a safe place. Memorize your number. Do not share your number unless it is safe and appropriate to do so. Beware of scams and identity theft!



Taxes & GLACIER

If you earn income while in the US, you will need to submit both a Federal and State tax return. These are due around April 15 of each year, for taxes during the previous calendar year. J-1 scholars paid by RIT will have a GLACIER account to assist with tax compliance.

- **What is GLACIER?** A web-based software managed by RIT's **Payroll Office**, GLACIER is the non-resident alien tax compliance software system.
- **How does GLACIER work?** Payroll will run a visa report, and when your name shows up on that report after you arrive at RIT, they will create a GLACIER account for you. Watch for an email from support@online-tax.net – this is NOT spam. It contains information you need to access GLACIER and your temporary log-in and password. You must complete your GLACIER record and follow Payroll's instructions. Contact Payroll with questions about GLACIER.
- **SPRINTAX** is I tax return preparation software for non-residents for tax purpose. To get an access code for free federal return filing, email iss@rit.edu during tax season (usually mid-February to mid-April). You can purchase access for New York State tax returns:
<https://www.sprintax.com/>

NOTE: Even if you are not required to submit a tax return, all J-1s in the US for less than 5 years are required each year to submit **Form 8843**: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf>

Protect Yourself!



- **Amounts of money you can bring into the US:** Determine whether you need to declare the amount you/your family members together are bringing into the US (>\$10,000USD)
- **Know your rights** while working in the US: Wilberforce Act Pamphlet (pdf)
- **Learn local and federal laws.** “Ignorance is no excuse!”
 - Alcohol and marijuana arrests (even without conviction) often result in revocation of your J-1 visa.
- **Protect your identity.** Beware of identity theft, which is when someone uses “your personal information to open accounts, file taxes, or make purchases”.
- **Beware of scams!** If you receive phone calls, emails, or other correspondence demanding your personal information and money, it is likely a scam! Common scam topics or targeted information: Social Security Number, taxes/IRS, immigration status
 - Government agencies will never request personal information or payment by phone
 - Scammers have slick tricks— they may make it look like a government or police phone number is calling you, but it is a trick.

Transportation

In Rochester, like many places in the US, most people get around by car. Since you may not choose or have a car while in Rochester, or if you need transportation options when you first arrive, here are some commonly used resources you can explore:

- Rochester's Regional Transit Service (RTS) is the region's bus service:
<https://www.myrts.com/>
- RIT Shuttle Services: <https://www.rit.edu/fa/parking/transportation/shuttle>
- RIT Bus Information: <https://www.rit.edu/fa/parking/transportation/bus>
- RIT Commuting Alternatives:
<https://www.rit.edu/fa/parking/transportation/alternatives>
- RIT Rideshare/Carpooling: <https://www.rit.edu/fa/parking/transportation/rideshare>
- Rideshare services: Download **Uber** and/or **Lyft** apps in your phone's app store.

Driving in New York State

- As a J-1 nonimmigrant, you do not meet the definition of “resident” in New York State. **This means that if you already have a valid license from your home country, you can use that to drive in New York, and you are not required to get a New York State Drivers License.**
- If your license from your home country does not contain sufficient English for an officer to read and verify it, you should translate your license, and include a signed statement on that translation certifying that you provided the translation and that it is the best to your ability. Carry your license and the translation together. If you have a valid license, an International Driving Permit is helpful but not required.
- If you do not have a license and wish to obtain one: <https://dmv.ny.gov/>
- Driver licenses and car registrations are managed by each state in the US. While most states have similar rules and you are likely fine to drive with your home-country license in other states, it is your responsibility to verify any requirements you may need to meet, if you will be driving in another state.
- **Remember when driving: seatbelt use is MANDATORY for all passengers, and cellphone use is PROHIBITED for the driver. See other rules of the road here: <http://safeny.ny.gov/roadrule.htm>**

RIT Resources

RIT ID Cards

Paid RIT employees: Visit HR office, who will give you a form

Visiting Scholars: Take invitation letter (listing program dates) from host dept and passport to Registrar's office to obtain ID

J-2 dependents: Recreation-only ID card for J-2; contact the [Fitness Center](#). Or, if living in RIT housing, contact [Housing Operations](#) about how to get an ID (they have a form)

RIT Fitness Facilities

RIT-paid employees: free with ID

Visiting Scholars: pay affiliate rate (\$65 for 3 months); requires either ISS or host department confirmation of RIT relationship; access with ID

For J-2 dependents: pay family rate (\$55 for 3 months)



Fitness membership types, rates, and contact information:
<https://www.rit.edu/~w-criw/membership.php>

RIT Resources, Continued

Apps to download:

- RIT Mobile: <https://www.rit.edu/mobile/>
- TigerSafe: <https://apparmor.com/clients/rit.edu/>
- TransLoc (shuttles): <http://translocrider.com/>

ISS Living in Rochester Resources: <https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/iss/prospective-students/living-in-rochester>

RIT On-Campus Healthcare:

- For paid employees with Employee Benefits: [RIT/Rochester Regional Health Family Medicine Practice](#)
- For visiting scholars with RIT AETNA student plan: [Student Health Center](#)

English Language Center: <https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/elc/>

Public Safety: <https://www.rit.edu/fa/publicsafety/>

- Emergency on campus: 585-475-3333
- Emergency off campus(nationwide): 911

RIT Maps: <https://maps.rit.edu/>

Cultural Exchange



The J-1 program was created for cultural as well as educational exchange. While you're in the US, we encourage you to take advantage of the many cultural events and activities on campus and in the Rochester area. Learn about the US and Americans, and share your culture!

- ISS news & events: Follow ISS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RITinternational/>
- RIT events: <https://events.rit.edu/> plus, check flyers around campus
- Rochester Global Connections events: <https://rocglobal.org/events/>
- *Rochester Global Connections is a local organization that “promotes international understanding and cultural exchange between our community and international students and international visitors”. In addition to events, they also have an [International Friendship Program](#) and [International Women’s Program](#).*

When to contact ISS

- If you have a **change of address** or contact information (inform us within 10 days of any change)
- Prior to beginning any **incidental employment or occasional lectures**, in order to obtain work authorization
- Prior to taking a **leave of absence** or needing to be outside the US for 4 weeks or more
- If you need to **extend your J-1 program** at RIT, wish to **transfer your J-1 program** to another US institution, need to **end your program early**, or have a **change in funding** amount or source.
- Prior to enrolling in any **courses or academic programs**, to verify eligibility and permissions
- If you have any **immigration, travel, or visa questions**, or if ISS can be of assistance in any way

... if you follow these instructions, you will properly maintain your J-1 status!

Thank you for reviewing your J-1 program guide!

Please bookmark these slides so you can refer to them during your stay in the US.

**Be sure to schedule your immigration
check-in & orientation once you arrive at RIT!**

Email issj1@rit.edu or call 585-475-6943