



## **J-1 Internship Program Overview**

Welcome to the J-1 Visa information site of International Educational Exchange, Inc. In this section, you will learn more about how to apply for a J-1 visa in the Intern category.

**Purpose of the J-1 Intern Program:** “Its purpose is to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges”.

**Eligibility:** If you are applying for our J-1 intern program, you must be currently enrolled in and pursuing studies at a foreign degree-or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States and entering the United States to participate in a structured and guided work-based internship program in your specific academic field.

*Or*

Have graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to your exchange visitor program begin date and enter the United States to participate in a structured and guided work-based internship program in your specific academic field.

Participants in IEE’s Intern program must also possess adequate financial resources to complete the program. Individuals must also possess adequate English skills in order to apply for participation in our intern programs.

**Program Length:** Our programs are 6-12 months in duration. The maximum duration is 12 months.

**Compensation:** As an exchange visitor, you will receive compensation from your host employer during your intern program. Placement hours will vary depending on the host organization and the seasonality of the business but will be at a minimum of 32 hours a week.

You must bring enough money to the United States to cover your food, housing, security deposits and other personal expenses for at least 1 month.

**Host Organizations:** Host organizations are organizations that have been approved to host exchange visitors and have agreed to provide adequate training in the exchange visitor’s career path. Intern opportunities for exchange visitors are approved based on the available training offered by the host organization and the exchange visitor’s educational and professional background. An exchange visitor who engages in unauthorized employment (employment outside of their assigned host employer) will be in violation of the program status and is subject to program termination and would be required to return to their home country.

IEE takes such terminations very seriously and based on the information received from the exchange visitor and the host organization, IEE will make the determination whether the exchange visitor should have the opportunity to continue the program.

**DS-2019 form and how to apply:** The DS-2019 form is a legal document that designated sponsors issue to potential exchange visitors which is necessary for them to apply for their J-1 visa. Once you have been approved to participate in our Intern program, you will be issued the DS-2019 form and you will be allowed to apply for your J-1 visa stamp at the American Embassy or consulate in your home country. To apply for your DS-2019 form, please visit the intern application portion of this website.

**Applying for the J-1 Visa:** Your DS-2019 form does not guarantee that you will be issued a J-1 visa stamp in your passport. It is simply a document illustrating that you have a visa sponsor for your program that has authorized you to participate in their intern program. It is your responsibility to illustrate and prove to the consular officer interviewing you that you are applying in good faith and that you plan to return to your home country upon completion of the program. If the consular officer does not feel that you have adequate ties to your home country or that you do not have sufficient financial resources, you may be faced with a visa denial. Please remember, all visa approvals lie with the consular officer at the American Embassy.

In order to apply, you must have registered in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). SEVIS is an Internet-based system that provides tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on exchange visitors (J visa). SEVIS enables program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications, via the Internet, to the DHS (Department of Homeland Security) and DoS (Department of State) throughout an exchange visitor's stay in the United States. Once you have done this you may make your appointment with the American Embassy for your interview. You will need to contact the Embassy as well to find out if there is a wait time for visa appointments and if so, for how long. It is important to know this ahead of time so you can plan your arrival to your host employer appropriately. You will need to give yourself plenty of time to apply for the DS-2019 form and make your Embassy appointment in order to arrive on schedule. You should plan to have all application documents and payment submitted no later than one month prior to your start date with your host employer.

There may be times that the dates indicated on the visa (in your passport), do not match the dates listed on the DS-2019 form. It could be for a time period less than the dates on your DS-2019 form or even longer than the dates on your DS-2019 form. If the dates are less than the dates on your DS-2019 form, you may still legally train in the United States; however, if you plan to leave the country and return *after* the dates listed on your visa, you will need to re-apply for your visa at the American Embassy in your home country.

If the dates on your visa exceed the dates on your DS-2019 form, this does ***not*** allow you to continue to train (receive compensation or remain in the United States) until the expiration of your visa dates. This time frame is only a period in which you may present yourself to an US immigration officer at the point of entry to the United States with a valid DS-2019 form under the J-1 status. For example: If the US consular officer approves your visa for two years, this means that you have a two year period in which

you may approach the border with a valid I-94 card and program sponsorship for entry to the United States.

**Grace Period:** All exchange visitors participating in the J-1 internship program are legally allowed to stay in the United States for a period of 30 days upon completion of their internship program. This is called your “grace period”. You must note that if you stay so much as 31 days past the completion of your program dates, you will be out of status and will be considered illegal. The program dates are the dates indicated on your DS-2019 form and represent your dates of training with your host organization. **Note:** Should your program be terminated for any reason, your 30 day grace period will be forfeited and you will need to return back to your home country immediately.

**Applying for a Social Security Card:** Prior to beginning your intern program, you will need to apply for your social security number. This number is unique and will be assigned to you for the US government to receive information regarding your earnings. You will need to give this number to your host employer so they can report your income and tax withholding to the government. You will also need this number to file for your tax returns at the end of the year.

If you have never received a social security card in the past, you will need to apply in person. Your host employer will assist you in getting to the social security office to apply. You will need to take your DS-2019 form, your passport, your I-94 card and proof of employment with you. You may find other helpful information on the social security website at <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

Be sure to ask the social security officer for a receipt showing proof that you have applied for your card. You will need this to track your card and the application process. Delays or denials in issuing your card could be due to several factors. It is important that all of your documents match your passport information exactly. This and your inability to prove you are employed will delay the processing or could result in a denial. If you are denied a social security card, you are ineligible to work and receive compensation.

The social security office will ask you for an address to send your card to. We recommend that you have it sent to your human resources office. The process should take approximately 2-3 weeks. If you have not received it by this time, you will need to go back to the social security office and inquire about the delay. If it has been processed, they will be able to provide you with the number. You will have to do this in person; they will not provide you with any information over the phone.

**Initial Entrance to the United States:** Department of Homeland Security requires that all exchange visitors contact their visa sponsor within 3 days of entering the United States. You are required to provide us with your address, phone number, e-mail address, and date of entry to the U.S. This should be done within the first 72 hours of your arrival into the U.S. and can be done on our website. Failure to do this could result in your program termination. Should at any time during your program you move from your initial housing, you must contact IEE within three days and provide us with your new address and phone number. Failure to do so could cause your program to be terminated.

**Leaving and Re-entering the United States:** There may be times during your internship period that you will need to return to your home country or you may have the opportunity to travel outside the United States during approved time off from your internship program. If this opportunity arises, you will be required to provide IEE with a letter from the Human Resources department of your host organization indicating that you have been approved for this break in your program. They will be required to indicate the date of your proposed departure and the date of your return to your intern program. You will also need to return your original DS-2019 form along with \$50.00 to our office for our signature indicating that you are in good standing in the program and that we have granted approval for you travel. You will need to provide us with a pre-paid method to return your DS-2019 form to you (we recommend Federal Express or some other method that can be tracked in case it is mis-placed in the mail). You will need to send this to us at least two weeks prior to your travel. Please allow adequate time to have this form signed and returned to you. It is important to note that if you neglect to get our signature on your DS-2019 form, you may not be allowed back into the United States. The immigration officer at the point of re-entry to the United States will be checking for this signature to ensure that you should be permitted to return and you are eligible to continue your intern program. **NOTE:** Intern programs are intended to be continuous in nature and extended periods away from your program are not permitted.

**Insurance:** International Educational Exchange, Inc. has arranged for insurance coverage for you during your time in the United States. You will need to be covered under our insurance for the time beginning on your DS-2019 form until the ending date on your DS-2019 form. If you choose to travel during your grace period, you will be required to have coverage during this time period as well. The Department of State has very specific insurance requirements relating to exchange visitors which most insurance companies in your home country do not have. If your insurance company in your home country can accommodate the DOS requirements, we can consider them for approval. We will need our insurance verification form filled out by the insurance company with proof of payment and coverage for your program dates.

The insurance coverage is really for catastrophic purposes only. It does not cover routine check-ups, dental or any pre-existing conditions. Sports related injuries have a maximum coverage, so if during your time here you think you may be participating in excessive sports (such as skiing, hiking, etc.), you should consider purchasing hazardous insurance coverage

**Program Terminations:** Should your intern program be terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily by either you or your host organization, you must contact IEE within 3 days. Failure to do so will result in termination of your entire program and you will be required to return to your home country immediately.

Immediate termination from the program will include, but are not limited to, any violation of the program regulations set forth by the Department of State, any violation of program regulations as outlined by your program sponsor (IEE), gross neglect of the policies of your host organization and failure to abide by the laws of the United States.

DO NOT terminate your intern program without speaking with a representative from IEE first. As the program is site specific, it is important to note that you could jeopardize your program status by quitting without authorization to do so. If you receive disciplinary actions from your host organization it is important to keep us informed so we can see what we can do to assist you remain in positive status in the program. Host organizations are asked to keep us informed of your progress as well.

If you leave your program without notifying IEE, we will have to report you to Homeland Security as being out of status in the program. This is very serious and could result in your inability to secure future visas to the United States.

**On-Going Support:** As your visa sponsor, IEE is committed to making this one of your most memorable and rewarding experiences in your career. Representatives of IEE will contact you periodically during your Intern program to inquire about your experience. You will be asked to write about your cultural experiences and how they differ from some of the cultures in your home country in your midpoint evaluation. Your managers and/or supervisors will be asked to evaluate your progress periodically during your program. They will provide us with copies of your evaluations and let us know if they feel you may need additional support from us as your sponsor. You will also have the opportunity to evaluate your host organization and share with us your experiences and suggestions for improvement. This assists us in educating our host organizations and how we can continue to enhance the program for exchange visitors participating after you.

There may be times during your program that you may feel overwhelmed by the experience. Please feel free to contact us any time you may have a concern. We are here to support you and ensure your program experience is beneficial.

## **Question and Answers:**

1. Q. What if my visa is denied?
  - A. If your visa is denied you will be required to return your original DS-2019 form. Upon receipt of your DS-2019 form, you will receive a refund based on our refund policy.
  
2. Q. What if I lose my DS-2019 form?
  - A. We will issue you a new form. The cost for a replacement form is \$250.00 plus shipping fees
  
3. Q. What if I have an accident or illness?
  - A. Please familiarize yourself with the insurance that is provided to make sure you are seeking the appropriate treatment for your illness. You must submit the required forms to the insurance company within 30 days of the incident to be properly covered.
  
4. Q. Do I have to pay taxes?
  - A. Certain taxes, yes. You will need to check with the IRS or a tax accountant to verify your exemptions. You may also visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for more information.
  
5. Q. What if I lose my social security card?
  - A. You may find information regarding this at the following website:  
<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>
  
6. Q. How do I file my taxes?
  - A. Once you receive your W-2 from your host organization, you may consult a tax accountant such as H&R Block. You may also use an on-line service such as [www.taxback.com](http://www.taxback.com). These are just suggestions as we do not recommend any particular service. NOTE: W-2's are issued by your host organization every January. If your program ends prior to January, you will need to make sure you provide your host organization with your forwarding address in order to receive your W-2 on time.