



Greetings from International Services!

We are pleased to send you the Form DS-2019 “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status” and welcome you to Clemson University (CU). Please verify the information on form DS-2019 and inform us immediately if it needs to be revised. We look forward to welcoming you to Clemson University and have provided the information below to assist you with your travel preparations.

J Visa Application Process

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires all J-1 exchange visitors to pay an I-901 SEVIS fee of \$220 at least three business days before applying for the J visa. Please visit <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/> for more information about this required fee. The SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is an online database used to store information about the exchange visitor including the purpose of the visit and travel history. The SEVIS system it is also used to generate and update DS-2019 forms.

If you are outside the United States, you must present the DS-2019 along with the documents below at the nearest United States consulate or embassy to obtain a J Exchange Visitor Visa. To start your visa application, we recommend finding the nearest [embassy or consulate](#) to confirm the specific application requirements. You will then need to complete the [DS-160](#) visa application form to schedule and proceed with your visa application.

1. Evidence of financial support
2. Invitation Letter from Clemson University
3. Passport
4. [DS-160 Visa fee](#) (*this is a separate fee to the I-901 fee*)
 - Please use the information on your DS-2019 to complete this form.
5. Proof of [I-901 SEVIS fee](#) payment
6. A passport size picture of yourself

Please visit the [DOS website](#) for further information about the visa application and the most recent documentation requirements. Please note that Canadian and Bermudian citizens are required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee but do not require J visas to enter the U.S.

If your dependents (spouse and/or unmarried children under the age of 21) will be accompanying you, they will need separate J-2 visas to enter the U.S. You must take their passports and J-2 DS-2019s with you to the consulate and be prepared to show proof of marriage for your spouse and proof of parenthood of each child. After completing your interview, the U.S. consular official will return your original Form DS-2019 (and any J-2 dependent DS-2019s) to you.

Travel to Clemson South Carolina

U.S. Department of State Guidelines state that J visitors should enter no earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the DS-2019. It is recommended to arrive to the U.S. at least 2 weeks prior and no 2 weeks after the program start date listed on the DS-2019. If you cannot arrive within this timeframe, you will need to work with your department and our office to defer your program.

When booking your airplane tickets, we recommend flying directly to Greenville Spartanburg airport (GSP) if possible. The next closest airports are the Atlanta Hartsfield Airport (ATL) or the Charlotte Douglas Airport (CLT), however, please note that these airports are 2-3 hours driving from Clemson, SC. Information about shuttle and train service from all airports can be found [here](#).





Arrival at the Port of Entry

You must present your original Clemson University DS-2019, along with your passport (with a valid J-1 visa) to a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspection officer at the port of entry to the United States. The CBP inspection officer will return your passport, the properly processed DS-2019, and will issue you an electronic arrival record, called the [Form I-94](#), Arrival/Departure Record. You may view and print your I-94 after arrival. Additional information about arrival at the U.S. port of entry can be found [here](#).

It is advised that you keep your printed DS-2019, passport, visa, offer letter/invitation letter from Clemson University, your immunization records (if applicable), financial documents, travel itinerary, contact information for the International Service office *and* for the person(s) who will be picking you up at the airport in your carry-on bag in case you are asked for them at the port of entry. If you used a travel agent to arrange your transportation, please bring this contact information also.

Housing

If you have not yet secured housing, you will want to find temporary accommodations when you arrive in Clemson. You can find a complete list of area hotels on the [Visit Clemson website](#). To find off-campus housing, you can visit [Clemson's off-campus resource page](#). We encourage visiting scholars to consult with a local realtor or rental property manager to assist with the process. More housing information can be found within the [Exchange Visitor Arrival Guide](#).

Arrival Requirements & SEVIS Check-In

All exchange visitors are required to complete a mandatory orientation session and [check-in](#) with the Office of International Services. Exchange students participating in bilateral programs will be provided a group orientation session.

Failure to [check-in](#) with the office of international services will result in voidance of your DS-2019, which will require you to leave the U.S. immediately for status violation or apply for reinstatement and pay all required fees. Any J-2s that you bring with you to the U.S. (no matter their arrival date) must also check in with International Services.

Insurance Requirements to Maintain J-1 Status

Please be informed that the U.S. Department of State (DOS) requires that you and your J-2 dependents (if applicable) must be in compliance with the health insurance standards listed below:

1. Medical insurance must cover the entire period of participation in the Exchange Visitor program (*refer to the program start and end dates on your DS-2019*)
2. Medical benefits must provide a minimum of \$100,000 per accident or illness
3. Medical evacuation must be covered in the amount of \$50,000, minimum (medical evacuation is emergency medical transportation to the home country)
4. Repatriation must be covered in the amount of \$25,000 minimum (in the unfortunate event of death, repatriation is the transportation of remains back to the home country)
5. The deductible must not exceed \$500 per accident or illness

The insurance must also meet one of the requirements below:

1. An A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above or an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-" or above or, a Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of "A" or above or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above
2. Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the insured's home country; or
3. Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or





4. Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) or eligible Competitive Medical Plan (CMP) as determined by the Health Care Financing Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Special note for Clemson employees: *If receiving (employee) health insurance benefits from CU - the CU Employee Health Insurance Plan does not meet the minimum [U.S. Department of State requirements](#), so you will be required to purchase [separate insurance](#) that meets these requirements. If not, you and any dependents will be in violation of J-1/J-2 immigration status and your SEVIS record will be terminated. Please contact International Services for questions about this requirement.*

Many international scholars purchase foreign health insurance coverage which does not meet the requirements listed above and are required to purchase an additional coverage upon arrival. We strongly recommend that you do not purchase foreign or U.S. insurance coverages that are not listed in the [pre-approved insurance options](#) without first contacting our office to verify whether or not the insurance coverage will meet the U.S. Department of State requirements.

Should your arrival be delayed for any reason, please submit the [Deferral Form](#) immediately so that we can report the delay in SEVIS and possibly issue you a new DS-2019 with a new program start date. Your SEVIS record with DHS must be validated by the IS within 30 days from the program start date listed on Form DS-2019. **(To validate your SEVIS record, we will need at minimum your local address, U.S. phone number, and evidence of your medical insurance coverage.)** Please note that the IS office is not open on weekends or on national and university holidays.

Our office is here to support you with any immigration-related questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions related to your DS-2019, J-1 visa application, dependents, and arrival to the U.S.

Sincerely,

International Services

