# Table of Contents

About the Office of International Education ................................................................. 5

The Immigration Process .................................................................................................... 5

Introduction to Visa Sponsorship ...................................................................................... 5

Determining the Correct Visa Type: The J-1 Visa .......................................................... 5

About the J-1: ..................................................................................................................... 5

J-1 Temporary Bar: ............................................................................................................. 6

J-1 Home Residency Requirement: .................................................................................... 6

English Language Ability: ................................................................................................. 7

Proof of Funding: ............................................................................................................... 7

Proof of Health Insurance: ............................................................................................... 7

The J-1 Sponsorship Application Process ......................................................................... 8

The Sponsorship Request Form: ....................................................................................... 8

J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Intake Form: ........................................................................... 8

Form DS-2019: .................................................................................................................. 8

Processing Times ................................................................................................................. 9

J-1 Associated Costs.......................................................................................................... 9

Other Visa Types ............................................................................................................... 10

H-1B: ................................................................................................................................. 10

TN (Trade NAFTA): ........................................................................................................... 10

E-3: .................................................................................................................................. 10

O-1: .................................................................................................................................. 10

Pre-Arrival Information ...................................................................................................... 11

Determining an Arrival Date ............................................................................................. 11

The Departmental Liaison ................................................................................................. 11

The Scholar’s Handbook .................................................................................................... 11

Promoting Cultural Awareness ......................................................................................... 11

Free Pre-Departure Orientation ........................................................................................ 12

Providing Program Information ....................................................................................... 12

Program Terms and Obligations: ...................................................................................... 12

Departmental Information: ............................................................................................... 12

Housing .............................................................................................................................. 12
About the Office of International Education

The Office of International Education (OIE) is pleased to welcome international scholars to The University of Georgia. International scholars directly support the teaching and research missions of UGA in fundamental and comprehensive ways. Likewise, our office seeks to support this population and all hosting departments with information and advice regarding visa options, benefits and obligations, and legal status in the U.S. This guide seeks to inform UGA departments about the process for hosting international visitors, from obtaining a visa to successfully concluding the program. We hope that you will not hesitate to contact us with any questions pertaining to international scholars at UGA and the information in this guide. For more comprehensive resources, please visit http://international.uga.edu/

The Immigration Process

Introduction to Visa Sponsorship

Departments offering invitations/employment to visitors must request assistance from the ISSIS office (International Student, Scholar, and Immigration Services) within OIE with the issuance of any necessary documents the visitor will require for obtaining a visa to enter the U.S. or for obtaining the correct legal status to allow employment at UGA. In general, the type of activity and the purpose of the visit will determine what type of visa will be required. The decision regarding the most appropriate type of visa is the responsibility of the ISSIS immigration advisor. The most common international scholar visa type is J-1 (Exchange Visitor), and most of the information in this guide is geared toward this visa type. However, other visa types are occasionally more appropriate. Additionally, it should be noted that the procedure for handling J-1 student interns varies slightly from the normal processing of J-1 exchange visitor (scholar, specialist, or professor outlined in this guide. If your department is planning to host a J-1 student intern, please contact an ISSIS immigration advisor. ISSIS immigration advisors are trained to determine the best visa type for international visitors, and may be consulted if it is unclear what type of visa sponsorship is required.

For more information on visa sponsorship, visit:
http://international.uga.edu/issis/information_for_sponsoring_uga_departments/

Determining the Correct Visa Type: The J-1 Visa

About the J-1: The first step in hosting a visitor is to determine the correct visa type for them. This is typically, but not always, the J-1 visa. Generally, it is used for research scholars, professors, short-term scholars, J student interns, and specialists coming to the U.S. to teach or conduct research temporarily. The duration of the visit can be between one day and five years, so the J-1 visa offers great flexibility. This category of sponsorship can be used to hire scholars (paid by UGA) or to host scholars who have separate, external sources of funding.
Additionally, the visitor’s spouse and children (under 21 years of age) may be eligible to obtain J-2 visas. Note that the visa application process differs slightly for student interns, and thus not all the information in this guide is applicable to them. If your department will be hosting a student intern, please contact an ISSIS advisor before beginning the application process. For a definition of the five categories of J-1 visitors at UGA, maximum lengths of stay for each, and more information on the J-1 visa in general, visit: http://international.uga.edu/issis/international_scholar_faculty_staff_information/j_1_scholars_and_faculty/

**J-1 Temporary Bar:** If the planned employment or position meets the above criteria, the ISSIS advisor must next determine if the scholar is eligible. This will involve a review of the person’s immigration history in the U.S., and specifically whether the person has been in the U.S. on a J-type visa (such as J-2 dependent, J-1 Student or J-1 scholar) anytime during the last 12-month period before the beginning date of this request, and also whether they have just completed a previous J-1 scholar or professor program in the U.S. If either of these applies, the scholar may be temporarily barred (12-24 months) from entering the U.S. on a new J visa. Your ISSIS advisor can provide more information on these temporary bars, or you may visit. http://international.uga.edu/issis/international_scholar_faculty_staff_information/j_1_scholars_and_faculty/

Click on the link on the lower right-hand side entitled “J-1 / J-2 Bars to Re-entry”.

**J-1 Home Residency Requirement:** The two-year home residency requirement is a different rule from the 12 or 24 month temporary bar. Specifically, some J-1 Exchange Visitors must return to their home country for at least two years at the end of their exchange program prior to being eligible for U.S. permanent residency, or a U.S. work visa. The home residency requirement can apply to an exchange visitor if:

- The visitor participated in a government funded exchange program; that is, the exchange visitor’s program was financed (in part or fully) by the U.S. government or the visitor’s home country.
- The visitor’s field of research or teaching is considered a specialized knowledge or skill, and the exchange visitor is a national or a permanent resident of a country which has deemed his/her field of specialized knowledge as necessary to that country’s development.
- The exchange visitor has been in the U.S. receiving clinical medical training.

It is advisable to make potential exchange visitors aware of this potential residence requirement early on during the application process, as it may affect their decision whether or not to come to the U.S. For more information, visit:
Additionally, the J-1 sponsorship from UGA may not be used for the following:

- The employment of persons in nonacademic staff positions
- Tenure-track or tenured faculty appointments
- Foreign medical graduates who will be engaged in clinical activities, including training
- Clinical appointments to the Schools of Dental or Veterinary Medicine or affiliated centers, or internships or programs of study including clinical responsibilities in any field

**English Language Ability:** As the sponsoring department, you must determine that the visitor has the English language skills necessary for the activities he/she will participate in at UGA.

**Proof of Funding:** Financial support must cover the entire period of the exchange visitor’s program. The minimum amount needed per month is $1580 for one visitor alone, plus $2000/month for an EV and spouse and $330 month per child. Support may come from UGA or from an outside source. For outside sources, proof of funding must be provided along with the ISSIS application materials. If necessary, the proof of funding must be translated into English and converted into U.S. dollars.

**Additional Funding Information:** If the J-1 exchange visitor will be paid by UGA, determine from what account(s) they will be paid. If they will be paid with grant funding, contact your department’s Sponsored Programs officer for help in determining whether they should be paid as a UGA employee or via stipend. Different types of grants have varying stipulations for how the J-1 exchange visitor may be paid. For example, training grants may require pay via stipend, while research grants may require pay as a UGA employee. If your Sponsored Programs officer determines that your visitor should be paid as a UGA employee, check in with the Human Resources Department to determine an appropriate job title for the visitor (making sure that it meets the J-1 visit requirements of being an academic position and having an appropriate salary level), whether the position is benefits eligible, whether the position must be posted competitively, etc.) Whether the exchange visitor provides their own funding, is paid via stipend, or is paid as a UGA employee will determine how their future integration of UGA is handled, such as who is responsible for initiating their paychecks each month, what forms are necessary for them to receive a UGA card, what privileges they have at the UGA library, whether they are allowed to bring UGA property off campus, whether they must obtain a bank account in the U.S., and whether they are eligible for benefits from UGA (and consequently, how much will be deducted from their paycheck).

**Proof of Health Insurance:** All J-1 and accompanying J-2 family members are required to obtain health, accident, medical evacuation and repatriation of remains insurance coverage while in
the United States. They must maintain medical insurance coverage for the duration of their program. Failure to purchase and maintain such insurance may lead to loss of legal immigration status and termination from the Exchange Visitor Program. UGA Employee Benefits Insurance does not currently cover medical evacuation and repatriation; visitors eligible for UGA employee insurance must purchase a supplemental policy to cover those costs. For more information, visit:

- [http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/J1_Health_Insurance_Info_Sheet_.pdf](http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/J1_Health_Insurance_Info_Sheet_.pdf)
- [http://www.hr.uga.edu/benefits-snapshot](http://www.hr.uga.edu/benefits-snapshot)
- [http://www.hr.uga.edu/benefits](http://www.hr.uga.edu/benefits)

### The J-1 Sponsorship Application Process

If the prospective international visitor meets the above criteria, he or she is eligible for to apply for the J-1 visa. The following section provides information on how to complete the J-1 sponsorship application process. If the visitor will require a different visa type, skip down to “Other Visa Types” below, and contact an ISSIS immigration advisor for assistance.

**The Sponsorship Request Form:** In order to initiate the J-1 sponsorship paperwork with our office, the department should submit the online application and supporting documents as soon as possible. To begin the process, please fill out the online J-1 sponsorship request form: [http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/iStart_J_department_access_instructions.pdf](http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Fac_Scholar_Section/iStart_J_department_access_instructions.pdf)

The above J-1 request form contains information on all the additional documents which should be uploaded along with the form. This includes the sponsoring department’s letter of invitation or appointment letter, which should include the program’s specific beginning and ending dates. All documents should be in English; this may require that the prospective visitor provide an official translation of his/her documents.

After the sponsoring department submits the J-1 sponsorship request form, an ISSIS immigration advisor will review it to ensure the position is eligible for the J-1 program. The advisor will contact the sponsoring department if additional information is needed.

**J-1 Exchange Visitor (EV) Intake Form:** Next, the exchange visitor will receive an auto-email with a link to an Exchange Visitor intake form, which he/she should then complete and submit along with the necessary documents indicated.

**Form DS-2019:** The ISSIS advisor will review all the information to ensure the J sponsorship is appropriate. The advisor will issue form DS-2019 which is a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. The sponsoring department is responsible for picking up this original form

---

Page | 8
from ISSIS, and sending the form and all accompanying documents to the prospective exchange visitor via Fed-Ex or UPS express mail (in order to obtain a tracking number). Upon receipt of Form DS-2019, the prospective exchange visitor will use the DS-2019 form to make a visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or consulate in his/her home country and to pay the required SEVIS fee of $180.00. For more information about Form DS-2019, please visit: http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/about-ds-2019/

Processing Times
- ISSIS Sponsorship Request form: 5 to 10 business days after ISSIS advisor receives both the sponsorship request form and visitor’s exchange visitor intake form
- J-1 initial processing with consular visa application: 1 to 3 months for visa application and travel.

J-1 Associated Costs
ISSIS Case Processing Fees: The ISSIS Office is a cost recovery program, which means that it is funded in large part through fees. After the sponsoring department completes the J-1 sponsorship request form, it will automatically be charged a $165 fee, which ISSIS requires in order to process the sponsorship.

SEVIS I-901 Fee: Once the EV receives the DS-2019 form, he or she must pay the SEVIS fee prior to going to the U.S. Consulate to apply for the J visa. The EV should use the information on the DS-2019 form to complete the information pertaining to the payment of the required SEVIS fee ($180). This fee is in addition to the visa application fee payable to the U.S. consulate. For more information on this fee, visit: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/

International Student/Scholar Fee (ISCF): International visitors are required to pay the ISSIS International Student/Scholar Compliance Fee (ISCF). Note that if the scholar fails to pay, the sponsoring department is responsible for covering the fee payment. For J-1 scholars (50% or more of support coming from the UGA department), the fee is $120.00 per year. J-1 scholars (less than 50% UGA funding), the fee is $200.00 per year. If EVs are at UGA for more than one year, renewal of the fee payment will be required at the start of each new year. Note that J-2 dependents are excluded from paying this fee. For information about the ISCF fee, visit: http://international.uga.edu/issis/iscf_issis_fee_information/

Visitors issued immigration documents by parties other than UGA (for instance, the U.S. government, or IIE...) may be permitted to waive the ISCF fee by completing the following form: http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Info_Section/ISCF_FAQ.pdf

For more information on ISSIS and U.S. government processing fees payable by the department or visitor, see: http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Info_Section/issis_fee_info_sheet.pdf
Other Visa Types
Occasionally, visa types other than the J-1 are more appropriate for international visitors. ISSIS is also able to assist with visa sponsorship processing for the following:

**H-1B**: H-1B is a temporary worker visa. It is appropriate for international researchers, faculty, and staff members who are coming to UGA for purposes of academic employment. The duration of employment can be between one and six years, and in contrast to the J-1 visa, OIE can sometimes initiate a U.S. permanent residency sponsorship if the position is full-time and permanent. Note that ISSIS should be consulted if a department plans to hire a foreign national in order to assist in ensuring that applicable federal laws and regulations are met before employment begins. For more information on the H-1B visa category, visit: [http://international.uga.edu/issis/international_scholar_faculty_staff_information/h_1b_scholars_faculty_and_staff/](http://international.uga.edu/issis/international_scholar_faculty_staff_information/h_1b_scholars_faculty_and_staff/)

**TN (Trade NAFTA)**: The TN status is available to Canadian or Mexican nationals working in specific jobs. More information about the TN status, including a list of approved jobs, can be found here: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1274.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1274.html)

**E-3**: The E-3 status is similar to the H-1B status, and is available to Australian nationals. It does not generally require an application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and so is sometimes faster than the H-1B. It usually does require the employee to apply for and receive the E-3 visa from a U.S. embassy. More information about the E-3 visa can be found here: [http://canberra.usembassy.gov/e3visa.html](http://canberra.usembassy.gov/e3visa.html)

**O-1**: The O-1 status is available for people who are considered “outstanding” in their field of research or teaching. It is a difficult standard to achieve, and requires hard evidence of the employee’s outstanding ability in several different categories of proof. Information on the O-1, including evidence required for eligibility, can be found here: [http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=e2930b89284a3210VgnVCM100000c6a7543f6d1a1a_VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD&vgnextchannel=e2930b89284a3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=e2930b89284a3210VgnVCM100000c6a7543f6d1a1a_VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD&vgnextchannel=e2930b89284a3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD)

After reading the above information, if you are not sure what type of visa sponsorship the international visitor or employee will require, the following link is an interactive guide through determining the appropriate visa type: [https://fs21.formsites.com/issisuga/VisaInquiryForm/secure_index.html](https://fs21.formsites.com/issisuga/VisaInquiryForm/secure_index.html)
Pre-Arrival Information

Determining an Arrival Date
The exchange visitor must plan to enter the U.S. any time up to 30 days before the start date of his/her program as indicated on form DS-2019. If circumstances prevent him/her from entering the U.S. before the indicated start date, the sponsoring department must notify the ISSIS immigration advisor so that she can amend the start date. If the exchange visitor tries to enter the U.S. after the indicated start date, he/she could be denied entry into the U.S. Ideally, the exchange visitor should arrive in the U.S. during the day, on a weekday, in case assistance is required. Note that the exchange visitor cannot begin his/her actual work, however, until the official program start date. Rather, he/she should use the time before the start date to settle in.

The Departmental Liaison
The sponsoring department should designate a UGA faculty or staff member who serves as the exchange visitor’s sponsor. This liaison is normally the person who worked with the exchange visitor for his/her initial appointment of visit. The liaison should work with the exchange visitor to make travel and arrival plans, complete all required paperwork and check-in processes at UGA, and settle in (please see below for detailed information on what may be required). If the EV has difficulty with the English language, the departmental sponsor must make sure to provide a translator to attend the immigration check-in session at ISSIS-OIE.

Remember that this is an exciting and stressful time for the exchange visitor, and he/she will greatly appreciate help settling into life in the U.S.

The Scholar’s Handbook
In addition to the information provided below (“Arrival” and “During the Program”), be sure to refer the exchange visitor to OIE’s Scholar Handbook, which has general information and web links for most of the topics covered below. The exchange visitor should also obtain and read the handbook, which is available for download here:

http://international.uga.edu/issis/international_scholar_faculty_staff_information/scholar_faculty_pre_arrival_information/

Promoting Cultural Awareness
Before the exchange visitor departs for the U.S., he/she should learn some basics about life in Athens and the U.S. in general. Although the only real way to learn about American culture is to experience it, reading about cultural issues before departing will help minimize culture shock and information overload upon arrival. Be supportive and keep in mind that customs which may be second nature to U.S. residents, such as how to use a drive-through ATM or how much to tip at a restaurant, may be new to the exchange visitor. In addition to the information included in the Scholar Handbook, the following links are recommended:

About UGA:  www.uga.edu (see the “About UGA” tab on the homepage, particularly the subheadings “About UGA” and “Visiting UGA”).

About Athens:
http://www.visitathensga.com/
http://visit.uga.edu/index.php/plan/athens/

Free Pre-Departure Orientation
EducationUSA, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, provides guidance for international students and scholars who seek to attend U.S. institutions of higher education. Education USA has offices around the world and hosts free pre-departure orientations, among other educational services. For more information or to locate offices in the exchange visitor’s home country, visit:  http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php#.T9YSolvRDcv

Providing Program Information
Program Terms and Obligations: The sponsoring department is responsible for providing to the exchange visitor, in writing, the terms and obligations of the program of work or study before arrival. This should include what is expected of the visitor and what resources the sponsoring department is obligated to provide. It may include financial or legal restrictions on research and/or teaching as well as resources available (e.g. laboratories, libraries, outside departments, and financial resources). If the J-1 visitor will be paid by UGA, now is a good time to give them an estimate of what their likely take-home pay will be after deductions such as taxes and health insurance, so that they may budget accordingly. Otherwise, the amount deducted from the first paycheck might be an unwelcome surprise.

Departmental Information: Although an in-person orientation will be necessary upon arrival, it is helpful to inform the exchange visitor about the sponsoring department before arrival. This may include key aspects of the department’s administrative structure and key people the exchange visitor will be interacting with. This information can be included in the written terms and obligations of the program.

Housing
The sponsoring department is responsible for assisting the scholar in locating housing. As with many college towns, housing in Athens is in high demand, so it is recommended to begin securing housing as soon as the exchange visitor’s visa paperwork has been approved and arrival/departure dates have been confirmed, if possible.

Temporary On-Campus Housing:  Visiting Scholar Housing is available at the UGA Health Science Campus (located on Prince Ave.) for periods ranging from 5-365 days. Note that
scholars visiting campus as part of their post-doctoral work will generally be accommodated after all other requests for the time period have been filled. Options include furnished, shared and private units at a range of price points. For more information, see:

http://housing.uga.edu/CONFERENCES VISITING-SCHOLARS VISITING-SCHOLARS

**Long-Term On-Campus Housing:** The University of Georgia’s Family and Graduate Housing is available for both single and married individuals and includes unfurnished, one and two bedroom shared or private apartments. Currently, these apartments are only available to enrolled students and, if applicable, their families. For more information, visit:

http://housing.uga.edu/FAMILY-GRADUATE

**Off-Campus Apartments:** There are many apartment complexes in the Athens area at various prices. However, since the majority of exchange visitors do not have access to a car, be sure that the apartment is conveniently situated on the UGA or Athens bus routes or is within reasonable walking distance of campus.

For visitors who prefer to look independently, the following websites provide listings for off-campus housing, reviews, and commute times.

- http://athensga.craigslist.org/apa/
- http://www.apartmentfinder.com/Georgia/Athens-Apartments
- **** http://www.apartmentfinder.com/Georgia/Athens
- http://www.padmapper.com/
- www.apartmentratings.com

**Long-Term Stay Hotels:** A few hotels in Athens provide a long-term stay options. This can be a good back-up option for short-term visiting scholars when there is no room available in the UGA Visiting Scholar Housing and a suitable sublease cannot be located. Hotels can also be useful for scholars whose visit dates do not align exactly with their lease period; for example, if a scholar needs to arrive a couple of weeks before or after a lease is scheduled to begin or end, they can utilize a long-term stay hotel for that time period. Below are some of the long-term stay hotel options which exist in Athens:

- The InTown Suites on S. Milledge Dr. is the most affordable, with prices starting at $180/week. It offers basic, studio-apartment style accommodations with one or two beds and a kitchenette. http://www.intownsuites.com/locations/athens-xag
- The Georgia Gameday has luxury, condominium-style apartments with full-sized kitchens. They will take long-term guests, but can be prohibitively expensive for a single occupant ($1400/month). For those visiting scholars who are willing to share a 2-bedroom apartment, the price is more affordable at $1600/month or $800 per person.
One advantage of the Gameday is its free shuttle service to anywhere in Athens, which is useful for visitors who do not have access to a car.
http://www.gagamedaycenter.com/suites.html

Healthcare Information
In addition to ensuring that the exchange visitor and any accompanying dependents obtain healthcare (see “Proof of Health Insurance” above), the sponsoring department should provide the exchange visitor with information about the U.S. healthcare system, as it may differ from that of the visitor’s home country. For example, in some countries, pharmacists are able to offer medical advice, and medicines are available over-the-counter which require a prescription in the United States (such as contraceptive pills or antibiotics). Please be sure the scholar understands the terms of his/her health insurance policy and where to go for healthcare in Athens, including pharmacies, non-emergency, and emergency care. Also be sure that the scholar has 911 programmed into his/her phone and has the numbers of two or three people in the department that he/she can contact in case of an emergency. The following links provide some of this information:

- http://health.usnews.com/health-plans
- http://www.libs.uga.edu/athens/hospitals.html

Schooling for Dependents
Dependents of EV’s holding J-2 status may attend public school in the U.S. If the exchange visitor has children who will be attending school while in Athens, he/she may contact the Student Registration Center at the Board Office of Education to begin the enrollment process. Contact information, hours of operation, and information on the enrollment process is available at: http://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/district.cfm?subpage=478. Tammy Whitehead may also be contacted at (706) 546-7221, ext. 18232.

Childcare
Athens has various options for daycare and childcare; the following websites provide more information. Note that UGA Childcare is in high demand and may have early deadlines, so the exchange visitor may wish to enroll his/her child as soon as the visa is obtained and arrival/departure dates are determined.

- http://www.athensparent.com/articles/featuregen/childcare.html#centers
- http://universitychildcarecenter.uga.edu/?page_id=13

English Classes for Adults
If the exchange visitor is accompanied by a spouse whose first language is not English, the spouse may be interested in enrolling in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses while in Athens. This is an excellent way for someone who otherwise might feel a bit isolated and lonely
to make friends and participate in a worthwhile activity while in Athens. Classes are available for learners at all skill levels, and some free courses exist. (Availability may differ during the summer.) Be sure to take note of any restrictions on enrollment due to visa type and enrollment deadlines. Below are some ESL course listings for Athens:

- [http://www.eslinstruction.com/Schedule.htm](http://www.eslinstruction.com/Schedule.htm)

**Arrival Information**

**Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Arrival**

The sponsoring department is responsible for making arrangements to transport the exchange visitor from the Atlanta airport to his/her housing in Athens. If it is not possible for the departmental liaison to meet the scholar in person at the airport, Groome Transportation is one company offering reliable shuttle service between Athens and Atlanta throughout the day. [http://www.groometransportation.com/athens.php](http://www.groometransportation.com/athens.php)

Remember that international travel, while exciting, is also tiring and stressful. Planning in advance and good communication will help ensure that the exchange visitor’s airport arrival goes smoothly. Below are some helpful tips to facilitate this process:

- Be sure that the exchange visitor has a phone number for the departmental liaison (or the shuttle company) who is picking him/her up. It is best to write these down in a safe place, rather than only programming them into a cell phone, in case of a dead battery. Also remember that the visitor’s cell phone from his/her home country may not work in the U.S. The Atlanta airport pay phones do accept credit cards (as well as U.S. dollars), but can be expensive. In an emergency situation, an employee at one of the information kiosks located throughout the airport may be able to assist the exchange visitor in placing a phone call.
- Ensure that the scholar and liaison are aware of the arrival time and flight number (again, write these down in a safe place).
- Before departing, the scholar may wish to browse an airport map for directions from baggage claim to his/her pickup location.
- Note that going through customs and baggage claim after an international flight can be a lengthy process, so it is recommended to book a shuttle at least one hour after the arrival time, if not more. If the visitor realizes he/she will miss the original pick-up time,
he/she can call Groome Transport to reschedule. If no phone access is available, he/she can go to the shuttle pick-up location and wait for a later shuttle to arrive.

**Athens Ben-Epps Airport**

Another, more expensive, option is to fly directly into the Athens-Ben Epps Airport. The airport’s website has information on ground transportation, including hotels which have complementary shuttles. [http://athensclarkecounty.com/INDEX.ASPX?NID=203](http://athensclarkecounty.com/INDEX.ASPX?NID=203)

**Arriving in Athens**

When the exchange visitor finally arrives, he/she will likely be tired from the long trip. Help him/her settle in by taking a trip together to Wal-Mart or Walgreen’s to pick up a few necessary items and to a restaurant to get a good meal. Although too much information on the first day would likely be overwhelming, the exchange visitor will also soon need to know convenient options for grocery shopping and dining near his/her home. Those who are new to the U.S. may appreciate a tutorial on the major differences among some of the supermarkets and pharmacies available in Athens, as this may not be readily apparent. Below are links with some restaurant options. Additionally, refer to the Scholar’s Handbook for information.

- [http://athens.guide2s.com/section/1/Food-Libations](http://athens.guide2s.com/section/1/Food-Libations)

**Mandatory Immigration Check-In at ISSIS-OIE**

The U.S. government requires that all J-1 exchange visitors check in with the OIE and complete an orientation session as soon as they arrive on campus. If the visitor fails to complete this check-in, OIE is required to terminate his/her immigration record, and the visitor will lose his/her legal status in the U.S.

J-1 Scholar Orientations are held at the OIE building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA, weekly. All new J-1 participants must call (706) 542-2900 to schedule attendance at one of these mandatory orientation sessions. Scholars not on the Athens campus (e.g. Tifton, Augusta or Griffin campuses) may complete the orientation online at [http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/orientation/j_scholar/](http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/orientation/j_scholar/).

If the exchange visitor is not fluent in English, the liaison or other appropriate staff member from the sponsoring department should accompany the exchange visitor to the OIE for check-in.

The visiting scholar should bring the following documents to orientation:

- A copy of his/her passport, visa, DS-2019, and I-94 card (front and back)
- U.S. addresses and phone numbers (both work and home)
• Proof of adequate health insurance
• A check or money order (no cash) to pay the International Scholar Compliance Fee (ISCF)

For more information on the mandatory check in, please visit:
http://international.uga.edu/issis/j_1_required_immigration_check_in_information

**Human Resources / Payroll Paperwork**

The Human Resource office at UGA is responsible for filing all necessary paperwork needed in the hiring process. Those J-1 exchange visitors hired as UGA employees will need to turn in paperwork to HR.

J-1 exchange visitors who provide their own funding or who are paid by UGA via stipend will not need to file paperwork with HR. The sponsoring department is responsible for assisting the exchange visitor in completing all necessary HR-related forms including:

• Form I-9
• Employment Eligibility Verification
• Form W-4 (if applicable)

For more information, visit [http://www.hr.uga.edu/](http://www.hr.uga.edu/)

All exchange visitors who are paid by UGA, whether by HR (those on UGA payroll), or by stipend (not on UGA payroll), will need to submit a UGA Tax Information Form for Internationals and the appropriate supporting documents to Susan Caldwell, the International Tax Coordinator. They will not be paid until this information is provided. More information can be found at the following links:

For stipend recipients: [http://www.busfin.uga.edu/payroll/itc/ptnra_fellowships.html](http://www.busfin.uga.edu/payroll/itc/ptnra_fellowships.html)

For UGA employees: [http://www.busfin.uga.edu/payroll/itc/ptnra_employment.html](http://www.busfin.uga.edu/payroll/itc/ptnra_employment.html)

**UGA MyID (E-mail)**

The sponsoring department should ensure that the scholar creates a MyID in order to set up his/her UGA email account and access UGA’s other online services, including paystubs and W2 information. To set up a MyID, the exchange visitor should access [http://eits.uga.edu/access_and_security/myid](http://eits.uga.edu/access_and_security/myid), click “Request a MyID,” and follow the instructions. When you are requesting the MyID, there may not be an appropriate classification for the visitor if they are not either a UGA employee or a UGA student; in this case, choose the “staff” option. If you put a note on the form that the applicant is a J-1 visitor, someone at EITS will read and approve it. If you choose “student” for someone who is not enrolled as a student at UGA, the request will automatically be denied, as it will be run against the student database. It can occasionally take a day or two for the MyID request to be approved. If the visiting scholar
needs immediate access to PAWS in order to access the internet no campus, he or she can call the EITS helpdesk to obtain a temporary log-in ID and password: 706-542-3106 (press option 2).

**UGACard**
The sponsoring department is responsible for ensuring that the exchange visitor receives his/her UGACard. The exchange visitor will need a UGACard to check out library books, access his/her on-campus workplace after hours (if applicable), and access many other facilities and services throughout campus. Note that employees and dependents must be included in the appropriate database prior to receiving the UGACard; employees must submit a faculty/staff dependent request form to the UGACard Office at least five working days prior to having a dependent’s card made. Additionally, for those J-1 exchange visitors who are not in the employee or student databases at UGA, the sponsoring department must submit a Request for Visitor ID Card form to the UGACard office at least five days prior to the card being made. As this form requires the approval of the department head and a dean or senior VP, it is a good idea to start this process at least two weeks before the exchange visitor will need to have the card made. The UGACard office is located in the Tate Student Center in room 309. For information on the card application process, visit [http://ugacard.uga.edu/get/index.html](http://ugacard.uga.edu/get/index.html)

**Library Access**
J-1 exchange visitors in the UGA student or employee database are automatically given library privileges and may check out books with their UGACard as normal. Exchange visitors who are not in either of those databases must submit a Visitor Voucher form to the library after receiving their UGACard. This form requires the sponsoring faculty member to assume all responsibility for any library materials the visitor loses or damages. Library privileges for non-UGA employees/students are also more limited in some ways. For example, they cannot request materials via interlibrary loan. The Visitor Voucher form is available here:

[http://www.libs.uga.edu/access_services/onlineforms/visitor.html](http://www.libs.uga.edu/access_services/onlineforms/visitor.html)

**Social Security Number**
The sponsoring department should assist the exchange visitor in obtaining his/her Social Security Number, if eligible. Please wait at least 10 days after check-in with OIE before applying for the SSN. F, J, and H visa holders may obtain an SSN; J-2’s may do so only if they receive a temporary work card from the U.S. government. For step-by-step information on how to apply for an SSN, refer to [http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student_Section/Obtaining_a_SS_number.pdf](http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student_Section/Obtaining_a_SS_number.pdf)

**Retirement Account**
All regular employees of the University of Georgia are required to participate in a retirement program. Faculty and all benefit-eligible staff in exempt positions have the option of participating in either the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or an Optional Retirement Plan
(OPT). To read more about TRS and OPT, see: http://www.hr.uga.edu/mandatory-retirement-plans-trs-orp

**** http://www.hr.uga.edu/optional-retirement-plan

To view exempt and non-exempt positions, select any pay plan listed on the UGA pay plan page: http://www.hrdocs.uga.edu/classification/family.html

**** http://provost.uga.edu/index.php/policies-procedures/academic/academic-affairs/1-faculty/107-compensation/

J-1 visitors who are required to contribute to a retirement account may be eligible to receive a refund upon ceasing to work at UGA; however, this process involves substantial paperwork. For more information on current regulations, contact:

- Cindy Walker (Human Resources): cewalker@uga.edu or (706) 542-7359

Those who will be earning a salary at UGA on a long-term basis may wish to set up a retirement account as a way to save part of their earnings. Benefits eligible employees may be required to set up a retirement account and contribute part of their earnings to it, but might be able to receive a refund when their employment with UGA ends. For more information, visit http://www.hr.uga.edu/teachers-retirement-system

****http://www.hr.uga.edu/optional-retirement-plan

**Banking**

The sponsoring department is responsible for assisting the exchange visitor in opening a U.S. bank account, if necessary. In particular, the exchange visitor may find a debit-card linked checking account convenient. For a list of banks in Athens, please visit: http://www.athenschamber.net/abt_members_section.php?ctg1=Banking%20%26%20Finance&ctg2=Banks%20%26%20Banking%20%26%20Associations

If the exchange visitor will be in the U.S. for a short enough time that they do not wish to open a U.S. bank account, Wells Fargo (UGA’s bank) will cash their paycheck for free. However, this option is only available to visitors who are paid via stipend and are not technically UGA employees. J-1 exchange visitors paid via stipend may also have their pay wired to the bank account in their home country. To do so, the sponsoring department should include the visiting scholar’s bank and routing information in the paycheck issue request form. UGA employees (those not on stipends) may not be eligible to have their pay wired to their home country.
Phone Service
The sponsoring department should assist the exchange visitor in arranging telephone services. For visitors whose stay will be a year or less, a pre-paid cell phone may be the most convenient option. With pre-paid phones, it is not necessary to sign a contract, payments may be made online, and a variety of rates and plans are available. If the visiting scholar wishes to use the cell phone to call a foreign country, they should carefully check the rates and plans, as they vary differing on which county one wishes to call; it may be necessary to purchase separate phone cards. A more affordable option for calling abroad may be an online Skype account; computer-to-computer Skype calls are free, and Skype rates are affordable for calling phones in many countries. For more information and to purchase a pre-paid phone, the departmental liaison can accompany the exchange visitor to a major retailer such as Best Buy or Wal-Mart.

Georgia Driver’s License
Although most short-term visitors will likely not purchase a car, the exchange visitor still may wish to rent or borrow a car on occasion. Residents of other countries may generally drive in Georgia for up to one year on a valid international driver’s license (If the exchange visitor already has a driver’s license in his/her home country, an international license can be obtained for a reasonable fee before departing for the U.S.) Non-US citizens who become Georgia residents must transfer their out-of-country driver’s license within 30 days of obtaining Georgia residency (a written and driving test are necessary).

Lastly, those who do not wish to drive in the U.S. may want to consider obtaining a Georgia Identification Card (non-driver card), which may be useful when requested to show a photo ID.


ISSIS-OIE driver license information sheet: [http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student_Section/Obtaining_a_GA_drivers_license.pdf](http://issis.uga.edu/docs/Student_Section/Obtaining_a_GA_drivers_license.pdf)

Public Transportation
For most exchange visitors, the primary means of transportation will be the UGA and Athens bus systems. The UGA and Athens buses are free for UGA ID holders, although it is necessary to show one’s UGA ID when boarding an Athens bus. The following websites have information on bus routes and times:

- UGA bus system: [http://transit.uga.edu](http://transit.uga.edu)
- Athens bus system: [www.athenstransit.com](http://www.athenstransit.com)
During the Program

Sponsoring Department Orientation
OIE strongly encourages the sponsoring department to provide the exchange visitor with an in-person welcome and introduction to the department, including meeting the colleagues, staff, and students with whom the exchange visitor will be working. Please take the time to familiarize the scholar with the available resources in the department (e.g. laboratories, libraries), as listed in the program’s written terms and obligations (see above). If the visitor will be working in a laboratory, make certain that he/she has been thoroughly trained in all lab safety procedures and that they have completed any trainings required by UGA. The lab manager or principal investigator should know which trainings are necessary to complete. For more information, refer to the website of the UGA Environmental Safety Division:

http://www.esd.uga.edu

Later on in the program, it is also advisable to work with the exchange visitor to make academic connections in other departments or at other universities, if useful. Ensuring that the visitor makes connections at UGA will make his/her stay more productive and enjoyable.

Changes to the Program
The sponsoring department should notify the OIE immediately if:

- The exchange visitor will be transferring his/her program to another university.
- There are any changes in the immigration status of the exchange visitor. Note that the processing time for a J-1 change of status from within the U.S. is 2-5 months, so it is advisable to begin the process in a timely manner.
- The exchange visitor will be departing from the program early.
- The exchange visitor needs to extend his/her stay. The sponsoring department should notify the OIE at least 30 days prior to the expiration date of the current DS-2019, and will need to provide proof of funding and health insurance, including medical evacuation and repatriation). The fee for this paperwork is $110.

Maintaining Legal Status
In order to maintain his/her legal status in the US and avoid program termination, the exchange visitor should keep the following points in mind (see the Scholar Handbook for more details):

- Maintain a valid passport and DS-2019
- Maintain proof of health insurance
- Engage only in activities listed on the DS-2019 form
- Do not be employed on or off-campus without authorization from ISSIS
• Report changes of address within 10 days to ISSIS

**Travel outside the U.S.**

International scholars may need to travel outside the U.S. during their stay at UGA. They must have a valid J visa to re-enter the U.S., and a recent “travel signature” on the Form DS-2019. Only the ISSIS immigration advisor is authorized to sign the DS-2019 form; departmental representatives may not sign the DS-2019 form. The scholar should contact the ISSIS immigration advisor for information prior to departing the U.S.

**Visa application:** The scholar should contact the ISSIS immigration advisor for information regarding a renewal of the J visa if it has expired, and he or she will be travelling abroad. The visa application process can take anywhere from a few days to a month or two – or longer if the applicant is subjected to a security clearance delay. Delays are not common, but possible. It can be helpful for the scholar to have a letter from the departmental supervisor confirming the position at UGA, and the field of research or teaching.

**DS-2019:** The exchange visitor should consult with ISSIS before traveling to ensure that his/her form DS-2019 is signed.

**Income Tax**

J-type visa holders must file income taxes every year, regardless of whether or not income was earned. CINTAX, a web-based federal tax return preparation software, is available through the Payroll office for international visitors who are non-residents for tax purposes. For more information, see the Scholar’s Handbook, and visit www.cintax.us. For questions about income taxes for exchange visitors, contact Susan Caldwell at susanc@uga.edu. UGA’s International Student Life organization also provides free income tax assistance preparation assistance: [http://isl.uga.edu/students/tax_2012.html](http://isl.uga.edu/students/tax_2012.html)

**Social Security Withholding**

J-1 visa holders may not be required to pay social security tax, depending on whether or not they are a resident for tax purposes. For more information, see the Scholar’s Handbook.

**Community and Campus Involvement**

When the exchange visitor has free time, he/she will likely want to make friends and participate in some of the many activities available on campus and in the Athens area. Joining an extra-curricular organization or house of worship will make the exchange visitor’s stay more enjoyable and help combat normal feelings of homesickness. Take the time to find out what the exchange visitor’s interests are and help him/her connect to a relevant organization or two. Below are a few ideas for getting started; the Scholar Handbook provides more information about many of these links, as well as additional resources.
• Houses of Worship and Campus Religious Organizations:
  o http://www.libs.uga.edu/athens/religion.html

• Campus Involvement
  o International Student Life: http://isl.uga.edu
  o UGA International Family Association: http://ifa.uga.edu/
  o LGBT Resource Center: http://lgbtcenter.uga.edu/
  o Recreational sports: www.recsports.uga.edu
  o UGA master calendar: http://www.uga.edu/mastercalendar
  o UGA Insider listing: http://www.freshmaninsideruga.com/#!get-involved/ccaa

• Athens Activities:
  o www.athenswelcomecenter.com
  o http://attractions.uptake.com/georgia/athens/509489500.html

Ending the Program

Program Feedback

Departmental Exit Interview: As the exchange visitor’s stay draws to a close, schedule a time to meet with him/her to get feedback on the program. Learning about the positive and negative experiences the visitor had while at UGA will improve the experience of future exchange visitors to your department and enhance the quality of any ongoing collaboration with the current visitor.

Future Collaboration: The sponsoring department is encouraged to stay in touch with the exchange visitor and discuss options with him/her for future collaboration if the exchange has been productive for all concerned. Let ISSIS know if you are planning to have future or continued exchanges. Additionally, contact International Partnerships if you are considering a formal agreement: http://international.uga.edu/partnerships/international_collaboration/develop_partnerships/

ISSIS Exit Interview: Although it is not required, ISSIS strongly encourages exchange visitors to participate in an exit interview before departing. Information compiled from exit interviews is used to improve the quality of ISSIS services for future visitors. For more information, see the Scholar Handbook.
Departing from the USA

*Notice of Departure:* Exchange visitors who have completed their J-1 program must fill out a departure notice and submit it to ISSIS; ISSIS is required to report the program’s end date to the federal government. This end date is either the date listed on the DS-2019, or a prior date if the scholar completes his/her program early. The notice of departure form can be found at: [http://fs21.formsite.com/issisuga/ScholarDepartureForm/index.html](http://fs21.formsite.com/issisuga/ScholarDepartureForm/index.html)