



J-1 VISITOR PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE: Visiting Professors, Research Scholars & Short Term Scholars

We are glad that you chose The University of North Texas for your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program and look forward to welcoming you to Denton! At the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office, we are here to help you with immigration planning and related matters during your stay.

This J-1 Visitor Pre-Arrival Guide contains essential information about immigration regulations, programs and services for new international scholars. Whether you are coming to UNT from your home country or from another U.S. University, please read this guide carefully.

CONTACT INFORMATION

International Student and Scholar Services

The University of North Texas

1155 Union Circle #311067

Marquis Hall, Suite 110

Telephone: 940-565-2195

Fax: 940-565-4145

<https://international.unt.edu/content/j-1-scholars>

jinfo@unt.edu

Mandatory J-1 Scholar Orientation

Register online by email: jinfo@unt.edu

Individual Advising

Contact Nancy Dreessen at: jinfo@unt.edu

PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Carefully read all of the information in this J-1 Visitor Pre-Arrival Guide.

Before arriving, you must:

- Verify that all of the information on your DS-2019 is correct. **Note the program begin date and notify your inviting department (and ISSS) immediately if your travel plans change.** This includes any delays encountered obtaining your visa.
- Pay the SEVIS FEE online at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html#>
- Apply for a J-1 Visa at the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy to your home residence.
- Arrange or make plans with your department for transportation from the airport to your hotel or apartment.
- Schedule your mandatory J-1 Scholar Orientation with ISSS for a date shortly after your arrival in Denton. Appointments can be made at: jinfo@unt.edu.
- Purchase or make plans for required medical insurance coverage. The U.S. Department of State requires all individuals who enter the United States in J-1 status to have medical insurance for yourself and J-2 dependents for the duration of your program.
- Arrange or make plans for your housing needs. Although ISSS is unable to assist you in arranging housing, this guide provides an overview of the many housing choices in Denton. Contact your department if assistance is needed.

SEVIS FEE

All J-1 visa applicants must pay the SEVIS fee of \$220. ***Fee amount subject to change.***

The SEVIS fee must be paid at least three business days before the scheduled visa application interview. For most individuals, the SEVIS fee can be paid by electronically completing the Form I-901 and paying with a credit card at www.fmjfee.com/i901fee. You will need the information from your DS-2019 in order to complete the SEVIS Fee payment.

Print the electronic receipt immediately at the time of payment. You must show the receipt to the consular officer at the time of the interview. Spouses and dependent children (J-2s) do not pay this fee. The SEVIS fee is not a visa application fee. It is used to operate and maintain the SEVIS system. The fee is nonrefundable, even if the visa application is denied.

NOTE: Canadian nationals are exempt from the J-1 Visa requirement. However, they must still pay the SEVIS fee.

APPLYING FOR A J-1/J-2 VISA

A valid J-1 visa is required for entry to the United States on the Exchange Visitor Program. For information regarding processing times and procedures, visit the U.S. Department of State at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>. From this website you will be directed to <http://www.usembassy.gov> to find information regarding your nearest Consulate or Embassy.



NOTE: A personal interview is required, so you will need to schedule your appointment as soon as possible. Be aware that there may also be substantial delays due to security checks, so please plan your travel arrangements accordingly.

Immediate family members (spouse and children under the age of 21) who will accompany you to the U.S. may apply for J-2 visas using the DS-2019 forms enclosed. If your family will join you later, a DS-2019 form will be issued at a later date, upon request.

The following is generally required for the consular J-1/J-2 visa application:

- Signed DS-2019(s) – A separate DS-2019 form is required for each visa applicant. Each J visa applicant should sign his/her own DS-2019, with the exception of children under age 14 (the J-1 parent should sign in this instance). The DS-2019(s) will be returned to you to present at the U.S. port of entry.
- Receipt showing payment of the SEVIS Fee (J-1 only).
- Payment of the \$160 visa application fee (**fee amount subject to change**) and appropriate visa application forms (see <http://www.usembassy.gov>) for each visa applicant.
- Passport(s) valid for at least 6 months into the future, for each visa applicant.
- Proof of ties to your home country - Consult the website of your local U.S. Consulate/Embassy for suggestions.
- Proof of financial support - You must be able to verify the total funds indicated on the DS-2019 with a personal bank statement and/or a sponsor's official statement of support. If you are receiving payment from UNT, you may request a letter from the inviting department that specifies your position and salary.
- Two U.S. Passport-size photos (often required – check with U.S. Consulate), for each visa applicant.
- J-1 Invitation letter from the sponsoring department at The University of North Texas (recommended).
- Evidence of J-2 relationship to the J-1 applicant (e.g. marriage or birth certificate).

PROGRAM DATES AND ACTIVITY

Applying for a J-1 visa using the enclosed DS-2019 implies acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined on the second page of the form. You may be admitted to the United States to engage in the activity described in item 4 of the form and for the period of time specified in item 3.

MAXIMUM STAY

The category indicated in item 4 of your DS-2019 determines your maximum period of stay under your J-1 program. See the second page of the DS-2019, 1(c) "Limitations of Stay." Upon completion of your J-1 program, you are afforded a 30-day grace period to prepare for departure from the United States. You cannot work or engage in other program activities during this period.

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

Present the following documents to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer at the U.S. port of entry:



- Passport(s) containing a valid J-1 visa (or J-2 visas for accompanying family members).
- Signed DS-2019(s) for you and any accompanying family members.
- Recommended: Proof of financial support (same as the document presented at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate).
- Invitation letter from the sponsoring department at UNT.

The officer should return the following:

- Passport(s) with entry stamp: Please check that the entry stamp has the notation "J-1 D/S" or "J-2 D/S" (D/S stands for "Duration of Status"). If you notice a discrepancy, please be sure to address it with the CBP officer immediately as it may be difficult to correct later.
- Stamped DS-2019s for you and any accompanying family members.
- Any of the recommended documents that you provided.

I-94 RECORDS

Once you enter the U.S., your I-94 entry record will be available to you by accessing the following website online: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>. Occasionally, a paper I-94 is issued at the U.S. Port of Entry.

NOTE TO CANADIAN NATIONALS:

Canadian nationals are not required to obtain a visa stamp from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. However, they must present the enclosed DS-2019, SEVIS fee receipt, and a Canadian passport at the U.S. port of entry in order to be admitted in J-1 status for D/S (duration of stay). If you are a Canadian Landed Immigrant, please check with the nearest U.S. Consulate about whether or not you require a J-1 visa stamp, as requirements vary depending on country of citizenship.

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

AIRPORT:

Dallas – Fort Worth International Airport is the 3rd busiest in the U.S., and the 8th busiest airport in the world and located approximately 28 miles (45 kilometers) from the UNT campus. Please work with your department to coordinate transportation from the airport to the UNT campus. Public transportation options are listed below:

SUPERSHUTTLE

This company provides airport transportation in the form of shared vans. To get to the UNT campus, you should plan to pay an approximately \$54.00 fare for one passenger and \$10 for each additional passenger. To make a reservation, call 1-800-258-3826 or visit www.supershuttle.com.

TAXI

Taxis are available on the upper level at DFW airport. In most cases, you do not need to arrange a taxi in advance, but costs may vary between taxi companies. Be sure to verify the cost with your driver before you leave the airport.

TRAINS to DENTON:

Both airports are served by Dallas Area Regional Transport (DART) which is Dallas's public transportation system.

From DFW International Airport: From Terminal A, take the Orange Line to Bachman Station. From Bachman Station you will change trains and take the Green Line to the Trinity Mills Station. At the Trinity Mills Station you will change trains and take the A Train to Denton.

From Dallas Love Field: From Love Field Station, take the Green Line to the Trinity Mills Station. At the Trinity Mills Station you will change trains and take the A Train to Denton.



Source: <http://www.dart.org/riding/dartrailergreenline.asp>

NOTE: The A Train which is part of the Denton County Transit Authority system <https://www.dcta.net/routes-schedules/a-train> to downtown Denton is primarily a commuter train, and the schedule reflects this (fewer trains in the middle of the day, does not run on Sunday, and does not run late at night on Monday through Thursday).

MAP OF UNT CAMPUS

You can find a map of the UNT campus at the following link:

http://transportation.unt.edu/sites/default/files/UNT_Campus_Parking.pdf

NEXT STEPS UPON ARRIVAL

Inform your inviting department that you have arrived safely. Attend the mandatory J-1 Scholar Orientation at ISSS (discussed further in this guide).

MANDATORY J-1 SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of State requires us, as your program sponsor, to provide you with an orientation program. After you attend the orientation, an International Advisor will validate your arrival in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database. This validation notifies the Department of Homeland Security that you have arrived and begun your J-1 exchange visitor program and changes your SEVIS record to “ACTIVE” status.

Failure to attend orientation and have your SEVIS record validated may result in **future immigration complications**.

DAYS AND TIME

You MUST attend the J-1 Scholar Orientation within 5 business days of the DS-2019 start date. Orientation sessions typically last around one hour. **To schedule your appointment, please send an email to jinfo@unt.edu.** We conduct orientation in a group setting, so please be on time for your appointment and have all of your documents with you (noted in the next section). If you arrive after orientation has started, you will be asked to reschedule for another session.

WHAT TO BRING

You will need to bring the following documents to your orientation session for you and any accompanying J-2 dependents:

- Passport(s)
- DS-2019(s)
- Proof of Health Insurance

During orientation you will be asked to complete an Information Form. Along with general information, you are required to provide your Local U.S. Address and U.S. Phone Number and Emergency Contact Information.

TOPICS COVERED AT ORIENTATION & MORE

- Immigration Status
- Medical and Evacuation/Repatriation Insurance
- Employment
- Obtaining a Texas Driver’s License

Optional: The International Students & Scholars Services office is collecting postcards. If you would like to display a postcard from your home country, please bring it to J Orientation.



HOME RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT/PARTICIPATION BARS

212(E) TWO-YEAR HOME RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

Exchange Visitors and their dependents may be subject to the 212(e) Two-Year Home Residence Requirement. This requirement is different from the 12-month and 24-month repeat participation bars. Please read and understand section 1(a) on the second page of the enclosed DS-2019. This requirement is normally associated with government funding (from your country or the United States) and/or the U.S. Department of State skills list.

To check the skills list: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>. If you are subject to 212(e), it does not mean that you cannot return to the United States for two years in any nonimmigrant status (i.e., F student or B tourist). However, it does mean that you cannot change status in the United States, obtain a work visa (H), an intra-company transferee visa (L), a fiancé visa (K), or permanent residency (green card), unless this requirement is waived or met. The Consular Officer may indicate this requirement on your visa or DS-2019; however, the Department of State Exchange Visitor Program makes the final determination on whether this requirement applies.

REPEAT PARTICIPATION BARS

12-MONTH BAR

USCIS regulation 22 CFR 62.20(d)(ii) established a “12-month bar” on beginning a new J-1 program as a J Research Scholar or J Professor for those persons who spent the previous year in the United States in any J status. This bar does not apply to transfers from one institution to another, to persons who were J Short-Term Scholars, or to persons (other than J Research Scholars or J Professors) whose J program lasted less than six months. Also applies to J-2s.

24-MONTH BAR

USCIS regulation 22 CFR 62.20(i)(2) established a “24-month bar” on repeat participation as a J Research Scholar or J Professor for those persons who were present in the United States in J-1 Research Scholar/Professor Category on or after November 17, 2006. The bar does not apply to transfers from one institution to another. The “24-month bar” only prevents new programs as a J Research Scholar and J Professor who have previously held J status as J Research Scholar or J Professor in the past 24 months. Also applies to J-2s.

These bars do not prevent someone who has held J status from beginning a new program, such as a J-1 Student or Short-Term Scholar. Once the applicable 12-month or 24-month time period has lapsed, Exchange Visitors are again eligible to begin a program in any J category.

NOTE: If you held J status in the past or believe that one of these bars might apply to you, please contact your International Advisor at ISSS.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

U.S. Department of State regulations require all J-1 Exchange Visitors to have medical insurance for themselves and any J-2 family members (regardless of their location) for the duration of the J-1 program. **Willful violation of the insurance requirements shall result in termination of your J-1 program by ISSS, in accordance with immigration regulations.** Fulfilling this insurance requirement is essential, not only because of the U.S. Department of State regulations, but because **medical treatment in the United States can be very expensive, especially without proper insurance coverage.** It is your responsibility to provide proof of continuous insurance coverage to ISSS.

UNT EMPLOYEE MEDICAL INSURANCE

If you will be employed by UNT for at least 20 hours per week and for a duration of at least 4.5 months during your J-1 program, your medical insurance coverage may be provided to you as a benefit of your employment, according to the following guidelines:

- Full-time Employees and eligible dependents – Employees working at least 30 hours per week for at least 4.5 months are considered full time employees for insurance purposes.
- Part-time Employees and eligible dependents – All employees who work 20-29 hours per week for at least 4.5 months are eligible for UNT insurance.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

UNT Employee medical insurance meets the DOS requirements for medical coverage, however, it **does not** include repatriation and medical evacuation coverage. In addition, medical coverage through UNT does not begin immediately. Therefore, you **must** purchase medical, repatriation and evacuation coverage with the applicable deductible according to the DOS in order to have coverage during this initial employment period. Note that even with UNT Employee medical insurance, you **must** purchase supplemental insurance for the duration of your program to cover repatriation and medical evacuation. Health Insurance is required for you and your J-2s upon arrival of the J-1 and must be maintained for the duration of the J program.

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION FOR BENEFITS-ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

If you will receive insurance benefits from UNT due to your employment, you will need to attend a new employee orientation to elect your insurance coverage. New employee orientation is presented by Human Resource Services. Please verify the date and location with HR. Additionally, employees can speak to a Benefits Representative with UNT, at 817-735-7650 or email at hrbenefits@untsystem.edu.

YOUR INSURANCE MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

Medical Benefits	At least \$100,000 per accident or illness
Repatriation of Remains	At least \$25,000
Medical Evacuation (to home country)	At least \$50,000
Deductible	\$500 or less per accident or illness

FOREIGN MEDICAL INSURANCE POLICIES

J-1/J-2 Exchange Visitors who will be covered within the United States under a foreign insurance policy must submit a copy of the insurance policy or originally signed letter from your government or authorized agent to ISSS. You must submit an English translation of your policy that clearly demonstrates that the policy meets the minimum requirements outlined in this guide. Individuals carrying policies that do not meet the minimum levels of coverage will be required to purchase insurance that meets the U.S. Department of State requirements, including medical evacuation and repatriation coverage.

PREGNANCY AND INSURANCE COVERAGE

Please know that many international/travel plans will not cover pregnancy expenses or may exclude pre-existing pregnancies. If you or your spouse is currently pregnant and you are not eligible for UNT employee medical insurance, you should be careful to purchase a medical insurance policy that will cover the pregnancy and birth while you are in the United States. Both the UNT employee and UNT student health insurance plans will cover a pre-existing pregnancy. If you are eligible for UNT employee medical insurance and you or your spouse is currently pregnant, please contact Human Resource Services as soon as possible.

VISION AND DENTAL CARE

It is important to remember that in the United States certain kinds of elective medical care, such as eyeglasses or dentistry, are ordinarily not covered by regular medical insurance. Exchange Visitors should take care of such needs before leaving home or may elect to purchase separate coverage for these needs through a private company.

PUBLIC CHARGE

A recent rule has been altered to expand the definition of “public charge.” While all J1 Exchange Visitors have to show proof of finances before entering the United States, it is important to remember that as an exchange visitor, you are not allowed to accept public benefits in the form of cash assistance, food stamps, housing assistance, or Medicaid. Examples of these benefits are SNAP, Section 8 Housing, free healthcare. Accepting one or more of these benefits could result in future visa denials or applications for permanent residency.

TAX INFORMATION / SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

TAX INFORMATION

As in most countries, the tax laws in the United States are very complicated. Tax treaty benefits, Social Security taxes, and filing requirements depend on your visa status, the purpose of your visit, the number of days you will be in the United States, and the history of prior visits.

TAXATION OF EXCHANGE VISITORS

It is hard to generalize about specific tax situations. Under normal circumstances, visitors in J-1 status do not pay Social Security or Medicare taxes until they have been in the United States for two calendar years. However, U.S. source income is normally subject to federal income tax withholding at a 10-14% rate, or at a 30% rate for one-time payments for independent contractor services. If your country has a Tax Treaty with the United States, a portion of your income is generally exempt from tax withholding for a certain period of time specified by the treaty.

TAX FILING RESPONSIBILITIES & ASSISTANCE

If you are in the United States for even a day in J-1/J-2 status, you will have tax filing responsibilities during tax filing season (**February through April**). If you did not have any U.S. income source, you are still required to file Form 8843 with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Your J-2 dependents must also file Form 8843. If you have U.S. income source, you may also be required to file a tax return. ISSS does not have a certified tax advisor and cannot assist you with preparing your taxes, however we do provide tax preparation software.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

If your program is funded or partially funded by UNT (see 5. on your DS-2019 / Program Sponsor Funds), ISSS will issue you a letter that is needed when applying for a Social Security Number (SSN). A SSN is required in order to be paid in the United States. Instructions on the SSN application procedure are available from ISSS. You must wait 5 days after your arrival to the United States and be validated in the SEVIS system in order to apply for an SSN, therefore please plan accordingly. Your J-1 status will be validated in the SEVIS system within 1-2 days of your attendance at the mandatory J-1 Scholar Orientation. Please read the instructions provided ISSS, on what documents you will need to take with you when you go to the Social Security Office.

NOTE: If you have an SSN from a past visit to the United States, you will use the same number for your entire lifetime.

HOUSING INFORMATION

APARTMENTS

Many J-1 faculty and scholars live in privately owned apartments within walking distance of campus or on the UNT shuttle or city bus routes. Depending on the apartment complex, you may be able to rent an apartment before you arrive in Denton, or in person upon your arrival. You may also want to contact your sponsoring department to see if they are able to provide housing assistance to you. It might be necessary that you consider a plan for living in a hotel for the first few days after your arrival, until you are able to find housing that suits your needs.

APARTMENT LOCATOR SERVICE

There is no fee for using an apartment locator service. If you are already on campus, there are normally several free apartment guides around the student newspaper stands that you may choose to look at, or there are several internet websites that may assist you in your apartment search. We have listed a few below to get you started. *Please keep in mind that these sites do not offer a complete list of local off-campus housing and ISSS does not offer any endorsement of these sites or the properties that are listed. We are listing these to give you some idea of the resources available to you as you begin your apartment search.*

- UNT Off-Campus Housing Service (A UNT website where people can list apartments; however, this does not constitute an endorsement by UNT.): <https://offcampushousing.unt.edu>
- ApartmentCities.com: <http://www.apartmentcities.com>
- ApartmentFinder: <http://www.apartmentfinder.com/Texas/Denton-Apartments>
- Denton College Apartment Source: <http://collegeapartmentsource.com>
- Off-Campus Housing 101: <http://unt.och101.com>

HOTELS:

<p>Comfort Inn (TXA96) 4050 Mesa Drive Denton, TX 76207 Phone: (940) 320-5150 Fax: (940) 320-4959 Website: http://www.comfortinn.com/hotel-denton-texas-TXA96</p>	<p>Hampton Inn and Suites Denton 1513 Centre Place Drive Denton, TX 76205 Phone: (940) 891-4900 Fax: (940) 891-4433 Website: http://hamptoninn.hilton.com/en/hp/hotels/index.html?ctyhocn=DTNTXHX</p>
<p>Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites 1434 Centre Place Drive Denton, TX 76205 Hotel Front Desk: (940)-383-4100 Hotel Fax: (940) 383-4110 For Reservations: 1-800-315-2605 Website: http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/hi/1/en/hotel/dtotb</p>	<p>Homewood Suites 2907 Shoreline Drive Denton, TX, 76210 Phone: (940) 382-0420 Fax: (940) 382-0424 Website: http://homewoodsuites3.hilton.com/en/hotels/texas/homewood-suites-by-hilton-denton-FTWDEHW/index.html</p>
<p>La Quinta Inn Denton 700 Ft. Worth Drive Denton, TX 76201 Phone: (940) 387-5840 Fax: (940) 387-2493 Website: http://www.lq.com/lq//properties/propertyProfile.do?propId=542</p>	<p>Quality Inn & Suites (TX836) 1500 Dallas Drive Denton, TX 76205 Phone: (940) 387-3511 Fax: (940) 387-7917 Website: http://www.qualityinn.com/hotel-denton-texas-TX836</p>
<p>The Wildwood Inn 2602 Lillian Miller Parkway Denton, TX 76210 Phone Toll Free: (866)840-0713 Phone: (940) 243-4319 Fax: (940) 387-9029 Email: info@denton-wildwoodinn.com Website: http://www.denton-wildwoodinn.com Please note that the Wildwood Inn is a deluxe, boutique hotel.</p>	

ENSURING THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF ALL EXCHANGE VISITORS IS THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S HIGHEST PRIORITY

To help safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all exchange visitors, there is an Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) Emergency Hotline – 1-866-283-9090 – a 24/7 toll-free telephone number that allows exchange visitors to directly contact the Department in emergency and urgent situations. A Department representative is available 24 hours a day.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, PROTECTIONS & RESOURCES

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html>