

Florida Gulf Coast University Exchange Visitor-Scholar Pre- Arrival Information

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International Services Office

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

FGCU INTERNATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE (YOUR EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM SPONSOR) AND THE NAME OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS

Sponsor:
INTERNATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
Florida Gulf Coast University
10501 FGCU Boulevard South
Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Tel: 239-590-7925
Fax: 239-590-7977

- Elaine Hozdik, Director, International Services: Responsible Officer
Office Tel: 239-590-7925
Direct Line: Tel: 239-590-7931
- Timothy Gjini, Assistant Director, International Services: Alternate Responsible Officer

Office Tel: 239-590-7925
Direct Line: Tel: 239-590-7690

In emergency cases—after hours contact:
FGCU University Police at 239-590-1900

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF EXCHANGE COORDINATION AND DESIGNATION

United States Department of State
Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation
ECA/EC/AG - SA-44, Room 820
301 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547
Telephone: (202) 203-5029
Fax: (202) 453-8640
jvisas@state.gov

THE PURPOSE OF THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program is to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through education and cultural exchanges. Florida Gulf Coast University's exchange visitor program will facilitate exchange of knowledge and foster greater cultural understanding between citizens of the US and other nations. The program will mutually benefit participants through collaborative cultural and educational exchange in academic study, research, sharing of expertise, professional networking, social engagement, and exposure to the host community.

Exchange Visitors will be immersed in their host culture and engaged in their selected academic or educational pursuits with colleagues and peers. Participants in the Exchange Visitor Program are expected to return to their home countries when they complete their programs in the US. On return to the home country, they will further advance the Exchange Visitor Program goals by bringing an increased knowledge, education and cultural understanding back to the home country, to promote a continued sharing of ideas and information between the US and other nations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exchange Visitors (students or scholars) are foreign nationals who have been selected by a Department of State (DOS) designated program sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program in the United States.

Florida Gulf Coast University is your exchange program sponsor and the main contact during your program is the International Services Office. The International services office has a Responsible Officer (RO) and Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who coordinate invitations to the U.S./FGCU, provide advising and authorizing, as well as provide support services to exchange visitors. In addition to your main contact at the International Services Office, you will also have a specific contact in your hosting department at FGCU who will be of further support to you.

Both the sponsor (Florida Gulf Coast University) and the individual participants (exchange visitor scholars) are required to comply with all Exchange Visitor Program regulations and procedures. The J visa is a nonimmigrant visa, and participants in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program are expected to return to their home countries when they complete their programs. Entry into the United States as a participant in the Exchange Visitor Program is granted with the understanding that participants will complete the objectives of a single program category.

The minimum duration of any exchange program is three weeks, except for participants in the Short Term Scholar category or those sponsored by the Federal Government. The maximum duration varies by category.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DS-2019 AND J –EXCHANGE PROGRAM

What is the DS-2019: Certificate of Eligibility?

The DS-2019 form confirms your date of eligibility for entry to and requirement for departure from the US.

REMEMBER: The U.S. government monitors all travel and entry into the U.S., so it is important that you follow all U.S. immigration procedures accordingly.

The Form DS-2019 identifies:

- The participant, in block 1.
- The sponsor: Name, signature and telephone number/address of the sponsor's responsible officer, in blocks 2 and block 7.
- A brief description of the program activity to be completed by the participant in block 2.
- The 'begin' and 'end' dates of the program indicated in block 3.
- The program category in block 4.
- A breakout of the total estimated financial support to be provided to the participant during his or her program provided in block 5.
- The program participant is in current J visa status, and may complete objectives relative to the program category indicated in block 4, only during the time period defined in block 3 unless the participant withdraws or is terminated from the program.

The time period defined on the Form DS-2019 may not reflect the maximum program duration permitted for a specific category; in such cases, the participant's program may be extended, as allowed by program regulations and at the discretion of the responsible officer. Program extensions beyond the maximum duration, if allowed for a program category, must be requested by the responsible officer and approved by the Department of State. Program regulations of some categories permit the entry of the participant's dependents under the J-2 visa at the sponsor's discretion. Dependents are defined as the participant's spouse and minor unmarried children -- unmarried children under the age 21. Participants should contact their sponsors for additional information and to determine if their dependents may accompany them to the United States for the duration of their programs.

TWO YEAR HOME COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT

Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence [212(e)]. Some Exchange Visitor Program participants and family members who were admitted to the U.S. on a J visa or who adjusted their visa status to J after admission must return home for a minimum of two years after completing their educational or cultural exchange program before they can change or adjust their status. This requirement applies to those whose:

- (1) Exchange program was financed to some extent by the U.S. Government or your home country government;
- (2) Skill appears in the Exchange Visitor Skills. List as identified by their home country government; or,
- (3) Purpose in coming to the United States was to receive graduate medical education or training. For details, see [see CFR 62.44 (e)] or contact your responsible officer.

Program participants who are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement, as established by Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, must apply for a waiver of that requirement if they seek to remain in the United States beyond the end date of their programs or if they seek to submit an application to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for a change in visa status. A waiver may be requested for five statutory bases: 1) a claim of Exceptional Hardship to a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident spouse or child of an exchange visitor if the exchange visitor is required to return to the country of residence; 2) a claim that the participant will be persecuted due to race, religion, or political opinions if he/she returns to the country of residence; 3) a request from an interested US Government Agency on the participant's behalf; 4) a No Objection Statement from your government; and 5) a request by a designated State Health Department or its equivalent.

Participants must file an application to receive a recommendation for a waiver with the Department of State. Please refer to the regulations for details. **[22 CFR 41.63]**

Information about waivers may also be obtained from the Department of State's [Visa Office](http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/participation/waivers.htm) <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/participation/waivers.htm>

The public inquiry line for waivers is (202) 663-1225; fax (202) 663-3899.

EXCHANGE VISITOR HEALTH & MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

Why Exchange Visitors Must Have Health Insurance

Exchange visitors are advised not be in the US without sufficient health insurance. Health care and medical service in the U.S. is generally not socialized, but rather is an expense assessed to the individual receiving the health care service. Health care (such as visiting a doctor, hospitalization, medical lab tests, etc.) can cost thousands of dollars. Health insurance provides coverage for a certain level of medical care expenses, and in some cases, may be required by medical care providers before they agree to treat a patient.

As a J-1 Exchange Visitor, you are required by the US government to have health insurance which meets the following minimum criteria for yourself and your J-2 dependents for the full duration of your time in the US in your J visa status. If you willfully fail to have this insurance, we are required by US government regulations to terminate your J program status and report this to the Department of State that oversees

this visa program. You may purchase your health insurance policy after you arrive in the US (our university has several insurance programs you can select) but you should also ensure that you have health insurance coverage during the time you leave your home country, arrive in the US and the date you officially begin your exchange program. This date is noted on your DS-2019

Minimum Insurance Requirements

Minimum coverage shall provide:

- (1) Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness;
- (2) Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500;
- (3) Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$10,000; and
- (4) A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

*Note: If a particular activity is a required part of your exchange program, your insurance must cover injuries resulting from your participation in that activity.

An insurance policy secured to fulfill the requirements of this section:

- (1) May require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions which is reasonable as determined by current industry standards;
- (2) May include provision for co-insurance under the terms of which the exchange visitor may be required to pay up to 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness; and
- (3) Shall not unreasonably exclude coverage for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which the exchange visitor participates.

Any policy, plan, or contract secured to fill the above requirements must, at a minimum, be:

- (1) Underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A.M. Best rating of ``A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of ``A-i" or above, a Standard & Poor's Claims-paying ability rating of ``A-" or above, a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above
- (2) Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor'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.

VISA, TRAVEL AND ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

Applying for a US Visa:

Exchange visitor scholars will need to apply for a J-1 Visa at a US Consulate (or Embassy) Visa Office. You can find the US Embassy and Consulate locations and visa application procedures, including scheduling of your visa appointment at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html . Also read the visa information at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html . If you have dependent children or a spouse who plans to join you in the US, he/she will also need to apply for a J-2 visa. All J visas applicants must pay a \$100 SEVIS fee prior to applying for the visa. Please follow the enclosed instructions to pay for your SEVIS fee, apply for your visa and schedule your visa interview. The visa application may require several weeks to complete, so plan to make this a priority and allow sufficient time to complete this process.

Travel to the U.S.

Be advised of the Department of Homeland Security regulation which permits all J-1 exchange visitors, and J-2 spouse and dependents to enter the U.S. 30 days or less in advance of the applicant's program start date as shown on the Form DS-2019. Please consider this date carefully when making travel plans to the U.S. Immigration officers may deny you entry into the United States, at your expense, if you attempt to enter more than 30 days before your program start date. The 30-day limitation does not apply to current exchange participants who are returning to continue with their exchange program.

- If you have a special circumstance that deems it necessary for you to arrive in the U.S. earlier than 30 days of your program start, or on a visitor's visa, please contact the Responsible Officers at Florida Gulf Coast University to determine if the U.S. Immigration regulations can support this.

Entering the U.S. - Port of Entry

Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a port-of-entry in the United States, such as an international airport, a seaport or a land border crossing, and request permission to enter the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection officer will permit or deny admission to the United States, and determine your length of stay in the U.S., on any particular visit. Exchange visitors must have their Form DS-2019 in their possession each time they enter the United States. Upon arrival, you will be enrolled in the US-VISIT entry-exit program. Some travelers will also need to comply with *Special Registration* upon their entry into the U.S. and departure. If you are

allowed to enter, the U.S. immigration official authorizes the traveler's admission to the U.S. At that time, Form I-94, Record of Arrival-Departure, which notes the length of stay permitted, is validated by the immigration official. Form I-94, which documents your authorized stay in the U.S., is very important to keep in your passport.

How Long am I Permitted to Stay in the U.S. After my Program has Ended?

The initial admission of an exchange visitor, spouse and children may not exceed the period specified on Form DS-2019, plus a period of 30 days for the purpose of travel. The 30-day grace or travel status period is intended to be a period following the end of the exchange visitor's program and is to be used for domestic travel and/or to prepare for and depart from the U.S., and for no other purpose. A spouse or child (J-2 visa holder) may not be admitted for longer than the principal exchange visitor (J-1 visa holder).

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS

Advance Preparation Prior To Entry

Careful planning and preparation can ensure that delays are minimal. We suggest the following:

- ✓ Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and J-1 visa are still valid for entry into the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- ✓ Check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification. (i.e. J-visa)
- ✓ When you receive your J-1 visa at the US Embassy or Consulate in your country, if the consular officer seals your immigration documents in an envelope and attaches it to your passport, you should not open this envelope! The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port-of-entry will open the envelope.
- ✓ If the visa states the name of the institution you will attend or identifies the exchange program in which you are participating, verify that this information is accurate as well. If your review indicates any discrepancies or potential problems, visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a new visa.
- ✓ Students and exchange visitors entering the United States for the first time under their respective nonimmigrant visa classification may only be admitted up to 30-days prior to the program start date.
- ✓ When you travel, you should carry your documents on your person. Do not check them in your baggage because they may get lost or delayed and the Customs and

Border Protection Officer will need to see them before you are able to enter the United States.

Documents you should carry on your person:

- Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with nonimmigrant visa;
- SEVIS Form DS-2019;
- Visa exempt nationals presenting a SEVIS Form DS-2019 issued on or after September 1, 2004, who are entering the United States for the first time should have a Form I-797, Receipt Notice or Internet Receipt verifying SEVIS Fee payment. Refer to the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement www.ice.gov/sevis website for additional SEVP/SEVIS Program Information;
- Evidence of financial resources,
- Invitation letter from FGCU.
- Name and contact information for Responsible Officer (RO) at FGCU. Writing instrument (pen).

If you are traveling by aircraft, the flight attendants on board will distribute CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record for immigration, before you land at your initial point-of-entry in the U.S. Complete these forms while you are on the aircraft and submit them to the appropriate Customs and Border Protection Officer upon your arrival. If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.

When you arrive:

- **Have your DS-2019 form, visa and passport in hand.**
- **A U.S. Customs border protection officer will review your travel documents and ask you some questions about the nature of your stay in the U.S.**
- **Your fingerprint will be electronically scanned and a digital photograph will be taken of you.**

Upon arrival at the port-of- entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers for inspection. As you approach the inspection station, **ensure that you have:** passport, SEVIS Form DS-2019; completed Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record; and, CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the CBP Officer. The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside (not the address of the school or program sponsor).

If you are entering through a land or designated seaport, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059, Customs Declaration Form and

Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record at the port-of-entry. If you do not understand a form, ask the CBP Officer for assistance.

Like all entering visitors, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. It is important that you tell the CBP Officer that you will be an exchange visitor student or scholar. Be prepared to include the name and address of the school or exchange visitor program where you will enroll/participate (this is Florida Gulf Coast University).

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will:

- Stamp your SEVIS DS-2019 Form
- Stamp the Form I-94 and staple it in the passport;
- Return the SEVIS DS-2019 Form to you

Secondary Inspection Requirements

If the inspector cannot automatically verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be escorted to an interview area know as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.

It is recommended that you have readily available the name and phone number of the FGCU Responsible Officer for your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program in case your admission/participation needs to be verified. In the event you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), you should have a phone number where this individual can be reached during non-business hours.

Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or scholar admission into the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student or scholar is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A, Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor. This form authorizes temporary admission for 30 days into the United States and requires the student or scholar to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained on these forms can result in future adverse action. If you are given form I-515A, please contact the RO at FGCU immediately on your arrival.

HOUSING FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS

(Note all fees/ rates are subject to change, please contact the housing or apartment office directly for current information)

On-Campus Housing

Florida Gulf Coast University has a limited number of on-campus apartments available to exchange visitor. Most on campus residents are students, however scholars, researchers and professors are eligible to apply for on-campus housing. Each private apartment

includes kitchen, living room, bathrooms and bedrooms. Resident housing contracts are offered on a one or two semester basis, or on shorter term guest contracts through arrangement with the Housing and Residence Life office. Rental rates in 2006-07 were approximately \$750/month or \$25/day. Children are not permitted in university housing.

<http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/Housing/>

On Campus Housing for scholars is coordinated through the International Services Office.

Off-Campus Housing near university

Coastal Village

Distance from FGCU: 4 Miles

19401 Skidmore Way

Fort Myers, FL 33912

Phone: 1-888333-9499

Website: www.gocoastalvillage.com

(View the website or contact the apartments directly for current information).

College Club

Distance from FGCU: 3 Quarters of a Mile

17100 College Club Loop

Fort Myers, FL 33913

Phone: (239) 693-2582

Website: www.collegeclubapartments.com

(View the website or contact the apartments directly for current information).

Additional Off-Campus Housing Information: Rentals/Leases and Purchases

Newcomers' Guide <http://www.news-press.net/community/index.php>

FEES & PROGRAM COSTS

These are some estimated expenses you are expected to pay during your program at Florida Gulf Coast University.

COSTS (for Professors, Researchers, Scholars, Specialists)

Annual **estimated** expenses for exchange visitors for academic year 2007-08 is as follows, based on one academic year. Exchange visitors participating in only one semester of exchange should divide these expenses in half. Shorter term exchange visitors should use the monthly cost, multiplied by the appropriate number of months duration of the exchange. (partial months should be treated as full months). The expenses are estimated to increase 10% annually.

Health insurance (exchange visitor) \$1,400

	*(Add for dependent spouse)	\$3,975
	***(Add per dependent child)	2,000
Room & Board		10,685
Personal expenses		1,400
Transportation		3,000
TOTALS	(Exchange Visitor only)	
	(Annual expense).....	\$16, 485
	(one semester only).....	8,243
	(Monthly expense).....	1,374+
	(Exchange Visitor and spouse).....	\$20,460*
	(Exchange Visitor and one dependent).....	18,485**
	(Exchange Visitor, spouse and one dependent).....	22,460
	(For each additional dependentadd \$ 350 per month)	
+ Partial months should be treated as full months		

Other Costs That The Exchange Visitor Will Likely Incur (E.G. Living Expenses) While In The United States

Individual circumstances will vary, however participants may incur additional expenses (where applicable) for travel to and from the US, housing security deposits, drivers license, automobile registration, auto insurance, university parking fee, renter's insurance, dental care, entertainment & recreation, US income tax, student orientation fee, late fees for late course registration, late payment fees (after deadlines), lab fees in some courses, student ID card fee, etc.

Students must pay a \$30 admission application processing fee. Deposits for university housing of \$50 is required for those persons requesting to live on campus.

University Parking Fees: If you use a vehicle, all students, staff and faculty are expected to pay: \$100 parking fee, annually, for general parking. If you wish to have a designated/reserved parking spot, the annual fee is approx. \$450.

RULES THAT EXCHANGE VISITORS ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW UNDER THE SPONSOR'S PROGRAM

On arrival to Florida Gulf Coast University, each exchange visitor will be required to present him/her self to the International Services Office for arrival information, exchange visitor orientation and document processing. This may be

conducted in a group setting or individually, depending on the circumstances. Each exchange visitor will be provided a handbook containing information necessary for the scholar to comply with university and Department of State requirements as well as cross-cultural information, and local area resources. Each exchange visitor will receive a description of his/her program, with contact information for the hosting department and the International Services Office (EVP administrators, RO/ARO), the EVP Welcome Brochure and contact information for the Department of State Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation.

Health care and insurance information will include the DOS and university requirements for coverage, health insurance enrollment information, university health services available to exchange visitors, and information on local health services and medical facilities. A section of the handbook (and orientation) will cover general customs and US cultural information, things to know, a checklist of important items to complete, and helpful local resource information (ie: banking, housing options, transportation, schools, medical services, shopping, recreational facilities, etc.)

Some important rules that you must follow while you are in the US:

- Present yourself to the International Services Office on arrival to the university for orientation and document processing.
- You must be registered by the International Services Office in SEVIS within 20 days of your arrival in the U.S. You must also notify the International Services Office to update your SEVIS records with 10 days every time you change your address during your program.
- While under FGCU's EV Program, you may not work for a second employer. The U.S. government does not authorize J-1 visa carriers to hold a second job while on an EV Program.
- You are required to obey all federal and state laws, as well as any U.S. Department of State Regulations for Exchange Visitors.
- Maintain Health Insurance at all times.

Health Insurance

Scholars in J-1 status and their J-2 dependant family members are required by law to have health insurance that meets certain minimum coverage standards for the entire duration of their stay. Health insurance may come from the home country provided it meets the J-1 requirements. Visiting students and scholars in J-1 status may purchase the FGCU health insurance plan. Please refer to the additional Health Insurance information and waiver forms enclosed with your pre-arrival packet for details.

Failure to purchase and maintain Health Insurance will result in termination of your J-1 program status.

Time limit.

The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors in the "Professor or Research Scholar" category is limited to three years. Limited extensions beyond that time may be possible, but only under special circumstances. The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors in the "Short-Term Scholar" category is limited to six months.

Extensions beyond that time are not possible. Short-term scholars may enter and leave the U.S. with some frequency, if necessary.

12 month rule.

J researchers and professors may not begin a new J program if they have been in another J program for 6 of the previous 12 months. "Short term scholars" are not subject to this rule, but may come for 1 day to 6 months only - no extensions or exceptions allowed. This "12 month rule" does not apply to a J transfer situation. Please speak with a Responsible Officer at the Office of International Services regarding a specific situation.

Two-year home-country physical-presence requirement.

The J exchange program was created to foster learning across cultures. In some cases, rules ensure that J visitors will return to their home countries after completion of the US program so that the home country will also benefit. Participants in a J program (students, scholars, professors, and researchers), as well as their dependant family members, may be subject to the "two year home residency requirement" for three reasons:

- Direct funding from the home government of US government
- Graduate medical education or training
- The country-specific "skills list"

There are two ways to fulfill the two year home residency rule:

- Return to the home country for a period of two years or more.
OR:
- Request and receive a waiver