Maintaining Legal Status on Your J-1 Visa – Wuhan Students

Like all other countries of the world, the United States has laws and regulations governing foreigners who are temporarily within its boundaries. These regulations are often complex, and they change periodically. You are responsible for knowing the regulations regarding your particular immigration status. Violating any of these regulations will result in your falling out of status and may subject you to deportation or the loss of future immigration benefits. Listed below are essential rules that you are responsible for abiding by with respect to U.S. immigration law and regulations:

- **SEVIS Registration:** Following your initial entry to the US, the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) Office will need to make copies of your immigration documents and validate your program in SEVIS within 10 calendar days of the program start date of Form DS-2019.
- **Address or Source of Funding:** Report any change in address or source of funding to ISSS by emailing krusee@uwplatt.edu. J-1 exchange visitors are required to report change of address or funding to ISSS within 10 days of the change.
- **Full-time Enrollment:** Maintain your full-time enrollment, which is 6 graduate credits for the Wuhan, China, MSE students.
- **Online Course:** No more than one fully online course (3 credits) per semester may be counted toward the full-course of study requirement by J-1 students.
- **Passport:** Keep the passport valid. In most cases, passports can be renewed by the J-1 exchange visitor’s home country consulate without leaving the U.S. The DOS maintains a complete list of Foreign Embassies in the US.
- **I-94 card:** Make sure the J-1 I-94 card is always marked “J-1” and “D/S.” It is much harder to correct errors once the exchange visitor leaves the immigration inspection site (e.g. airport). If a J-1 exchange visitor’s I-94 card contains any errors by an immigration officer, immediately notify the ISSS Office.
- **Lost/Stolen Documents:** Contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) if any of your documents (passport, visa, I-20/DS-2019, I-94 card) are stolen, lost, or damaged.
- **Health Insurance:** Comply with Department of State federal health insurance requirements for J-1 exchange visitors and their families. Failure to secure or maintain adequate health insurance will result in termination of the J-1 program participation.
- **Travel Signatures:** J-1 exchange visitors who plan on traveling outside of the U.S anytime during their stay in the U.S. must have a valid travel signature by a UW-Platteville official (RO) on their DS-2019 – and they must take it along to be re-admitted to the USA. Travel signatures for a DS-2019 (page 1) are valid for 6 months.
- **Employment:** Employment in the U.S. is not allowed by the program sponsor for J-1 exchange visitors coming to UW-Platteville with the Wuhan, China, MSE program.
- **Program End Date/Extension:** Be aware of program end date on the DS-2019. This is not the J-1 visa expiration date. You must contact ISSS at least six weeks prior to the current DS-2019 end date to discuss whether you are eligible for a program extension.
- **Departure from the U.S.:** After the end date listed on their DS-2019, J-1 exchange visitors have a 30 day grace period to prepare for departure from the U.S.
- **Taxes:** All international students and scholars are expected to complete and file tax forms with the U.S. federal government, whether or not they had earned income during the tax year.
- **Never throw away or lose your I-20 or DS-2019,** even after you have completed your program.
- **Make copies of all of your immigration documents** and store them in a separate place away from your originals, in case something happens to your original immigration documents.
Two-Year Home Residency Requirement
The Two-Year Home Residency Requirement (as set out in Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires J-1 exchange visitors who are subject to the two-year home country residence requirement to "reside and be physically present" in their "home" country for an aggregate of two years before being eligible for certain immigration benefits.

Who is subject to the Two-Year Home Residence Requirement?
A J-1 Exchange Visitor may be subject to the two-year home residence requirement for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Skills List**: The education, skill, or training that you are pursuing in the United States appears on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for your home country; or
- **Government funding**: You received funding from the United States government, your home government, or an international organization, specifically in connection with participation in the Exchange Visitor Program; or
- **Foreign medical graduates**

How does the Two-Year Residency Requirement Affect You?
If the Two-Year Home Residency Requirement is notated on a visitor’s DS-2019, s/he is:

- Ineligible for an immigrant visa or for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident (immigrant/green card) status;
- Ineligible for an H visa (temporary workers and dependents), an L visa (intracompany transferees and dependents), or a K visa (fiancé and dependents);
- Ineligible to change his/her nonimmigrant status within the United States from J to any other nonimmigrant category except A (diplomatic), G (international organization), or U (victims of qualifying criminal activity) statuses.

Health Insurance Requirements for J-1 Exchange Visitors
Unlike any other immigration categories, the Department of State (DOS) federally mandates all J-1 and J-2 status holders to carry adequate health insurance coverage. The J-1 professor must purchase insurance for him/herself and his/her J-2 dependents immediately upon arrival in the U.S.

Failure to secure or maintain adequate health insurance will result in termination of the J-1 program participation. It is highly recommended that the visiting professor purchase UW-Platteville’s insurance plan for international students and scholars through Rust Associates, since this plan meets the DOS insurance coverage requirements.

DOS required insurance coverage must meet the following criteria:

- Medical insurance must cover the entire period of participation in the Exchange Visitor program.
- Medical benefits must provide a minimum of $50,000 per accident or illness.
- Medical evacuation must be covered in the amount of $10,000, minimum. (Medical evacuation is emergency medical transportation to the home country.)
- Repatriation must be covered in the amount of $7,500, minimum (In the unfortunate event of death, repatriation is the transportation of remains back to the home country.)
- The deductible must not exceed $500 per accident or illness.