



UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR
PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

Greetings Exchange Visitor:

Welcome to the University of Florida! The University of Florida International Center (UFIC) is here to support your success as a member of the University of Florida community. All J visa holders fall under the supervision of the UFIC Exchange Visitor Services Unit (EVS) located within the UFIC at 190 Hub. The UFIC is here to assist you with any questions, concerns or transition matters, whether it is academic, personal, financial, or immigration, etc. We specialize in J student and J visitor immigration however if we're not the right department to answer your question, we'll guide you in the right direction!

We hope you will have a rewarding and successful educational experience while with us at the University of Florida. Welcome to UF as part of the Gator Nation!

The below websites may provide you with useful information:

SOME USEFUL WEBSITES:

- Immigration <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>
- MyUFL <https://my.ufl.edu/ps/signon.html>
- UF Activity Calendar <http://calendar.ufl.edu>
- Local Bus Service & Schedules <http://www.go-rts.com/>
- Drivers' Handbook <http://www.flhsmv.gov/handbooks/>
- US Embassies Worldwide <http://usembassy.state.gov/>
- Free English Classes <http://www.internationalfriendship.org/english-classes>
- Additional/Helpful Resources <http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/EVS/EVS/J1Visitors.html>
- UF Resources: <http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/EVS/resources.html>

You are welcome to come into EVS for walk-in advising or make an appointment. The office is open Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm. You may contact the office by phone or e-mail 8:00am-5:00pm. The office is closed for all official University of Florida holidays.

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Pre-arrival checklist

After you receive your DS-2019:

- Verify DS-2019
 - When you receive your DS-2019 form, review your DS-2019 form (and any dependent DS-2019 forms) to make sure that the information is correct. Please review the packet of information included with your DS-2019 form(s).
- Pay [I-901 SEVIS Fee](#)
 - See [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the SEVIS Fee for additional information.
 - Bring your SEVIS fee receipt to your visa interview.
- Apply for J-1 Visa
 - Review your [rights and protections](#) as a nonimmigrant visa holder
 - [Wilberforce Pamphlet](#) (more languages available at the link above)
 - Find a [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#) near you and schedule your visa interview
 - Review [Required Documents](#) for your visa interview
- Insurance
 - All J-1 visitors and their J-2 dependents must maintain health insurance for the duration of their J program.
 - Review our [Pre-approved insurance plans](#) to purchase before you check-in.

J-1 Rules Overview

212(e) Two Year Home Residency Requirement

Some, but not all, exchange visitors are subject to this requirement. Through this provision, the Department of State helps ensure that your home country benefits from your educational and cultural exchange activity upon your return from the U.S. If you are subject to this requirement, you will not be able to change from J-1 status while in the U.S. You will not be eligible for the H1-B, L, K, or immigrant visa status until you have physically resided in your country of residence for two years. For the terms of the requirement, please review your DS-2019 form. If you have any questions about the two-year home residency requirement, including whether or not you are subject to it, please ask the U.S. Consular officer when you apply for your visa, or ask our office when you arrive.

12-Month Bar

Individuals who participate in an Exchange Visitor program in **any** J-1 category for **more than 6-months** in the United States (excluding Short-Term Scholar) in the previous year (12-months) are barred (not eligible) from returning to the United States in the categories of Research Scholar or Professor for a 12-month period from the end of their program (official Form DS-2019 program end date). The 12-month bar applies to both the principal J-1 and any J-2 dependents and cannot be waived.

24-Month Bar

Individuals who participate in an Exchange Visitor program in the J-1 categories of Research Scholar or Professor are subject to a 24-month repeat participation bar. Individuals subject to the 24-month repeat participation bar may not return to the United States as another J-1 Research Scholar or Professor for a 24-month period from the end of their program (official Form DS-2019 program end date), regardless of the amount of time spent in these categories. The 24-month bar applies to both the principal J-1 and any J-2 dependents.

The bars do not prevent individuals from returning to the United States in any other visa status such as the B-1 (business), B-2 (tourist), F, H, etc. or in the J-1 categories of Student/Non-Degree Student, Student Intern, or Short-Term Scholar (Short-Term Scholar category excluded as the maximum duration is 6-months). This bar cannot be waived.

Entering the U.S.

You have a 60 day window of opportunity to enter the US as a J-1 visa holder. You can enter no earlier than 30 days before and must have arrived to the U.S. and completed your check-in at UF Exchange Visitor Services within 30 days after the start date of your DS-2019 (#3 of the form).

At the Airport (or Port of Entry)

You will be asked to show your documents in the first city in which you arrive in the United States to be given permission to enter the country.

Please carry with you (in your carry-on bag, NOT in your checked baggage):

- Your Passport with J-1 visa stamp
- DS-2019 Form
- The supporting documentation that you showed to the United States Embassy to obtain the visa.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) officer should return all documents to you.

Canadian nationals: Canadian nationals entering the United States as J-1 exchange visitors do not need to apply for a J-1 visa at the U.S. Consulate before entering the U.S. At the pre-flight inspection area, port of entry or border crossing, the Canadian national needs to only present a document verifying their Canadian citizenship, form DS-2019, and proof that they have paid the [SEVIS fee](#).

I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will issue you an electronic I-94 admission number/record of arrival when you enter the U.S. Your I-94 record is proof of your legal visitor status and should be available within 10 days of your entry into the U.S. You need to retrieve and print your I-94 from the [CBP website](#) AFTER you arrive in the U.S. Click “Get Most Recent I-94”, and enter your passport information. Review your I-94 to be sure the information is correct. Make sure this form shows the following:

- Admission class as “J-1”
- Admit until date is “D/S”

Your dependents should show J-2 as the class of admission. If there are any discrepancies, please notify EVS.

Check-In

Once you arrive in the United States, you will need to check in at the Exchange Visitors Services office, located in the International Center in the HUB building on the main campus of the University of Florida. If you are working at a different site, outside of Gainesville, your department contact will conduct your check-in.

You may check in up to 30 days before your program start date. There is a grace period of up to 30 days after your start date during which you can check in, however we highly recommend checking in as soon as you are able.

Exchange Visitor Services conducts group check-ins Monday through Friday at **10:00 am and 3:00 pm**. You must arrive at the scheduled check-in time with all the documents listed below in order to complete check-in. **If you need to purchase insurance when you arrive, you will need to plan to attend a later check-in time.**

What to bring:

- DS-2019 for yourself and any J2 dependents who are with you in the US.
- Passport and J visa for yourself and any J2 dependents who are with you in the US.
- Proof of insurance for yourself and any J2 dependents, regardless if they have arrived in the US or not. The proof of insurance must reflect start and end dates and coverage plan, and meet our minimum requirements, in order to be accepted at check-in. You cannot be checked in and validated until we receive sufficient proof of insurance.
- Completed Registration Form. This form was sent to you in your initial DS-2019 packet.
- J2 Responsibility Form, if you are bringing any J2 dependents. This was also included in your initial DS-2019 packet if you have J2 dependents.

What to expect:

Upon arrival, someone will ask to see the documents above. We will need to make scans of the document. Please expect to wait 15 minutes or so for document review. We will then begin a brief orientation using a folder of informational materials that will be yours to keep. The entire process should take around 30 minutes, however if there are others needing assistance, please expect longer wait times.

During check-in, you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

After check-in, you will be directed to the Help Desk to set up your GatorLink account if you have not yet done so.

We will validate your SEVIS record once check-in has been completed, and you will receive a confirmation email from your advisor when validation is complete.

***If you are being hosted by the College of Engineering, you will need to check in with Pynie Gonzales in 340 Weil Hall prior to checking in with us.**

After check-in:

- Set up Your Gatorlink Account
 - A GatorLink account provides a username@ufl.edu e-mail address and will serve as your log-in for on campus Wi-Fi and UF accounts. Official university communications are sent to students, faculty and staff at this email address, so you will need to check this regularly and update this email with EVS. Many campus services, including One.UF, computer labs and network connections, print services, online training and the download of university-licensed software require a GatorLink sign on. www.gatorlink.ufl.edu
 - Computing Helpdesk is located at 132 Hub, 352.392.4357, helpdesk@ufl.edu
- Get your Gator1 ID card
 - The Gator 1 card is the official University of Florida photo ID card. It is required for all students, faculty, staff and departmental associates. Many activities on campus are available only upon presentation of the Gator 1 card. To receive a Gator 1 card, inquire with the sponsoring UF department's HR representative to complete an online ID Card Authorization on your behalf first.
- Applying for your Social Security Number (if eligible)
 - Only J-1 Exchange Visitors who will be paid by University of Florida (who are receiving program sponsor funds, as indicated on the DS-2019) are eligible to apply for a Social Security number.
 - All J-1 Exchange Visitors MUST wait at least 10 days after entering the U.S. before visiting the local Social Security Administration office, or the receipt of a social security card will be delayed.

Living in Gainesville

Schooling and Childcare

- [Enrollment Information](#) for Alachua County Public Schools
- [Baby Gator](#) Daycare services

Transportation

Driving in Florida

- Florida Drivers are regulated by [The Florida Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (DMV) & [Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles](#) (FHSMV)
 - Florida Driver [Handbooks & Manuals](#)
- [Information for International Drivers](#) in Florida
- Driving **without** a Florida Driver’s License
 - [Statement from DHSMV on International Driving Permits](#)
 - Non-resident visitors to Florida who wish to drive while here will be required to have in their immediate possession a valid driver license issued with his or her name from their country of permanent residence.
- To obtain [Driver’s Licenses and Florida State IDs](#):
 - Find out the documents you need to bring with you at [GatherGoGet](#)
- Locations in Gainesville

Alachua County Tax Collector
Gainesville Office
[Map](#)
 3837 Windmeadows Blvd
 Gainesville
 FL 32608
 8:30am - 5:00pm M-F
 Phone: (352) 374-5236
 Services: License Issuance

Alachua County Tax Collector
Gainesville Office
[Map](#)
 12 S.E. 1st Street
 Gainesville
 FL 32601-5383
 8:30am - 5:00pm M-F
 Phone: (352) 374-5236
 Services: License Issuance

Alachua County Tax Collector
Gainesville Office
[Map](#)
 5801 NW 34th Blvd
 Gainesville
 FL 32653-1756
 8:30am - 5:00pm M-F
 Phone: (352) 374-5236
 Services: License Issuance, Driving Test, CDL Hazmat

Buses

- [Gainesville Regional Transit System](#) (RTS) is the local bus system.
- You can ride for free with your Gator 1 card
- Bus schedules change every academic semester and reduced scheduling occurs between academic semesters. To stay updated, check www.go-rts.com. Resources include:
 - [How to read the schedule](#)
 - RTS Trip Planner (you can enter your starting location and ending location online to see which busses you need to take)

Biking

In Florida the bicycle is legally defined as a vehicle and the bicyclist is a driver. Bicyclists have the same rights to the roadways, and must obey the same traffic laws as the drivers of other vehicles including:

- Stop at stop signs.
- Obey traffic signals.
- Signal for turns.
- Use front and rear lights at night.
- Ride in the correct direction on a one-way street
- DO NOT wear headphones.
- Always yield to pedestrians.

Housing

There are numerous short-term (under one year) and long-term (one year or more) housing options around the main University of Florida campus. Please find more information below to aide you in your housing search.

On-Campus Housing

Depending if your visit meets the eligibility requirements, the [Department of Housing & Residence Education](#) may have availability in their on-campus housing areas. For more information about on-campus options and availability, please visit their website.

Off-Campus Housing

Gainesville has many housing options off campus, however it may be a challenge to secure affordable housing due to the current demand and expense of rental units. It is important

to try and secure accommodations as early as possible. You can find more resources to aide you in your off-campus housing search by visiting [Off Campus Life](#).

Cell Phones and Emergency Phone Calls

There are many cell phone companies in the U.S. It is recommended that you research what company and phone plans are most suitable for your needs. Some companies include: [Verizon](#), [AT&T](#), [Sprint](#), and [T-Mobile](#). Most companies want you to sign a 1-2 year contract (especially if you want a free/cheap phone) and want you to have a Social Security number. If you don't want to sign a contract or don't have a Social Security number, you can buy "pre-paid" phone plans and pay for the phone.

For emergencies within the U.S. (i.e. car accident, critical injuries, etc.) the emergency assistance number is 911.

UF Off-Campus Research & Education Centers

- [Citrus REC \(Lake Alfred\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Lake Alfred](#) Information
- [Everglades REC \(Belle Glade\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Belle Glade](#) Information
- [Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory \(Vero Beach\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Vero Beach](#) information
- [Florida Partnership for Water, Agriculture & Community Sustainability at Hastings](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [St. Augustine](#) Information
- [Fort Lauderdale REC](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Fort Lauderdale](#) Information
- [Gulf Coast REC \(Balm\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Tampa](#) Information
- [Indian River REC \(Ft. Pierce\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Fort Pierce](#) Information
- [Mid-Florida REC \(Apopka\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Apopka](#) Information
- [North Florida REC \(Marianna\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Marianna](#) Information
- [North Florida REC \(Quincy\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Quincy](#) Information
- [Plant Science Research & Education Unit \(Citra\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Micanopy](#) Information
- [Range Cattle REC \(Ona\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Tampa](#) Information
- [Southwest Florida REC \(Immokalee\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Fort Myers](#) Information
- [Subtropical Agricultural Research Station \(Brooksville\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Brooksville](#) Information
- [Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center \(Live Oak\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Live Oak](#) Information
- [Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory RDS \(Ruskin\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Tampa](#) Information

- [Tropical REC \(Homestead\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Homestead](#) Information
- [West Florida RDS \(Jay\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Jay](#) information
- [West Florida REC \(Milton\)](#) [\[Map\]](#)
 - City of [Milton](#) Information

Helpful Websites

- View the [Gator Guide](#) for tips to living in Gainesville
- Check out [Visit Gainesville](#) for events happening around the city every week
- Free counseling services are available through the [Alachua County Crisis Center](#)
- If your invitation letter states that you will be a “Postdoctoral Associate” at UF, visit the website for the [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) for resources and events.
- Find [Consulates](#) in Florida
- Look at the University of Florida [campus map](#)