

PRE-ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION INFORMATION FOR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) J-1 Exchange Visitor Program! We are delighted that you will join our community of scholars and spend some time enjoying the hospitality of the Aloha State. The purpose of this packet is to provide you with information about the RCUH Exchange Visitor program. This is intended to provide you with an overview of our program, you should refer to the appropriate U.S. Department of State websites/references for additional information. As a participant in the program, you also have responsibilities as a nonimmigrant visitor in the U.S. The legal climate has been much stricter in enforcing laws regarding all visitors in the U.S. As your program sponsor, we want to ensure you are compliant with all rules and regulations to minimize issues during your program stay in Hawai'i.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) is a State Agency, established by the Legislature in 1965, and is attached to the University of Hawai'i for administrative purposes. Its enabling legislation is codified as Chapter 304A-3001 to 3011 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes. RCUH is a non-profit governmental research organization and the fundamental mission of RCUH is to support and enhance research, development, and training in Hawai'i, with a focus on the University of Hawai'i.

ABOUT THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of State administers the Exchange Visitor Program under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The purpose of the program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The J-1 exchange visitor visa is a nonimmigrant visa, and participants in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program are expected to return to their home countries to share their experiences when they complete their programs. Entry into the U.S. as a participant in the Exchange Visitor Program is granted with the understanding that participants will complete the objectives of a single program category. You may refer to [The Exchange Visitor Program Welcome Brochure](#) issued by the U.S. Department of State (DoS). Administration and regulation of the Exchange Visitor Program is through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs under the U.S. Department of State.

Sponsor

Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor: Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH)

Responsible Officer (RO): Kira Higa, Director of Human Resources

Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO): Sin Wan (Sharon) Vong, Human Resources/Employment Administrator

Address: 1601 East West Road, Burns Hall 4th Floor, Makai Wing Honolulu, HI 96848

Phone: (808) 956-0871

Email: rcuh_immigration@rcuh.com

Website: <https://www.rcuh.com/>

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

SEVIS is an Internet-based system that provides tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors, and their dependents. SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications, via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State (DoS) throughout a student's or exchange visitor's stay in the United States. You may learn more about SEVIS and the Student and Exchange Visitor Program through the [U.S. Department of State J-1 Exchange Visitor Program](#).

Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

J-1 Exchange Visitors may be subject to the “two-year home-country physical presence requirement” as a condition of being granted their visa status. You may be subject to the two-year home-country requirement if one or more of the following applies to you:

- **Government funded Exchange Program** - You participated in a program funded in whole or in part by a U.S. government agency, your home country’s government, or an international organization that received funding from the U.S. government or your home country’s government.
- **Specialized Knowledge or Skill** – You participated in a program involving an area of study or field of specialized knowledge designated as necessary for further development of your home country and appears on the [Exchange Visitor Skills List](#) for your home country.
- **Graduate Medical Education/Training** - You participated in a program to receive graduate medical education or training.

If this requirement applies, you must return to your home country for a cumulative total of two years at the end of your exchange visitor program.

Please note that only the U.S. Department of State, Waiver Review Division has the final authority to determine whether you are subject to the requirement. For more information about the [Eligibility](#) and [Advisory Opinions](#), please refer to [Waiver of the Exchange Visitor Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement](#).

Rules and Responsibilities Regarding the RCUH Exchange Visitor Program

The following are rules and regulations that exchange visitors and projects are required to follow. You may refer the DoS [Exchange Visitor Program](#) website for additional information on J-1 programs. **Violation of any one of these rules (and any regulations described in 22 CFR Part 62) may result in termination of your employment with RCUH and necessitate your immediate departure from the U.S.**

Responsibilities For Principal Investigator

- Must supervise the exchange visitor directly. The exchange visitor must remain under the direct supervision of the named supervisor.
- Must monitor the progress and welfare of their exchange visitor(s). Projects are also required to provide 24-hour emergency contact information to their exchange visitor (address, email and telephone number) [22 CFR 62.10(e)].
- Ensure that the activities the exchange visitor engages in are consistent with the category and activities listed on the exchange visitor's Form DS-2019.
- Must notify RCUH Human Resources ***immediately*** regarding any change(s) in the exchange visitor's residential/ mailing address, telephone number, email address, and site(s) of activity in the U.S. within ***ten (10) calendar days of the change***. The RCUH J-1 Exchange Visitor Change Form must be completed. Office addresses or P.O. boxes are ***not*** sufficient.
- Must notify RCUH Human Resources of any **Early Completion or Termination of Employment**. When the exchange visitor is terminated prior to the end of the J-1 Program, the RCUH J-1 Program Completion Form must be completed and submitted to RCUH Human Resources at least ten (10) days prior to exchange visitor’s last day of employment.

Responsibilities For J-1 Exchange Visitor

- Maintain his/her current nonimmigrant status, including any dependents at all times.
- Provide complete and legible copies of passports, visa stamps, and other immigration forms to the Principal Investigator of the project.
- Maintain a valid passport during the entire stay in the U.S.
- Submit transfer or extension requests with RCUH Human Resources on a timely basis.
- Maintain medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage for yourself and dependents for the entire duration of the exchange visitor program.
- Keep the Principal Investigator and the RCUH Program Sponsor (RO/ARO) informed of current contact information, as well as his/her dependent's current contact information including: residential/ mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address at all times. If/When you move to a new residence, you must report the new address to the RO/ARO at RCUH Human Resources within ten (10) calendar days of the move by submitting the RCUH J-1 Change Form.
- Keep the Principal Investigator and the Program Sponsor (RO/ARO) informed of any plans to travel outside of the U.S. or other immigration matters. Travel requests must be submitted to RCUH Human Resources **at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of departure.**
- Pursue only the activities for which admittance to the U.S. was granted in compliance with the policies, rules and procedures of the RCUH in addition to applicable state and federal statutes, rules and regulations. This means that the Exchange Visitor is limited to the activities of the position upon which his/her admittance was granted, unless otherwise authorized by his/her Principal Investigator and the RCUH Program Sponsor.
- Engage in unauthorized employment shall be deemed to be in violation of the exchange visitor's program status. Your current employment authorization is limited to employment with the RCUH.
- Dependents can accompany the exchange visitor upon hire or may come at a later time. The exchange visitor shall provide the RCUH Program Sponsor (RO/ARO) with the name, date and place of birth, and contact information for each dependent by submitting the RCUH Form I-110, J-2 Information Form. In addition, financial evidence showing sufficient funds are available to support all dependents while they are in the U.S. is required. Separate Forms DS-2019 will be issued to each dependent.

Medical and Other Required Insurances

The exchange visitor, and any accompanying spouse and dependent(s) must have medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance in effect that covers the exchange visitor, any accompanying spouse and dependent(s) in the event of sickness or accident during the entire period of the exchange program. The period of required coverage is the actual duration of the exchange visitor's participation listed on the DS-2019 as "Program Begin Date" and "Program End Date". The exchange visitor, and any accompanying spouse and dependent(s) may be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act. Failure to maintain medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage may lead to disciplinary action including and up to termination of employment. Minimum coverage must provide:

- Provides medical benefits of at least \$100,000 (U.S.) per accident or illness;
- Provides repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitors to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000;
- Requires deductibles not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.
- Insurance policies secured to fulfill the requirements of this section:
 - May require a waiting period of pre-existing conditions that is reasonable as determined by current industry standards;
 - May include provisions 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
 - Must 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:

- Underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A.M. Best rating of “A–” or above; a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of “A–” or above; a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of “B + ” or above; a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of “A–” or above; a Moody's Investor Services rating of “A3” or above; or such other rating as the Department of State may from time to time specify; or
- Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country; or
- Part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or
- Offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified Health Maintenance Organization or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

You may refer to J-1 Exchange Visitor insurance requirements in [22 CFR 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)

Options for Medical, Evacuation, and Repatriation Insurance

To assist you in obtaining the required medical, evacuation, and repatriation insurance coverage as mentioned above, the following are a list of options. You are, however, free to select any insurance that meets or exceeds the J-1 requirements as stated above.

Option 1: Enroll in RCUH Medical Insurance AND purchase separate evacuation and repatriation insurance. This option is only available to individuals who will be employed as a Regular Employee with 50% FTE or more.

- RCUH Health Insurance (covers medical, vision & prescription drugs). You may refer to the health plans available at RCUH website [Policy 3.520 RCUH Health Plans](#) and [New Hires Benefits](#). RCUH health insurance does not provide coverage for emergency evacuation and repatriation, so you must purchase this coverage in addition to enrolling into the health plans.
- Purchase a separate evacuation and repatriation insurance. You may purchase the insurance plans from the companies listed below and contact them directly.
 - [BETINS International Health and Travel Insurance](#)
 - [International Student Insurance](#)

Option 2: Purchase insurance to cover ALL medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage.

Please note that the insurance plans mentioned below specifically serve foreign students and scholars. The following is provided for informational purposes only and is not meant to recommend one insurance carrier or policy over others. Since plan provisions and costs are subject to change, it is the exchange visitor's responsibility to ensure that their insurance plans are kept current and that they meet the insurance requirements for the J-1 Program. You may purchase the insurance plans from the companies listed below and contact them directly.

- [International Student Insurance](#)
- [Compass Student Insurance](#)

Option 3: Purchase other insurance which meets the J-1 Program requirements.

Obtaining Your Visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate

RCUH will send you a J-1 packet and Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status via an encrypted email with instructions. Please follow the instructions and guidance from the [U.S. Department of State, Exchange Visitor Visa](#) to apply for the J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate which includes the following topics.

- Acceptance in Exchange Visitor Program
- How to apply

- Complete the online visa application
- Schedule an interview
- Prepare for your interview
- Application fee
- Gather required documentation
- Attend your visa interview
- Two-year home-country Physical Presence Requirement

Each Embassy/Consular may have different procedures which changes periodically. You should contact your nearest [U.S. Embassy/Consulate](#) for instructions and requirements to apply for J-1 visa. Each exchange visitor who applies for a visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate must pay the nonimmigrant visa application processing fee.

Arriving to the U.S.

You must arrive within 30 days before the start date shown on the Form DS-2019. If you are not able to arrive to the U.S. on time, please notify RCUH Immigration immediately to ensure we have enough time to change the start date on the Form DS-2019.

At the port of entry into the U.S., you must present your passport, visa, DS-2019 and supporting documents to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials and request permission to enter the U.S. The CBP official will issue an electronic Form I-94 and an admission stamp (if issued). You may access and print the I-94 admission record via the [CBP I-94 website](#). You must carry your passport and all issued DS-2019(s) with you at all times during travel abroad while you are a participant in the RCUH Exchange Visitor Program. It will provide evidence of your status and should be safeguarded against loss or destruction at all times.

Program Transfer for Exchange Visitors Already in the U.S.

Exchange visitors already in the U.S. on J-1 visas should consult with the appropriate institution official or their present sponsor to seek advice on proper procedures to transfer program sponsorship to the RCUH.

Travelling Outside the U.S. (international)

Exchange visitors often travel abroad for professional or personal reasons while in exchange visitor status. In order to re-enter the U.S. in J-1/J-2 status, you must have your DS-2019 travel validation endorsed by the RCUH RO/ARO and a valid J-1/J-2 visa. It is your responsibility to keep all your issued and endorsed DS-2019(s) with your passport at all times. You must notify RCUH Immigration for any international travel(s) at least (2) weeks prior to your departure, so that we can ensure you have the proper documentation to travel and return to the United States to continue your employment with RCUH.

You may find that the visa stamp in your passport expires earlier than the validity dates of your DS-2019. This is not unusual. Once you have entered the U.S. with a valid visa, you are permitted to stay (even if your visa stamp has expired) the entire validity period authorized on your DS-2019. The visa stamp is simply an entry permit; once in, your stay is governed by the dates on the DS-2019. If your visa stamp expires or if you use all the entries permitted, you will have to obtain a new visa on your next trip outside the U.S. This can take several weeks or even months depending on your citizenship and academic field. Therefore, you must plan accordingly to allow sufficient time to get a new visa stamp at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate while you are out of the U.S.

Completing Your RCUH J-1 Program

You must complete and submit the RCUH J-1 Program Completion Form with a copy of your return air tickets/itinerary to your Principal Investigator at least 2 weeks before completing your program. The Principal Investigator will forward these documents to RCUH Immigration.

FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE IN HAWAI'I

If you will work at the University of Hawai'i (UH) Manoa campus, the surrounding neighborhoods include Manoa, Moiliili, McCully, Punahou, Makiki, Kaimuki, Kapahulu and Palolo Valley. You should consult with your Principal Investigator since he/she is likely to know how other exchange visitors in the department have arranged for housing. Sources of rental listings include the University of Hawai'i at Manoa [Off-Campus Housing](#) and the [Star Advertiser](#). If you will work on one of the other islands, newspapers such as the [Hawai'i Tribune Herald](#) (Big Island), [The Maui News](#) (Maui) and [The Garden Island](#) (Kauai) can provide rental listings. The local UH campuses (UH-Hilo, UH Maui College and Kauai Community College) can provide information on rentals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cost of Living in Hawai'i: Hawai'i is one of the most expensive states to live in the U.S. due to limited real estate, the need to ship goods from the mainland, costs for housing, energy, transportation, and food. It is a good idea to prepare a budget before coming to Hawai'i to ensure that you will be able to support yourself and any dependents throughout the stay. For more information, you may visit the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Hawai'i](#)

RCUH New Hire Reference Guide: This provides you an overview of all RCUH policies, procedures, and benefits. For more information, you may visit the [RCUH](#) and [New Hires Benefits](#).

Social Security Number: Upon your arrival to the U.S., we will provide you more information to apply for the social security number (SSN). The SSA recommends you wait 10 days after arriving in the U.S. to apply for a social security number. You should go to the nearest SSA Office to file your application. You will need to present your passport, DS-2019, and I-94 printout in order to apply for an SSN. You will receive an application receipt right away, and you should receive the social security card within 2-3 weeks in the mail later. For more information, you may visit the [Social Security Administration](#).

Social Security Taxes (FICA): J-1 Scholars are usually eligible for an exemption of (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) FICA taxes for the first two calendar years in the U.S. If the J-1 Scholar has been in the U.S. for more than 2 calendar years, they are considered to be residents for tax purposes, and RCUH will begin to withhold FICA. Please contact our RCUH Payroll section (rcuh_payroll@rcuh.com) if you have any questions about FICA. For more information, you may visit the [IRS](#) website.

Federal and State Taxes: Generally, your earnings are subject to applicable federal and state taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold these taxes from your paycheck. By the mid of April of each year, you must file an income tax return with the federal and state governments covering the prior calendar year to determine tax liability. Exchange visitors from countries that have tax treaty agreements with the U.S. should find out about the specific terms of the treaty before arriving in the U.S. For more information, you may visit the IRS for [Form W-4](#), [U.S. Tax Treaties](#), [Taxation of nonresident aliens](#), and [State of Hawai'i Department of Taxation](#).

Information about Hawai'i: To find out about the history, culture, geography, and attractions of Hawai'i; visit [The official website of the Aloha State](#) or the [Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau](#). These sites have the most current information on all aspects of visiting and living in the Aloha State. For current events and news, you can refer to the [Star Advertiser](#), [Hawai'i News Now](#), or [KHON2](#).

Bank account: It is mandatory that all employees have their payroll check deposited into a participating financial institution(s) of their choice via automatic payroll deposit. Upon your arrival to the United States, you must open a checking and/or savings account to set up the direct deposit. You can find the Financial Institutions List via [Banks in Hawai'i](#).

This informational packet is intended to provide exchange visitors with pertinent information relating to RCUH J-1 program, and should not be construed as legal advice. This packet is also not intended to be a Handbook and does not create a contract between you and the RCUH. The RCUH reserves the right to change or delete any policy, practice, procedure, benefit or guideline at any time, with or without notice.

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FOR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS**

CERTIFICATE OF AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

IMPORTANT: Please complete, sign and return to RCUH Human Resources immediately upon reviewing the Pre-Arrival and Orientation Information for the J-1 Exchange Visitor.

Acknowledgement of Exchange Visitor:

I have read the RCUH Pre-Arrival and Orientation Information & Acknowledge Form for J-1 Exchange Visitors. I understand and will abide by all requirements of the RCUH J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. I attest that I meet all of the stated requirements for the RCUH J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. I attest that the information provided to you is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further understand that falsification of information and failure to abide by the RCUH J-1 Exchange Visitor Program rules may result in the termination of my visa, program, and employment with RCUH. I understand that my participation in the RCUH J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is not an employment contract or any other type of contract between myself and RCUH. I further understand that my program can be modified or cancelled at any time, if deemed appropriate by the RCUH.

J-1 Exchange Visitor (Print Name)

J-1 Exchange Visitor (Signature) & Date

Acknowledgement of Principal Investigator:

We understand that we are responsible for ensuring that the program obligations are met and that failure to comply with these responsibilities will result in the immediate termination of the employee and his/her J-1 Program with RCUH. We also certify that we have sufficient funding to support this action and related cost. We also understand that if the required insurance lapses or does not fully cover the participant and dependents to the extent required by 22 CFR Part 62, the program may be responsible for payment of such costs.

Principal Investigator (Print Name)

Principal Investigator (Signature) & Date