



## 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. This publication is intended to provide information about the RCUH Exchange Visitor Program, in which you are a participant, and your responsibilities as a nonimmigrant visitor to the U.S. As you undoubtedly know, the U.S. government has become much stricter in enforcing laws regarding all visitors to the U.S.; as your program sponsor, we want to ensure that you comply with all regulations so you will not have problems while you are here 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 the research and training programs of the University of Hawai'i and to enhance research, development, and training generally in 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-Staffing Services Administrator

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### **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 Visa Exchange Visitor Program website](#).

## Two-Year Home Country Residence Requirement

J-1 Exchange Visitors may be subject to the “two-year home country residence requirement” as a condition of being granted their visa status. You may be subject to the two-year home-country foreign residency requirement if your exchange program is funded by either your government or the U.S. government, involves specialized knowledge or skills deemed necessary by your home country or you received graduate medical 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. While in the U.S., you cannot change to any other visa status (except “A” or “G”), or get a permanent residence (green card) without first fulfilling the two-year requirement or having it waived by the appropriate government agencies.

Please note that only the U.S. Department of State, Waiver Review Division has the final authority to determine with certainty whether or not you are subject to the requirement. If you do not know whether the two-year home-country physical presence requirement applies to you, please review [Eligibility Information](#) and [Advisory Opinions](#).

## 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 also visit the DoS [J-1 Visa 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.**

### a) Responsibilities For Principal Investigator

- i. Must supervise the exchange visitor directly. The exchange visitor must remain under the direct supervision of the named supervisor.
- ii. 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)].
- iii. 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.
- iv. Must notify RCUH Human Resources **immediately** regarding any change(s) in the exchange visitor's home/mailling 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.
- v. 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 Exchange Visitor Change Form & 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.

### b) Responsibilities For J-1 Exchange Visitor

- i. Maintain his/her current immigrant status, including that of any dependents at all times.
- ii. Provide complete and legible copies of passports, visa stamps, and other immigration forms to the Principal Investigator of the project.
- iii. Maintain a valid passport during the entire stay in the U.S.
- iv. Submit transfer or extension requests with RCUH Human Resources on a timely basis.
- v. Maintain medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage, including coverage for all dependents during the entire period of time the visitor is participating in the exchange program.
- vi. 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: home/mailling 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.

- vii. 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.
- viii. 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.
- ix. 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.
- x. Dependents may accompany the exchange visitor 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.

### Health Insurance

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 federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act or ACA). 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:

- a) Medical Insurance:
  - i. Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 (U.S.) per accident or illness.
  - ii. Deductible not to exceed \$500 (U.S.) per accident or illness.
- b) Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance:
  - i. Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000;
  - ii. Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000 (U.S.);

Any policy, plan or contract secured to fill the above requirements must, at a minimum: (1) 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 (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 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 insurance requirements in [22 CFR Part 62](#).

## Options To Choose 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. We offer this information for your convenience. You are, however, free to select any insurance that meets or exceeds the J-1 requirements as stated above.

1. **Enroll in RCUH Medical Insurance AND purchase separate evacuation and repatriation insurance.**  
This option is only available to individuals who will be employed by RCUH as a Regular Employee with 50% FTE or more.
  - a) 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](#). RCUH group insurance does not provide coverage for emergency evacuation and repatriation, so you must purchase this coverage on your own.  
**AND**
  - b) Purchase a separate evacuation and repatriation insurance. You may purchase the insurance plans from the companies listed below and contact them directly.
    - a. [BETINS International Health and Travel Insurance](#)
    - b. [International Student Insurance](#)
  
2. **Purchase insurance to cover ALL medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage.**  
Please note that the insurance plans below are mentioned because they 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.
  - a) [International Student Insurance](#)
  - b) [Compass Student Insurance](#)
  
3. **Purchase other insurance which meets the J-1 Program requirements.**

## Obtaining Your Visa and Entering the U.S.

RCUH will send you a J-1 packet and Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status. In order to obtain the J-1 visa, you must do the following:

1. SEVIS Fee: When you are accepted into an exchange visitor program, the program will issue you a Form DS-2019 and you must pay a SEVIS I-901 Fee to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). You may visit [I-901 SEVIS Fee](#) on the DHS website for more information.
  
2. Obtaining a J-1/J-2 Visa(s) at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad: 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/Consular must pay the nonimmigrant visa application processing fee. Please visit the DoS [Exchange Visitor Visa](#) website for more information.
  
3. Entering the U.S.: At the port of entry into the U.S., present the Form DS-2019 and your passport with the J-1 visa in it to the Customs and Border Patrol Inspector. The Inspector will examine the documents and admit you into the U.S. You will need to carry your passport and DS-2019 with you any time you travel abroad while 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.

### **Travel Outside the U.S.**

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 endorsed by the RCUH RO or ARO. It is your responsibility to keep your endorsed DS-2019 with your passport at all times. If your endorsement dates have expired, you must contact RCUH Human Resources at least one (1) month prior to your departure for re-endorsement. Failure to do so, will certainly delay your timely return to the U.S. We recommend that all revalidations be completed at the consular office in your home country.

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. This is because 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, make sure you have allowed sufficient time to get a new visa stamp while you are out of the U.S.

### **Completing Your RCUH J-1 Program**

At least 2 weeks before the end date of your RCUH exchange visitor 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/Administrator. The Principal Investigator/Administrator will forward these documents to RCUH Human Resources.

### **FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE IN HAWAII'**

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 Referral Program](#) and the [Honolulu 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) also can provide information on rentals.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. **The High Cost of Living in Hawai'i:** Those who are not accustomed to living in high cost of living areas may be surprised to learn how expensive food, housing and other basic necessities are in Hawai'i. 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.
2. **Factbook on the Cost of Living in Hawai'i** issued by the Hawai'i Employers Council: The factbook will provide you information about general expenses, moving expenses, housing, food, education and recreation.
3. **RCUH New Hire Reference Guide:** This provides you an overview of all RCUH policies, procedures, benefits and compensation plans. Please visit [www.rcuh.com](http://www.rcuh.com).
4. **Social Security Number:** To begin employment in the U.S., you will need a Social Security Number (SSN). The form for obtaining a number can be downloaded from the [Social Security Administration](#) (SSA) website but you cannot file for a card from outside the U.S. 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 a receipt right

away, but you may only receive the number several weeks later.

5. **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 they are 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, so RCUH will begin to withhold FICA. Please contact our RCUH Payroll section if you have any questions about FICA at [rcuh\\_payroll@rcuh.com](mailto:rcuh_payroll@rcuh.com).
6. **Federal, State and Local Taxes:** Generally, your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state and local 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 whether you owe more taxes or are eligible for a refund. 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.
7. **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 and Convention Bureau](#) websites. 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 read the [Honolulu Star Advertiser](#).
8. **Bank account:** It is the RCUH's policy to directly deposit an employee's payroll check into a participating financial institutions(s) of your choice via automatic payroll deposit. You can find the Financial Institutions List from the [State of Hawai'i Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs](#).

*This informational packet is intended to provide exchange visitors with pertinent information relating to RCUH J-1 program, but 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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**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 J-1 Exchange Visitors.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Name:

**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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator (Print Name)