Exchange Visitors’ Program

J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program exists to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote educational and multi-cultural exchanges. The J-1 program provides foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in educational and multi-cultural programs in the United States and then share their experiences upon their return to their home countries. Another purpose of the program is to encourage Americans to participate in educational and multi-cultural programs of other countries. The U.S. Department of State has designated Claremont School of Theology (CST) as a J-1 Program Sponsor which allows CST to host foreign nationals as participants in educational and multi-cultural exchange programs conducted by CST and its partner centers.

SEVIS

SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s database which maintains electronic records for all J exchange visitors. The Responsible Officer (RO) creates a SEVIS record for each exchange visitor CST and its partner centers sponsors and is required to report certain information or changes for these exchange visitors. Certain U.S. government agencies such as the Department of State and Customs and Border Protection also have access to SEVIS records in order to update and verify exchange visitors’ records. It is very important that the information in SEVIS be as complete and accurate as possible so that J-1 Scholars have fewer difficulties when traveling, applying for a visa, and other benefits. J-1 scholars must notify the RO immediately of any changes in the J-1 program such as an address change, funding changes and requests to shorten or extend a program. For more information about SEVIS, please visit this website http://www.ice.gov/sevis/overview.

Form DS-2019

All exchange visitors are issued a document called a Form DS-2019 “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status” (“DS-2019” for short). The RO will issue the DS-2019 upon receipt of a complete and accurate DS-2019 Request Form plus the other required documents from the applicant. This DS-2019 form issued by the RO is generated by SEVIS upon creation of a new record or when changes are made to an existing record. Exchange Visitors (and their spouse and/or children) use this document to obtain a J visa to enter the United States.

The J-1 Visa

Exchange visitor applicants must meet specific requirements to qualify for an exchange visitor (J) visa under immigration law. The U.S. consular officer from the applicant’s home country will determine whether a foreign national qualifies for the visa. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate that they properly meet requirements, including the following:

1. That they plan to remain in the U.S. for a temporary, specific, limited period;
2. Evidence of funds to cover expenses in the U.S.;
3. Evidence of compelling social and economic ties abroad; and other binding ties which will insure their return abroad at the end of the visit;
4. Proof of medical insurance;
5. Proof of English Proficiency;
6. U.S. Address where the visitor intends to stay (must be within the same region or state of the sponsor).

For more information, please visit this website http://j1visa.state.gov/basics/.

**Participant’s Eligibility and Fees**

**Forms**

- Request for [DS-2019 Form](http://j1visa.state.gov/basics/)
- [English Proficiency Form](http://j1visa.state.gov/basics/)

**People to Know**

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