

Guest Researcher Exchange Visitor Checklist

Use this checklist to help you throughout the exchange visitor process. Details on each item can be found on the VAI web site.

1. Fill out Form DS-2019 on the VAI web site
2. Carefully review your SEVIS-generated DS-2019 when you receive it to make sure all of the information is correct; the spelling of your name on your DS-2019 should match the spelling of your name on your passport
3. Pay the SEVIS fee after you receive the DS-2019 from VAI and before going to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for your visa interview
4. Go to the Embassy/Consulate web site to find out which U.S. Embassy or Consulate you will need to visit, how to make an appointment for an interview, and what you'll need
5. Make an appointment for a visa interview and contact VAI with your interview date
6. Go to your interview; make sure to bring everything you need

Your visa is approved

7. Complete a Guest Student Agreement and Application Form and obtain permission from your home university if you are a student who would like to receive academic credit for performing research at the Institute
8. Purchase health insurance for you (and your family, if applicable)
9. Ask VAI about arranging for temporary housing or booking a hotel room on your behalf until housing can be arranged
10. Determine what transportation you will use while in the U.S.
11. Plan your finances; your first stipend (if receiving) will not be issued for a few weeks or more after you arrive
12. Arrange your flight to the U.S. for 30 days or less before the start date listed on your DS-2019 and contact VAI with your travel itinerary
13. Review web sites describing the procedures that occur upon entry

Travel to the U.S.

14. Make sure you receive three date stamps upon entering the U.S. – one in your passport, one on your Form DS-2019, and one on your I-94 Departure Record
15. Review your I-94 Departure Record and make sure it has “J-1” and “D/S” written on it; if not, contact VAI immediately
16. Work with VAI's Relocation Coordinator to fulfill your relocation needs, such as housing, shopping, schooling for dependents, English translation services, arranging a bank account, and getting a driver's license and social security number

Start at VAI

17. Provide all applicable documentation to the Institute's Payroll Department as soon as possible if you plan to claim tax treaty exemption for your stipend
18. Apply for a social security number 10 – 14 days after your start at the Institute
19. Take English as a Second Language (ESL) classes if needed
20. Inform VAI if there are changes in your medical insurance, financial support, or duration of program stay, or if you will be traveling outside of the U.S.; report any address change to VAI within ten days of the change of address
21. Engage only in those activities required by your J-1 visa category as described in Section 4 of the DS-2019 and obtain authorization from VAI before short-term activities such as lecturing, consulting, or conducting a seminar in your field at another institution
22. Maintain required documentation, which includes an unexpired DS-2019 and an I-94 indicating “J-1” and “D/S”; maintain a valid passport and notify VAI if your passport has been renewed
23. Leave the U.S. at the end of the authorized stay or contact VAI to request an extension of stay