

# J-1 Exchange Student Visa Instructions



## Step 1 – Verify & sign your DS-2019

- Review the personal information listed on your DS-2019
- Sign your DS-2019 at the bottom of the first page under the “Signature of Applicant” section

## Step 2 – Pay the SEVIS fee (I-901)

- Go to: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- \$220 USD
- Saint Mary's Exchange Visitor Code: P-1-06102
- Print the receipt
- You can reprint the receipt at any time by going to the website
- You will need the receipt for your visa interview and upon arrival to the U.S.
- For other methods of payment: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu-instructions>

## Step 3 – Complete the DS-160 visa application

- Go to: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
- \$185 USD visa application fee (MRV fee)
- Apply for a J-1 visa
- Exchange Students will apply for the “Student, College/University” category
- Professors will apply for the “Professor” category
- Print the confirmation page
- You will need the confirmation page for your interview

## Step 4 – Book an interview at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

- You must book the visa appointment in your country of citizenship or residence
- If you are a citizen or resident of a country where the U.S. embassy or consulate does not offer visa services, you must schedule the interview appointment at a designated location
- For a list of designated locations: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/adjudicating-nonimmigrant-visa-applicants-in-their-country-of-residence-sep-6-2025.html>
- Refer to the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate for information about how to book an appointment and to pay the MRV fee
- Check visa wait times: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/global-visa-wait-times.html>
- Keep a copy of the appointment confirmation
- You will need the appointment confirmation for the interview

## **Step 5 – Attend your interview**

- Bring the following documents with you:
  - Valid passport
  - DS-2019
  - SEVIS fee receipt
  - DS-160 confirmation page
  - Acceptance letter or job offer letter from Saint Mary's
  - Proof of funding
  - Proof of residency (if interviewing outside of your country of citizenship)

## **Step 6 – Receive your passport back with the J-1 visa**

- Instructions on how to receive your passport back will be provided when scheduling the interview
- Upload a copy of your J-1 visa to the exchange application portal
- Do not worry if your J-1 visa isn't valid for the entire duration of your program at Saint Mary's
  - The visa only needs to be valid when you are entering the U.S.
  - The visa does not determine how long you can remain in the U.S.
  - Exchange students have a 30-day grace period from when classes end to depart the U.S.

## **Step 7 – Entry to the United States**

- You may enter the U.S. no more than 30 days before the beginning of classes
- Make sure to pack the following documents in your carry-on luggage:
  - Valid passport
  - J-1 visa
  - DS-2019
  - SEVIS fee receipt
  - Acceptance letter from Saint Mary's

## **Saint Mary's College Contact Information**

Ashley Cross  
Director | PDSO & RO  
Center for International Programs  
1928 Saint Mary's Road  
PMB 3091  
Moraga CA 94575  
arm11@stmarys-ca.edu  
+1 (925) 631-4352

## **U.S. Department of State Contact Information**

J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline: 1 866 283 9090

This line is for use by exchange visitors and third parties in the case of urgent situations. A Department of State representative is available 24 hours a day.

Regular Communication & Questions: [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov)

## **Additional Information**

For more information about the J-1 program and the application process, please visit this website:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/exchange.html>