Understanding Your DS-2019

The DS-2019 is a multi-purpose document issued by a U.S. government-approved institution (or organization) certifying that your admission into a program has been accepted and that you have demonstrated sufficient financial resources to stay in the U.S. for the length of the DS-2019 form. The DS-2019 is officially titled the "Certificate of Eligibility" because with it, you are "eligible" to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Your spouse or children will also each need their own DS-2019 to obtain J-2 dependent status, if desired.

How the DS-2019 is created
Once your admission into a program has been accepted, your name and other biographic information are entered into a U.S. government database called SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). The SEVIS database processes the information and produces a "PDF" file of the DS-2019 that is sent back to the school via the internet. The school official (called the Responsible Officer) prints and signs the DS-2019 and then it is prepared for delivery to you. If an update or change information needs to be made on the DS-2019, the Responsible Officer makes these requests through SEVIS and the document can be easily reproduced (see also Understanding SEVIS).

How the DS-2019 is used outside the U.S.
The DS-2019 form is used by the prospective visitor to apply for a J-1 visa at the U.S. embassy or consulate abroad (see also Applying for a Visa). The visa is the document needed to be allowed entry into the U.S. (see also Understanding the Visa). The DS-2019 must be presented along with the J-1 visa to a U.S. Immigration inspector upon arrival at the U.S. port-of-entry (see also Entering the U.S.).

How the DS-2019 is used inside the U.S.
Once you have arrived in the U.S. and passed through the border inspections process, the DS-2019 is used as identification purposes and proof of your legal status. If you get a job on or off-campus, you will be required to show the DS-2019 to your employer during the hiring process.

Transfer of Programs
The DS-2019 is also needed for a transfer of programs. If you are transferring from one J-1 program to another, you must obtain a DS-2019 from the new school or program before your current DS 2019 has expired. See the Responsible Officer at your program to get more information about the transfer process.

Traveling with the DS-2019
If you will be traveling abroad and then returning to the U.S. to resume your J-1 program, you must take your DS-2019 with you. The DS-2019 is required to re-apply for a visa if you need one (see also Applying for a Visa) and for re-entering the U.S. Before your departure from the U.S., make sure that you have an unexpired "travel validation" from an Adviser at SISS on the DS-2019 (bottom right corner). This signature is valid for one year for multiple visits outside the U.S. or until the DS-2019 expires, whichever is
first. In most cases, a travel validation can be done quickly and easily at SISS; however, be sure to plan ahead and get it done several weeks before you depart the U.S. to avoid the holiday rush (see also *Travel and Re-entry to the U.S.*)

**Important Information on the DS-2019**

Some immigration regulations governing the J-1 status are listed on page 2 of the document. It is important that J-1 visitors read this page to understand the rules that apply to their stay in the U.S.

**The DS-2019 End Date**

An "end date" was entered into item #3 on page 1 of your DS-2019 based on your particular program. *If you are not able to finish your program on that date, you must request an extension from the SISS office at least two weeks before the end date expires* (Students, see also *Extension of Program*). In all cases, proof of sufficient funds will be required to extend your stay in the U.S. For some, this documentation may take time to acquire; advance planning is highly encouraged. Please consult with an Adviser at SISS if you have any questions about your stay in the U.S.

**The 30-day Grace Period**

After completing your program, you are allowed a 30-day grace period to depart the U.S.

From: http://ias.berkeley.edu/siss/multiple_use/understanding_ds2019.html