

J-1 Scholar Exchange Visitor Orientation Guide

BINGHAMTON
UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Welcome to Binghamton!

Binghamton University hosts over 100 scholars annually and has over 2,400 international students from more than 100 countries! As an on campus resource, the ISSS strives to provide all international students and scholars with a variety of resources so that they can succeed at Binghamton.

As you prepare to start your time at Binghamton University, we recommend that you use this guide to learn more about your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, the legal requirements and restrictions while you are a J-1 Exchange Visitor, extensions, employment and the Binghamton community.



ISSS Office Information

Contact Information:

Old Champlain, Room 142 (OH 142)

Phone: 607-777-2510

Fax: 607-777-4649

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:30AM – 4:30PM

Advising Hours:

Monday & Tuesday: 10:00AM – 11:45AM

Wednesday & Thursday: 1:30PM – 3:30PM

**Call 607-777-2510 to speak with an advisor

General Questions: ischolar@binghamton.edu

Health Insurance Questions: intl.insure@binghamton.edu

*When you email us, be sure to tell us you are a J-1 Scholar



After you check in with ISSS

- Meet with your supervisor in your host department to become familiar with your work place and complete any paperwork.
- Obtain your Binghamton University ID card. This is done after you have checked in with your host department.
 - **Admissions Center, Room 112, 9:00AM – 4:00PM**
- J-1 Short-term Scholars, Research Scholars, and Professors are eligible to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN) [online](#).
 - Once you complete the online application, you will be prompted to schedule an in-person appointment at the Social Security Administration Office.
 - You will need: passport, visa, DS-2019, I-94, employment letter and confirmation of your completed [SSN application](#).
 - NOTE: You must have an appointment to visit the SSA Office (no drop-ins available).
 - 2 Court Street, 3rd Floor, Binghamton, NY 13901



Your I-94 Record

Your I-94 record is the record of your arrival and departure to/from the United States. It is created electronically at the time of your arrival to the United States via airports and seaports.

Each time you enter the United States, you should download and print a copy of your I-94 record. Your I-94 will be 11 characters and be alphanumeric.

You can download your I-94 record at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/>.

When you download your I-94 record, review the information on the I-94 very carefully. Make sure the I-94 shows the correct notation for your visa status:

- The class of admission should be J-1
- The “Admit Until” date should be D/S (Duration of Status)
- If the notation on your I-94 record is not correct, or if you are unable to access your I-94 record, please contact the ISSS Office at ISSS@binghamton.edu

ISSS recommends that individuals in J-1/J-2 status carry a printed copy of their I-94 as documentation of their current status in the U.S. at all times.



U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : [REDACTED]

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2019 March 13

Class of Admission : J1

Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname : [REDACTED]

First (Given) Name : [REDACTED]

Birth Date : [REDACTED]

Passport Number : [REDACTED]

Country of Issuance : [REDACTED]



Federal Regulations:

- **Keep your passport valid at all times:** Your passport should always be valid for at least 6 months into the future.
- **Report address changes to ISSS within 10 days:** Report any changes in address by emailing ischolar@binghamton.edu.
- **Maintain required Health & Accident Insurance:** J-1 faculty and scholars must have ISSS-approved insurance for themselves and any J-2 dependents.
- **Incidental Employment:** J-1 faculty and scholars may conduct research or teach only at Binghamton University unless specifically authorized ahead of time by the ISSS to give a lecture or consult at another U.S. institution.

Federal Regulations:

- **Carry proof of your current immigration status at all times:**
U.S. federal regulations require that nonimmigrants carry proof of their immigration status at all times. ISSS recommends that individuals in J-1/J-2 status carry a printed copy of their I-94 as documentation of their current status in the U.S.
- **Travel:** Bring passport and DS-2019 to the ISSS office, or email ischolar@binghamton.edu prior to travel outside of the U.S. to obtain an updated travel signature.
- **Departing the U.S.:** J-1/J-2 visa holders are allowed a 30-day grace period to depart the U.S. following the expiration date of the DS2019 or the end date of the J-1 program. You are not allowed to work or engage in J-1 activities during this time. If you depart the U.S. during your 30 day grace period, you cannot reenter in J-1 status. *You must notify ISSS of early departure.





The Home Residency Requirement:

Some exchange visitors with J-1 visas are subject to a two-year home country physical presence requirement, which requires you to return home for at least two years after your exchange visitor program. This requirement is part of U.S. law, in the Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212(e).

J-1 visa holders are subject if one or more of the following applies to them:

- **Government Funded Exchange Program:** J-1 participated in a program funded by their home government or the U.S. government, or is funded by a government for the purpose of international exchange.
- **Specialized knowledge or Skill:** J-1 participated in a program involving an area of study or skill that is in short supply in their home country and appears on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for their home country.
- **Graduate Medical Education/Training:** J-1 EV participated in a program to receive graduate medical education or training.
- You can read more about the Two-year Home Residency Requirement online at <http://bit.ly/J1HomeResidency>.

If a J-1 Exchange Visitor is subject, they must return to their home country for a cumulative total period of at least two years.

If a J-1 EV is unsure if they are subject to this requirement, they can request an Advisory Opinion from the Department of State at <http://bit.ly/J-1Advisory>.

If a J-1 EV is subject to this requirement but would like to request a waiver of the two year home country physical presence requirement, they can apply for a waiver from the Department of State at <http://bit.ly/J-1Waiver>.

Bars on Repeat Participation:



12-MONTH BAR

An Exchange Visitor who was in the U.S. in any J status (excluding short-term scholars) for more than six months in the previous year may not enter the U.S. as a J-1 Professor or Research Scholar for 12 months after the end of their most recent J program. This 12-month bar also applies to J-2 dependents and cannot be waived; however, they may return to the U.S. in a different visa category.

24-MONTH BAR

An Exchange Visitor who comes to the U.S. for any length of time in the J-1 Professor or J-1 Research Scholar category will not be able to come back to the U.S. in the J-1 Professor or J-1 Research Scholar category for a 24-month period from the end of their previous J-1 program. This 24-month bar also applies to J-2 dependents and cannot be waived; however, they may return to the U.S. in a different visa category.

U.S. Department of State Compliance



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 Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States with the expectation that on completion of their exchange program, they will return home to share their experiences.

The U.S. Department of State has created an [Exchange Visitor Welcome Brochure](#).

The U.S. Department of State has established a Compliance Unit to provide an informational resource to participants in J-1 Exchange Visitor Programs. The Compliance Unit's e-mail is JVISAS@STATE.GOV.

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs invites exchange visitors to visit the Bureau's J-1 visa web page at: <http://J-1visa.state.gov>.

The Wilberforce Pamphlet informs you of your rights as a nonimmigrant visa holder in certain employment- and education-based categories. The U.S. government created this pamphlet at the prompting of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, which reaffirms and strengthens the U.S. government's commitment to fight human trafficking and labor abuses: <http://bit.ly/J-1Rights>.

Extensions

Scholars and Faculty in J-1 status whose DS-2019 are due to expire and would like to apply for an extension must follow Dept. of State-Bureau of Education and Cultural Exchange procedures.

You must contact ISSS **at least 30 days before** your DS-2019 end date. The request for extension must come from your host department, and you must not have exceeded your maximum stay.

You will need to submit the following documents to your department:

- DS-2019 Request Form – completed by sponsoring faculty member and Dean's Office/Research Foundation
- Proof of financial support (university letter, bank statement, sponsor letter)
- Copy of appointment letter



Your department will then submit a complete extension request to ISSS, ISSS will notify the State Department and issue an updated DS-2019.

Transfers

A scholar may transfer from one J-1 Exchange Visitor program sponsor to another if the purpose of the transfer is to complete the objective for which the scholar was admitted to exchange visitor status, and if the scholar remains within the same participant category. If you wish to transfer to another J-1 Program, you must submit the following to our office **at least 30 days before** your requested transfer out date:

- Offer letter from new program sponsor
- Confirmation that BU supervisor has been notified/supports the transfer. The supervisor can send this via email to ischolar@binghamton.edu
- Written goals of program from Binghamton supervisor and new school supervisor (email confirmation is acceptable from both schools to ischolar@binghamton.edu)
- Completed Exchange Visitor Transfer Out Form – email ischolar@binghamton.edu for this form

Please note the transfer cannot extend beyond the permissible time for the J-1 EV category you are in.

Professors and Research Scholars: Maximum stay is up to 5 years

Short-term Scholars: Maximum stay is up to 6 months



Safety on Campus and the Community



The New York State University Police at Binghamton is a fully empowered state law enforcement agency. Our officers receive their basic training at the Zone 6 Municipal Police Training Academy conducted at the Broome County Sheriff's Public Safety Facility in Binghamton, NY. Our officers receive additional, on-going training addressing the needs of our campus environment.

Our primary mission is to provide a safe environment for the campus community. Protecting life and property, preventing and investigating crime, and maintaining public order are among the University Police Department's top priorities. No police agency is effective without help from the community it serves. The department's success relies in part on the involvement of the University community. We encourage all community members to become aware of crime prevention practices and to participate in the University Police Department's educational offerings.

Through a collaborative effort, we hope to make your experience at Binghamton University a safe and enjoyable one.

- **In case of an emergency:** Call 607-777-2222 to reach University Police. If you are calling from an on-campus land line, call 7-2222 or dial 911. Staff answering this phone number will direct your call.
- **If you cannot remember the emergency number, you can always call 911** from a cell phone and be connected to Broome County Dispatch who can redirect your call to the University Police.
- **In case of a non-emergency (or) any other matter**, call 607-777-2393.

For additional information on The New York State University Police at Binghamton visit their website at: <http://bit.ly/BUPolice>

Safety on Campus and the Community

- **Blue Light Emergency Telephones:** More than 80 highly visible outdoor phones encased in Blue boxes for emergency use are connected directly to the University Police Dispatcher.
- **Educational Programs:** In addition to the already mentioned programs and services, the University Police offers educational programs on issues including alcohol and other substance abuse, fire safety, other dimensions of personal safety and related topics.
- **Escort Program:** On-campus walking escorts are available to all members of the University community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Officers will also provide escort services at other times. Call 607-777-2393 for an escort.
- **Rave Emergency Alert System (B ALERT):** Binghamton University has partnered with Rave Mobile Safety to provide an emergency alert system, known as B ALERT, which is capable of delivering messages to your University and personal e-mail addresses, as well as to your cell phone. <https://www.binghamton.edu/emergency/emergency-notification/text-alerts.html>.



Health Insurance Requirement



The U.S. Department of State requires that all J-1 visa holders and any accompanying J-2 dependents obtain health and accident insurance. Failure to carry insurance is considered to be a violation of the Exchange Visitor Program regulation and is a serious infraction. You must maintain valid health insurance during your entire program that meets the following minimums:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness;
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses associated with medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness

The State University of New York offers this coverage through the SUNY International Student Health and Accident Insurance Program. If you are a research scholar or professor, SUNY requires that you purchase the insurance through the University. This is mandatory regardless of coverage provided by an outside agency unless a specific exemption is approved by the Office of International Student & Scholar Services.

You will sign up for health insurance after you arrive at Binghamton University and schedule your orientation in our office.

You can read more about the current insurance plan at <http://bit.ly/J1Insurance>.



J-2 Dependents

MAINTAINING STATUS: Only the spouse or unmarried children (under the age of 21) are eligible to be classified as dependents, according to immigration law. The J-2 status of any family member is dependent upon the status of you, the J-1 exchange visitor. You may not exit the United States and leave the dependent alone in the country for extended periods of time, nor may they remain in the United States after completion or cancellation of your program. J-2 dependents must have valid health insurance at all times.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT FOR CHILDREN WHO TURN 14: The Department of Homeland Security requires that anyone who entered the U.S. prior to their 14th birthday must "re-register" with USCIS within 30 days of turning 14. This applies to anyone in F-1 or J-1 status as well as dependents in F-2 or J-2 status. If your dependents entered the U.S. prior to turning 14, it is essential that you review the information on [this USCIS page about the registration requirement](#) and ensure that they are registered within 30 days of their 14th birthday. That page provides step-by-step instructions on how to create an account and submit a registration form.

STUDY, RESEARCH OR VOLUNTEER: J-2 dependents are eligible to enroll in part- or full-time study while in the U.S. in J-2 status. They may also engage in research or volunteer during part or all of your J-1 exchange program. J-2 dependents must have work authorization if they will be paid for any research or volunteer work.



J-2 Dependents

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION: The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) permits J-2 visa holders to apply for employment authorization if the employment is not necessary for the financial support of the principal J-1 visa holder. The J-2 visa holder may apply for employment authorization any time after arrival in the U.S. The J-2 work authorization will be valid only for as long as the J-1 exchange visitor's stay is valid. The J-2 visa holder cannot work until they receive the EAD card. Please see the USCIS website for the necessary form I-765 and instructions: www.uscis.gov/i-765 Only J-2 spouses who have received employment authorization will be eligible to apply for a Social Security Number.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: The ISSS hosts monthly [Coffee Hours](#) and encourage our J-2 dependents to attend. The event is free and open to all Binghamton University students, faculty, staff and dependents. J-2 Dependents can access [B-Engaged](#) to view other ISSS sponsored programs and other Binghamton University.

While You Are Here



INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

In the United States, everyone files tax returns between January and mid-April for the previous calendar year. The staff at the ISSS are neither qualified nor permitted to give individual tax advice; however, we do offer free Federal tax software to all of our international students, scholars and dependents to assist with filing your taxes. The software is a web-based income tax preparation product and the Federal filing is available at no cost to you. Please read more about filing taxes on our website at <http://bit.ly/ISSSTaxes>.

ISSS COFFEE HOUR

We hold International Coffee Hour monthly during the academic year. You can view the dates of this semesters Coffee Hour on B-Engaged at <https://bengaged.binghamton.edu/>. The coffee hour provides a space where members of the entire University community can meet in a relaxed atmosphere. Each coffee hour is sponsored by a different University department or office. Refreshments are free. All are welcome!

CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The ISSS hosts a variety of cross-cultural programs throughout the year. Past events include a World Cup viewing party, self-defense courses and Coffee, Culture and Conversation. All events are free and open to everyone. Please view our current ISSS events on B-Engaged. <https://bengaged.binghamton.edu/>.



While You Are Here

BANKING

Since services and fees vary from bank to bank, you should research different banks to find one that best suits your needs. Before opening an account, be sure to look at a map of the bank's ATM and branch locations. A bank with locations in the areas where you plan to live and work will be the most convenient.

The current bank on campus at Binghamton University is Visions Federal Credit Union <http://bit.ly/BUVisions>. A social security number is not needed to open a bank account; however, you will need to show photo identification such as your passport and proof of U.S. address.

HOUSING

Before arrival, you may wish to check with your host academic department to see if they are able to offer assistance in locating suitable housing. Unfortunately, International Student and Scholar Services cannot make arrangements for housing. For additional housing information please see our website for off-campus housing resources <http://bit.ly/offcampushouse>.

ISSS News Listserv

The ISSS has a listserv where we send announcements regarding important immigration regulations, news from our office and our monthly newsletter. To subscribe to ISSS NEWS from your binghamton.edu account, send an e-mail message to: listserv@listserv.binghamton.edu

- Leave the subject and all other fields blank
- Type a single line in the message text as follows: Subscribe ISSS-BU first name and last name

Transportation

Binghamton University provides several options for getting around campus and the local community, including Off Campus College Transport (OCCT), and Bike Share. Broome County (BC) Transit is the local public transportation provider. Students, faculty and staff can ride buses for free with a valid Binghamton University ID.

Please see the Transportation and Parking Services website at <http://bit.ly/BUtransportation>.

- Broome County Transit information is available at <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/transit>.
- OCCT Bus information is available at <https://www.occtransport.org/>.
- Useful apps: ETA Spot (Binghamton University information and OCCT buses).

Binghamton has many local taxi cab companies, and Uber and Lyft are available in the Greater Binghamton area.



Driving in the U.S.

If you have a valid license from another country, you may drive in the United States. It is recommended that you get a translated license if it is in a language other than English. If you wish to purchase a car, you will need a NYS driver's license. A driver's license takes time to obtain; you should be prepared for the process to take six months or more. Additionally, as an international scholar be aware that you are responsible for following any laws or regulations related to driving.

If you just need a state-issued ID but not a driver's license, the DMV can provide this as well.

For additional information on driving in the U.S. visit <http://bit.ly/DriveinNY>.



CONSEQUENCES OF DRINKING & DRIVING

The legal drinking age in the United States is 21 years of age. If you are arrested and/or convicted of a DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) or DUI (Driving Under Influence of alcohol) your visa will most likely be revoked. If your visa is revoked, this means that it is no longer valid and cannot be used for entering the U.S.

If your visa has been revoked, you will be contacted directly by the Department of State (DOS) at the email address you included on your visa application. The ISSS Office will not be contacted. It is your responsibility to read and respond to any correspondence you receive from the DOS. It is highly recommended that if your visa is revoked, you come to the ISSS Office to meet with an immigration advisor.

Do not drink and drive.



Beware of Scams

Scam calls to individuals are increasing. Scam callers may use intimidation and/or threats to try and get you to pay money or purchase gift cards to make a supposed immigration/tax issue go away.



If you receive a phone call from an individual claiming to work for a **U.S. government agency** (IRS, ICE, Dept. of Homeland Security, etc.), ask for the caller's name, badge ID, phone number and request that you call them back. All valid officials have to allow you to do this; if they insist you cannot call them back, hang up. Student's have also reported receiving calls from individuals who claim to represent their **home country's government**. Your home country's government will not call you and make threats or demand payment to make an immigration/tax issue go away. **Do not give away any personal information!**



A gift card is a card or token that can be exchanged for a specified cash value of goods or services from a particular business.

No Government agency will ever ask for payment in cash, gift cards, money order, PayPal, or other instant payment to make an immigration/tax issue go away!



If you receive a phone call like this, please contact the ISSS office at 607-777-2510, or if it is after hours, contact University Police at their non-emergency phone 607-777-2393.

Around Binghamton

The Greater Binghamton area includes a variety of grocery stores, places of worship, public school districts, hospitals and retailers. There are three major hospitals in the Binghamton area:

Binghamton General Hospital

10-42 Mitchell Ave.

Binghamton, NY 13903

607-762-2200

Guthrie Lourdes Hospital

169 Riverside Drive 33-57

Binghamton, NY 13905

607-798-5111

UHS Wilson Medical Center

Harrison Street

Johnson City, NY 13905

607-763-6000

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS There are several public school districts in the Greater Binghamton area. Binghamton University and the neighborhoods surrounding it typically fall into the Vestal Central School District. Some other districts are: Binghamton, Chenango Forks, Chenango Valley, Johnson City, Maine-Endwell, Union-Endicott and Susquehanna Valley. If you are evaluating a potential home, be sure you know the school district before renting or buying. Ask your realtor or rental agency.

GROCERY STORES There are several large grocery stores in the area as well as smaller, more specialized retailers. Some of the major grocery stores close to campus are Price Chopper, Target, Walmart, Wegmans and Weis. Many of the bus routes make routine stops to these stores.

Things to do in Binghamton

Looking for something to do off-campus? There's lots of options available in our area:

- [First Friday Art Walk](#): Enjoy music and dance performances, art openings, fine dining, cafes, and entertainment on the first Friday of each month from 6:00-9:00 pm in downtown Binghamton.
- [Binghamton Rumble Ponies](#): If you're a baseball fan, go cheer for the Binghamton baseball team at the NYSEG Stadium.
- [Binghamton Black Bears](#): If you're a hockey fan, you can see the Binghamton Black Bears at Visions Veterans Memorial Arena.
- [Nature Preserve](#): Located on Binghamton University's campus, the Nature Preserve encompasses 182 acres of land and multiple hiking trails.
- [Historic Carousels](#): Did you know that Binghamton is called the 'Carousel Capital of the World'? Take a ride back in time and visit the six historic carousels in the Binghamton area.
- [15 places you absolutely have to visit in Binghamton](#).
- The [Visit Binghamton](#) website has information on restaurants, upcoming events, and more.
- The [Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce](#) website has information about upcoming local events.