

Dear New J-1 Scholars,

We are excited to have you at William & Mary and VIMS!

We have compiled a checklist of important, and required (★), steps to help ease your transition to life at W&M and in the U.S. If you have any questions, contact ISSP at globe@wm.edu, or [visit our office](#) after you arrive in the U.S.

We look forward to welcoming you to campus!

Staff at the Office of International Students, Scholars & Programs (ISSP)

Before You Arrive

Department initiates DS-2019 Request in iStart ★

An invitation by an academic department or unit is required for J-1 sponsorship. Once an invitation has been extended, **the department hosting the J-1 Scholar** must [initiate the DS-2019 process](#) through iStart. Once the required forms are submitted by your department, you will have access to completed the remaining forms in the DS-2019 request. After issuing the DS-2019, ISSP will email the document, along with instructions on how to apply for a J-1 visa.

Pay the SEVIS Fee and Apply for a J-1 Visa ★

To enter the U.S. in J-1 status, you will need to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Before applying for your visa, you must [pay a SEVIS fee](#); you will bring the receipt to your scheduled visa interview. For more information, visit ISSP's [Applying for a J-1 Visa](#) webpage.

Secure Off-Campus Housing

There are many off-campus housing resources and opportunities to explore. Some scholars arrange housing before arriving, while others make [short-term housing arrangements](#) first and then look for rentals after arriving. Visit ISSP's [Off-Campus Housing](#) webpage for additional resources.

J-1/J-2 Health Insurance Requirement ★

Federal law requires all persons in J-1 and J-2 status to maintain adequate health insurance during their stay in the U.S. Regardless of immigration status, due to the high cost of medical care in the U.S., it is important to have health insurance coverage for oneself and any dependents. The minimum coverage requirements for persons in J-1/J-2 status are: \$100,000 for each accident or illness, \$50,000 for medical evacuation, \$25,000 for repatriation, and a per incident deductible of \$500 or less. For more information, visit ISSP's [Health Insurance Information](#) webpage.

Schedule Airport Transportation

Explore our [Arrival Transportation](#) webpage to decide which airport to fly into and transportation options to Williamsburg and Gloucester.

After You Arrive

Complete Scholar Immigration Check-in with ISSP ★

After you arrive in the U.S., you must complete your scholar immigration check-in:

- 1) Login to [iStart](#) using your W&M login.
- 2) Select **J-1 Scholar Services** from the left menu.
- 3) Select **J-1 Scholar Immigration Check-In** and complete the **Check-In** and **Immigration Responsibilities** forms.

Connect to the W&M Network

Wireless internet is free for you to use when you are on-campus.

- Use your W&M ID and password to [authenticate your computer](#). Select **eduroam** setup.
- If you would like to use a computer on campus, there are several [computer labs](#) open to the W&M community
- Problems? Contact the **Technology Support Center** at 757-221-4357 or support@wm.edu.

Attend International Scholar Orientation ★

[International Scholar Orientation](#) is **required** part of your immigration check-in, and is designed to make your transition to campus as smooth and successful as possible. [Sign-up online](#) to attend a Scholar Orientation session at the Reves Center. *Spouses and family members are welcome to attend!*

Get your Tribe Card (W&M ID card) ★

The [Tribe Card](#) is W&M's official form of identification. It can be used to ride local buses, access W&M libraries and recreational facilities, and much more. To start the process, [activate your W&M username](#) and [get access to the GET Mobile app](#). You will receive a confirmation email when your ID is ready for pick-up. The cost for an ID card is \$23.

Apply for a Social Security Numbers (SSN)

Scholars who plan to work or be paid in the U.S. will need a Social Security Number (SSN) for payment and tax purposes. If you plan to return to the U.S. in the future, you may want to consider getting a Social Security Number (SSN) while you are in J-1 status. Your immigration must be registered by ISSP before applying for an SSN; you can do this by completing your Scholar Immigration Check-In after arriving in the U.S. Visit ISSP's [Social Security Numbers \(SSN\)](#) webpage for more information on the SSN application process for J-1 Scholars.

Open a U.S. Bank Account

To [open a bank account](#), you will need to apply in-person and provide the following items: a valid passport, your DS-2019, your [I-94 information](#), and your local address. Most banks are open Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm. Some banks are open on Saturdays.

Cell Phone Service and SIM cards

Take your time to do some research to decide if you need to purchase a new cell phone, select a phone service contract plan, or purchase a SIM card. For more information, visit ISSP's [Cell Phone/SIM cards](#) webpage.

Get a Driver's License

If you plan to do a lot of driving in Virginia, or to other U.S. States, it is advisable to apply for a VA Driver's License. If you are employed in the U.S. and/or have a registered car in VA, you must obtain a Virginia license within **60 days**. For more information about Driver's Licenses, please visit ISSP's [Getting a U.S. Driver's License](#) webpage.