

Obtaining Visa Document

- Your department administrator will contact you** to obtain documentation needed to submit the DS-2019 request to ISSS.
- Your department will submit the DS-2019 request packet to ISSS:** Once ISSS reviews a complete packet, the assigned ISSS advisor will process the DS-2019 within 5-7 business days.
- You will receive an email from iss@iss.vanderbilt.edu** with information on how to access the [ISSS portal](#), update your profile, and obtain your electronically signed DS-2019. As a reminder, make sure to log in using your personal email address and temporary password that is sent to you. Do not use a **VUNet** Login.
- Print, sign, and keep** both the original and an electronic copy of the DS-2019. **Bring this with you when you travel.**

Pre-Arrival Communications

- You will receive emails** from ISSS with more information on next steps, including access to a [Homebase Platform](#) for information about J-1/J-2 guidelines and tips on getting settled. Make sure to complete this pre-arrival platform, as you will need the certificate of completion for your SEVIS check-in after arrival. Follow the steps below to create a Homebase account:
 - Go to: english3.com/homebase/register
 - institution: Vanderbilt University
 - Program Code: 152-11-14
- Review your Form DS-2019:** Make sure your personal and program information are accurate on the DS-2019. J-1 Exchange Visitors are eligible to arrive 30 days before the program start date listed on the DS-2019. Please notify ISSS and your program if you are not able to arrive before the start date.
- Passport:** Your passport, and those of any J-2 dependents, must be valid at least 6 months into the future after your start date.
- [SEVIS I-901 Fee](#):** Pay the SEVIS Fee at least 3 days before your visa interview.
- Schedule U.S. Visa appointment:** Schedule an appointment with [U.S. Consulate or Embassy](#) to obtain visa and review their guidelines for requirements. Review your visa stamp in the passport once you receive it.
- Travel Arrangements:** Make sure to schedule travel arrangements after you obtain your U.S. visa. If you haven't secured housing, make sure to read the detailed information in the pre-arrival platform for tips.
- Health Insurance:** Review health insurance requirements to maintain your J-1 status. Also, recommend bringing copies of your medical records like x-rays, and prescriptions if you need them for the future use.
- Financial Documents:** Carry your financial supporting documents that you have provided to request your DS-2019 along with VU invitation letter. You might be asked for these at the U.S. Port of entry upon arrival.

Post-Doctoral Scholars: This is Vanderbilt University policy, not ISSS, so we recommend that you follow up with the postdoc office to complete the process.

Pre-Arrival:

- Sign Postdoc Appointment Letter
- Initiate and clear a criminal background check with Castle Branch.
- Verify education (if necessary)

SEVIS Check-In and Orientation with ISSS

- Complete SEVIS check-in with ISSS** – After arrival to the U.S., you are required to submit a SEVIS check-in through the ISSS portal, which includes reporting your new U.S. address and uploading immigration documents. If you have any questions about this process, contact your assigned ISSS advisor. You need to complete this within 14 days of your J-1 start date. The documents needed to complete the check-in process: [ISSS Portal](#).
 - DS-2019 – Signed by you and ISSS advisor
 - DS-7002 – Signed by you, your supervisor and ISSS Advisor (if you are a student intern)
 - Copy of Passport
 - Copy of Visa Stamp – in the passport
 - I-94 document – Retrieve online at www.cbp.gov/I94
 - [Health Insurance Pledge](#)
 - Copies of dependent immigration documents if any applicable
- Register for J-1 Scholar Orientation with ISSS - As a new international J-1 scholar, it is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities, as well as help you adjust to life in Nashville. Please take a moment to [sign up](#) for an orientation date if you have not already done so.

Connecting with your Program/Academic Department

- Visit your academic department to let them know you have arrived on campus and make sure you have fulfilled the requirements.
- Set up [VUNET ID](#) if you are eligible
- Set up [VU email address](#) if you are eligible
- HR orientation - Work with department to schedule and attend HR orientation to learn about employee benefits and requirements if you are hired as a VU staff or faculty. This is different from ISSS Scholar orientation.

Human Resources (Complete the following tasks if you are paid by VU)

- Complete an I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) – This is a federal requirement which must be done before your hire will be complete. More information about this can be found here: <https://hr.vanderbilt.edu/i9/>. You should have received an email from i9@vanderbilt.edu with instructions for this. Contact your department administrator if you need help with this. You can use your temporary place holder number in the place of your SSN number and replace with SSN once you receive it.

- Complete your Glacier profile (tax information) and submit the required forms. You should have received an email with information regarding the Glacier Nonresident Alien Tax Compliance System, which is the online tax compliance software used by Vanderbilt to determine the tax status of international individuals. This email comes from support@online-tax.net, and contains your Glacier access code. Contact the International Tax Office at ito@vanderbilt.edu if you have specific questions about this.

- Health Insurance:** In accordance with US government regulations, the J-1 Exchange Visitor must have sufficient health insurance for him/herself and all dependents. The insurance must meet the mandatory State Department requirements. Purchase Mandatory Health Insurance to maintain J-1 status. If you are eligible for staff health insurance, this requirement can be fulfilled by enrolling in the [Vanderbilt Aetna International Plan](#). Please contact ISSS if you do not find Aetna International Health Insurance as an option on your benefits page.

- Social Security Number:** You will be eligible to apply for SSN if you will be paid by VU or any other US organization. It is recommended to apply SSN after 10 working days upon your arrival and after you have completed the SEVIS check-in with ISSS. For more information on how to apply for the SSN visit this [link](#). You need to provide copy of SSN to your department, Human Resources online with after you receive SSN.

Additional Details

- Vanderbilt Staff ID:** Visit the VU Card office to have your picture taken and receive your VU Staff or Visitor card. Bring your passport, visa, i-94 document, DS-2019 and an appointment letter – Located in [Student Sarratt Center](#)

- Campus Transportation:** Familiarize yourself with transportation and parking on campus: Check with the office of [Parking Services and VandyRide](#)

- Public Transportation:** All faculty, staff and students can ride the buses and train for free with their Vanderbilt ID at any time, not only when commuting to and from the Vanderbilt campus, but throughout Nashville. Link to public transportation - [WeGo](#)

Post-Doctoral Scholars only - After Your Arrival

- Attend Orientation with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (Postdocs do not attend HR Orientation); This takes place on the second Wednesday of the month from 9:00 - 10:30, virtually. Postdoc administrators sign the postdoc up when they have cleared all requirements.

- Complete the initial Individual Development Plan (IDP) within three months (VUSE Submits this with the Postdoc Redcap Application)

- Complete Initial Compliance Training (Varies depending on area of research)

- Complete Conflict of Interest Disclosure