



## Pre-Arrival Newsletter for New International Scholars in J-1 Status

Hello! Bonjour! Nín hão! Hola! Guten Tag!

## WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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We regret that we cannot return telephone calls from overseas.

This newsletter will answer many of the questions you may have about life at the University of New Hampshire. Please contact the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) if you have any additional questions regarding this material.

### Where in the World is UNH?

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) is located in Durham, New Hampshire, which is nestled close to Great Bay, a scenic saltwater estuary. Although in a rural setting (Durham is a town of about 10,000 residents), it is ideally situated. Boston, a major travel terminus and cultural center, is only 60 miles to the south and easily reached by car or public transportation on an excellent highway; the Atlantic Ocean and public beaches are 12 miles to the east; outstanding skiing and hiking opportunities are available in the White Mountains, 60 miles north; and Montreal, Canada, and New York City are just 5-hour drives away.

### ABOUT THE OISS

The Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) promotes international education at UNH by facilitating the enrollment and employment of foreign nationals and by providing them with essential support services. It is the responsibility of the OISS to ensure university compliance with U.S. immigration regulations and to assist international students, exchange scholars, faculty, and staff in the achievement of their academic and professional goals.

The OISS staff will assist you in your dealings with various federal agencies charged with enforcing immigration laws and regulations. It will be your responsibility, however, to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to your status.

### Getting to UNH

#### By Air

We suggest that you fly into Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, and arrange for ground transportation to Durham, New Hampshire. The University of New Hampshire is not able to offer pick-up service at the airport.

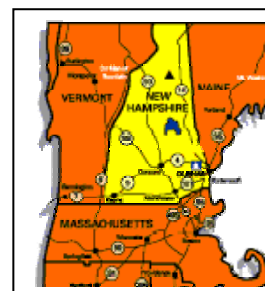
During the academic year (late August through late May), the **C&J Trailways Bus** offers regular service to Durham. At other times, C&J stops in Portsmouth, NH, and Dover, NH, both of which are about ten miles from Durham. There is taxicab service available from either Portsmouth or Dover to Durham. To see the C&J bus schedule, visit their website: [www.cjtrailways.com](http://www.cjtrailways.com)

**Mermaid Transportation** will pick you up at the airport and deliver you to your residence hall. You must make reservations and pay in advance. If you identify yourself as a UNH student, you qualify for a reduced fare. You may call 1-800-696-2463 or visit their website to make reservations. [www.gomermaid.com](http://www.gomermaid.com)

#### By Train

Amtrak provides train service from Boston, MA to Durham. To see the train schedule, make reservations, and purchase tickets, go to the website: [www.thedowneaster.com](http://www.thedowneaster.com)

**By Car:** Durham is just off U.S. Route 4, a major east-west highway linking Portsmouth and Concord, New Hampshire. Whether you approach Durham from east or west on Route 4, take the exit at Route 155A and turn toward Durham. Follow 155A a short distance to the UNH campus.



## At the U.S. Consulate: Tips for a successful interview

Many visa applicants are denied for reasons which can be avoided, if a little advance knowledge and common sense is applied. These tips may make your interview a successful one!

At all times, be friendly and courteous to the consular officer. Answer all questions truthfully, but do not volunteer information. Answer only those questions which are asked.

The job of a U.S. Consular Officer is to serve as the "gatekeeper." It is his/her job to make sure that individuals are thoroughly screened before they are allowed to enter the U.S.

Understand that you will be viewed as an intending immigrant – it is your responsibility to submit satisfactory evidence that you intend to return to your home country upon completion of your J-1 program.

Understand that the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is for educational and cultural exchange. It is temporary, non-immigrant status. If you give any statement that you would like to live in the U.S. on a more permanent basis will likely result in a denial of your visa application.

Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. Practice English conversation – preferably with a native speaker. On your J-1 application form, you indicated that you had adequate English skills to achieve your objectives in the U.S. The Consular Officer will consider your ability to communicate effectively in English as part of your visa application.

Keep in mind that Consular Officers usually see more than 100 visa applicants a day. They are under tremendous pressure to conduct quick and efficient interviews and make decisions based heavily on the impressions they form during the first few minutes of your interview. Therefore, how you present yourself and what you say are critical.

Remember that Consular Officers are well acquainted with the culture and customs of your country. Do not attempt to supply misleading information!

Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point. Listen carefully and make sure you understand each question. If you are not sure you understand, politely ask the officer to repeat the question. Be truthful!

Organize your supporting documentation so that it can be logically presented – without hesitation or fumbling through a briefcase. Do not bring papers with you to the interview unless you are prepared to present them. The Consular Officer may ask to see other papers you may be carrying with you; if you refuse, your visa will likely be denied.

Do not bring family members (other than those who will accompany you to the U.S.) with you to your interview.

Maintain a positive attitude. DO NOT argue with the consular officer for any reason! If you are denied a visa, politely ask the consular officer the reason for the denial and for a list of information and/or documents s/he would suggest you bring in order to be reconsidered. Try to get this information in writing and ask the Consular Officer's name.

Be prepared to discuss, in positive terms, what you expect to get out of your exchange program. Be sure to say (even if not asked) how you will utilize your experience upon return to your home country. If you have a job in your home country, be sure to tell the officer this. If possible, obtain a letter from your employer indicating that you have been granted a leave of absence to pursue additional experience/training and that you are expected to return.

If your spouse is applying for the accompanying dependent visa, be aware that there are employment restrictions. Be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his/her time in the U.S. WITHOUT WORKING.

Be prepared to discuss any professional interests, associations, memberships and social or family ties you intend to maintain with your home country. Be sure to indicate that you have a permanent place to live and that you have no intention of abandoning your place of residence.

If you are a male applicant and your country imposes mandatory military service, be prepared to state that you intend to fully comply with your country's laws concerning military service.

If you are married, especially with children, and your spouse is remaining in your own country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be problematic if you are the primary breadwinner in your family. If the consular officer suspects that your family will need you to remit money from the U.S. in order to support them, it may be cause for visa denial.

### What the Consular Officer will be looking for:

Proof of a Permanent residence abroad (i.e. in your home country) that you have no intention of abandoning

Strong economic, social, and family ties to your home country

The usefulness of your experience in the U.S. to your home country

Adequate financial resources to support yourself and any accompanying family members

Adequate knowledge of English

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For more information about applying for your visa, visit the State Department's web site at: [www.unitedstatesvisas.gov](http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov)

## Applying for your visa

The enclosed DS-2019 "Certificate of Eligibility" is a document which allows you to apply for your J-1 visa. Read the instructions on the back of the form carefully, sign where indicated, and present it along with your valid passport, appropriate financial documentation (job offer letter, funding letter from home government or institution, and/or a personal bank statement) to the Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate serving your place of residence. Make sure that all supporting financial documents are originals (or properly notarized copies) on official letterhead. Show all funds in US dollars.

U.S. Embassies and Consulates vary in their application procedures. Most now require personal interviews. Some consulates, however, will permit you to apply for your visa by mail under limited circumstances. In all cases, you will be required to complete Form DS-156, Application for a non-immigrant visa, which is available from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You will also be required to pay a \$100 visa application fee and, perhaps, a visa issuance fee which depends on your country of citizenship. We suggest you go to [www.state.gov/www/regions\\_missions.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions_missions.html) to find the Consulate/Embassy where you will apply for your visa, and familiarize yourself with its J-1 application procedures.

**CANADIAN CITIZENS:** Although you are exempt from passport and visa requirements, **you must submit your DS-2019 and supporting documents** to the immigration officer at the U.S. border or other point of entry. **You must also obtain Form I-94 from the immigration officer to show that you have entered the U.S. legally and in the proper J-1 status**

### ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

Unless you are a citizen of Canada, you cannot enter the U.S. as an Exchange Visitor unless you have a J-1 visa in your passport.

You can enter the U.S. no more than thirty days before the beginning date of your program as shown on your DS-2019, and you can remain in the U.S. no more than thirty days after the ending date. You can not work during these "grace periods"

When you arrive in the U.S. you will actually have to apply for admission. You will go through U.S. Customs and Immigration. An immigration officer will inspect your documents. Present your passport, visa, and Form DS-2019 to the immigration officer.

If your documents are in order, you will be "admitted to the U.S." in J-1 status. The immigration officer will stamp your DS-2019 and

passport with the date and place of admission. You will also be given Form I-94, Record of Arrival and Departure. Form I-94 is a record of legal entry into the U.S. and you will be required to surrender it when you depart from the U.S. (except for trips to Canada and Mexico). Form I-94 will indicate the date and place of admission and your status. It will include the notation "D/S" which stands for "Duration of Status." If your DS-2019 is not stamped or you have been given Form I-94 with showing a status other than J-1, politely ask the immigration officer to mark them correctly. If you notice an error too late, advise the OISS immediately after arrival on campus.

It is very important that you keep your DS-2019 and I-94 with your passport and visa at all times. These documents provide evidence that you have a legal right to be in the U.S. If you lose Form I-94, you might have to apply to Immigration for a replacement – which entails a significant fee.

### ARRIVAL AT UNH

Please advise the OISS of your arrival date as soon as your travel plans are complete.

### Reporting to the OISS

As prescribed by federal law, the OISS is required to maintain records on all international scholars at UNH. After you arrive in campus please contact our office ([oiss@unh.edu](mailto:oiss@unh.edu) or 862-1288) to set up an appointment for check-in and orientation. During orientation we will make copies of your passport and immigration documents, verify health insurance coverage, and obtain some personal and emergency contact information from you. You will also be provided with a packet of materials designed to assist you to adapt to your new home in New Hampshire.

### HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

As explained in your application packet, federal law required that all J-1 Exchange Visitors obtain medical insurance for themselves and any family members who are accompanying them to the U.S. This insurance must meet all federal requirements and include provisions for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Failure to obtain and maintain medical insurance for the duration of your J-1 program is cause for immediate dismissal from the program. It is necessary to make your health insurance arrangements before you come to the U.S.



#### SEVIS FEE:

The SEVIS fee must be paid prior to applying for the visa (this fee is in addition to other visa application fees). Visit the web-site for the most current information:

[www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm)

Click on the I-901 Fee Information



## HOUSING

The University has two on-campus housing facilities which may be able to accommodate you. The faculty member of the department which invited you to UNH may be able to assist you in making on-campus housing arrangements. Unfortunately, the OISS is not able to locate housing for you.

If you are not married, or if your family will not be joining you at UNH, you may be able to reserve a single room in Babcock Hall, the graduate dormitory. Rooms are small but private, with shared bathrooms. A bed, desk and bureau are provided, but you must furnish linens and other personal items. All rooms are wired for TV, telephone, and internet access. For information about living in Babcock Hall, visit [www.unh.edu/housing](http://www.unh.edu/housing).

University housing for families is very limited. The Forest Park Apartment Complex has on-campus rental apartments of various sizes and prices. However, there is always a waiting list. If you will be bringing your family to UNH, you should contact Forest Park well in advance to see if they will have an apartment available for you. Contact Forest Park through Department of Housing at [www.unh.edu/housing](http://www.unh.edu/housing), e-mail [housing@unh.edu](mailto:housing@unh.edu), or call (603) 862-2742.

Off-campus housing is available in Durham and the surrounding towns. The seacoast is currently experiencing a tight housing market so it is best to plan ahead. To take a look at a list of apartment for rent in the area, point your browser to [www.unh.edu/mub/housinglist](http://www.unh.edu/mub/housinglist), or call (603) 862-3612. Other rentals are available through local newspapers and real estate agents. To look at some of the local newspaper advertisements, check the Fosters Daily Democrat at [www.fosters.com](http://www.fosters.com)

### Temporary Housing

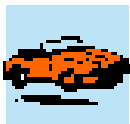
Temporary housing is available in Durham and surrounding towns. Temporary housing ranges from sleek and modern motels to small inns and bed & breakfasts. The following are within walking distance of UNH. Please note that this information is provided for your convenience and does not represent a recommendation on the part of the OISS. A more complete listing of temporary accommodations in the seacoast area is available on our web site under "miscellaneous."

The Holiday Inn Express  
Durham, NH 03824  
(603) 868-1234  
[www.hiexpress.com](http://www.hiexpress.com)

The New England Center  
Strafford Avenue  
Durham, NH 03824  
(603) 862-2801  
[www.necc.unh.edu](http://www.necc.unh.edu)

The Pines at Coe's Corner  
47 Dover Road  
Durham, NH 03824  
(603) 868-3361  
[www.pinesguesthouse.com](http://www.pinesguesthouse.com)

## DRIVING AN AUTOMOBILE



It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle in the United States without a valid driver's license. Unless you are coming to the U.S. as a tourist, you will be required to obtain a New Hampshire Driver's License within sixty days of arrival. If you drive without the proper license, you will be subject to serious fines and penalties, which may include arrest.

The state of New Hampshire has special requirements for individuals in non-immigrant visa classifications.

If you have a license to operate a motor vehicle in your home country, you will be asked to submit:

- 1) a copy of your driving record from the appropriate authority in your country. If it is not possible for you to obtain an actual driving record, you may provide a notarized document from an appropriate authority in your country stating that your license is not currently under revocation or suspension.

- 2) A copy of your current license. If you have never held a driver's license in your home country, you must submit evidence of this fact.

The New Hampshire Division of Motor Vehicles will accept evidence in the form of a notarized document from the authority in your country responsible for driver licensing, or another local authority of your home country college/university or employer testifying that you have never held a driver's license in your country.

If you do not have proof of previous vehicle operation, a valid home country driver license or valid U.S. driver license, you will be required to complete an approved driver education course.

These requirements are mandatory and you will not be issued a NH driver's license unless you comply with them. We strongly recommend that you secure all the necessary documentation before you leave home. Bring the required evidence even if you don't think you want to drive while you are here – just in case you change your mind!

Additional instructions and information are available at the OISS or on our website.



## BRINGING YOUR FAMILY

If you are thinking about bringing your spouse and/or children with you, there are a few things you should consider.

It is often more difficult to obtain a visa if you are bringing your family members with you. This is because it will be harder to convince the consular officer of your intention to return to your home country if your family is in the United States.

In addition, the Consular Officer must verify that you have sufficient financial resources to support your family in the U.S. In general, the consulates consult the latest U.S. poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services. They will expect you to exceed those guidelines by at least 25% in order to issue visas to family members.

For 2007, those figures are:

Family size:

One	\$12,763	Five	30,163
Two	17,113	Six	34,513
Three	21,463	Seven	38,863
Four	25,813	Eight	43,213

Add \$4,350 for each additional family member.

If you cannot provide evidence of at least that amount of funding, it is likely that visas for your family members will be denied.

### Work Authorization for Your Spouse

J-2 dependents are eligible to apply for employment authorization from Immigration. The income derived from the spouse's employment, however, **may not** be used to support the J-1 scholar and/or the family. Your spouse will be required to submit a monthly budget and proof of adequate financial resources with the application for employment authorization. **Do not** plan to depend upon your spouse's income to support your family while you are in the U.S.

### Health Insurance for Dependents

As indicated previously, Federal regulations require that all J-1 scholars purchase and maintain medical insurance for themselves and all accompanying family members. Medical insurance in the U.S. is expensive and can cost \$300 per month or more for a family plan. **Do not plan to bring your family if you cannot afford the cost of medical insurance.**

### School Age Children

Public education is available free of charge to children from first through twelfth grades (ages 6 to 18). All children are required to attend some type of schooling until age 16.

Children generally attend public school in the district in which they live. You may choose to enroll your children in private school. However, you will have to pay tuition for your children to attend any school other than a public one.

If you will be bringing your school age children with you, make sure that all their immunizations are up to date and documented. For each child you will need to bring with you an official birth certificate, school records, complete medical history and immunization record – which should show:

- 4 doses of DTAP or DPT (diphtheria), with one dose after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 4 doses of IPT/OPV (oral polio vaccine) OR 3 doses of TOPV/eIPV with one dose after the 4<sup>th</sup> OR 4 valid doses administered at any time
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B for children born on or after January 12, 1993
- 1 dose of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) given on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, and a second dose required before entry into school (but no less than one month after the first dose)
- 1 dose of varicella vaccine for all new students entering kindergarten or first grade
- A mantoux test for TB (tuberculosis) is also recommended if you are coming from a country with a high incidence of this disease.

You will not be able to enroll your children in school without these documents.

There are several quality schools and daycare centers in Durham and the surrounding area. The majority of daycare centers, however, has a waiting list and can be expensive, so don't expect to be able to enroll your child right away. The age range for each childcare center differs, but care is available for babies as young as 6 weeks to toddlers not yet ready for kindergarten (which they typically enter at age 5).

### PAYING TAXES IN THE U.S.

Please be aware that you may be required to pay income taxes on any money you earn from within the U.S. **UNLESS** a tax treaty between the U.S. and your country exempts you from payment of these taxes.

J-1 visa holders are not required to pay into the U.S. social security system during the first two calendar years (or parts thereof) after arrival. However, they are required to pay federal income taxes. Dependents of J-1 visa holders (J-2) who obtain employment authorization are also required to pay both federal income taxes and social security taxes.

You will be given more information about taxes after you arrive in the U.S. If you would like to find out more about taxes, you can do so online at: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Office of International Students and Scholars

John Deziel (603) 862-0086  
International Scholar & Student Advisor  
[John.Deziel@unh.edu](mailto:John.Deziel@unh.edu)

Main office (603) 862-1288  
Fax: 862-0844  
[oiss@unh.edu](mailto:oiss@unh.edu)  
[www.unh.edu/oiss](http://www.unh.edu/oiss)

Dept. of Housing (603) 862-2120  
Fax: 862-3406  
[housing@unh.edu](mailto:housing@unh.edu)  
[www.unh.edu/housing](http://www.unh.edu/housing)

Forest Park Apartments (603) 862-2742

Off-Campus Housing (603) 862-3612  
[www.unh.edu/mub/housinglist](http://www.unh.edu/mub/housinglist)

UNH Health Services (603) 862-1530  
[healthservices@unh.edu](mailto:healthservices@unh.edu)  
[www.unh.edu/health-services](http://www.unh.edu/health-services)

University Police (603) 862-1427

Traffic Services/Parking (603) 862-1010  
[www.unh.edu/transportation](http://www.unh.edu/transportation)

University Operator (603) 862-1234

Wildcat Transit (UNH Bus System)  
[www.unh.edu/parking/wtransit.html](http://www.unh.edu/parking/wtransit.html)

C&J Trailways Bus Line  
[www.cjtrailways.com](http://www.cjtrailways.com)  
Tel. (603) 742-5111

Flight Line, Inc.  
[www.flightlineinc.com](http://www.flightlineinc.com)

Mermaid Transportation  
[www.gomermaid.com](http://www.gomermaid.com)  
Tel. 1-800-696-2463 (from within the U.S. only)

US State Department – information on  
Applying for a US Visa and more:  
[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)  
[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

U.S. Embassies and Consulates online  
[www.state.gov/www/regions\\_missions.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions_missions.html)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
[www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis)  
[www.immigration.gov](http://www.immigration.gov)

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program  
[www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges](http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges)

Have a Safe Trip!  
Hope to See You Soon!