

I. Obtaining a J-1 Visa

(We have prepared a set of [pre-arrival webinars](#) for you to review)

Exchange Visitors accepted to TAMUK will receive a DS-2019 from the office of International Student and Scholar Services. After receiving this document and paying your SEVIS fee, you can schedule an appointment with a U.S. Consulate or Embassy to apply for a J-1 Visa.

Documents you will need for your visa interview:

- DS-2019 “Certificate of Eligibility”
- Valid Passport
- Letter of invitation from Texas A&M University-Kingsville
- SEVIS I-901 fee conformation (For more information, visit [I-901 SEVIS Fee](#))
- [U.S. Visa Reciprocity \(visa issuance fee\)](#) (depending on countries/areas of authority)

Because each Embassy or Consulate may have different requirements, we encourage you to contact or visit the [website](#) of the location you plan to take your visa interview.

Dependents:

J-1 Exchange Visitors wanting their spouses and/or dependents to accompany them should contact ISSS via email for J-2 DS-2019 issuance requirements.

After receiving the DS-2019, the J-2 applicant should bring the following items with them to their visa interview.

- DS-2019 (Original issued for dependent(s))
- Valid Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Marriage License
- Copy of student’s DS-2019
- Original financial support documents and sponsor’s letter, if not self-supported

II. Traveling to the U.S.

Entering the US, you will need to present your passport, containing your J-1 visa, and your TAMUK DS-2019 to the immigration officer at the airport. Keep these items on your person; do not pack them away in your luggage. The immigration officer will stamp your DS-2019 and give it back to you.

We also recommend that you allow yourself extra time between connecting flights in the US, as going through Customs can be a lengthy process.

30 days prior to program start date and grace period

Keep in mind, as a J-1 visa holder; you can enter the U.S. **no earlier** than 30 days before the start date printed on your DS-2019. If you arrive to campus early, keep in mind that you are **NOT** authorized to work until the start date listed on your DS-2019. Following completion of your J scholar program, you have a **30-day grace period** to remain in the U.S. as a tourist and finalize departure plans. During this grace period, J scholars are **NOT** permitted to work. This grace period simply provides you the opportunity to prepare for departing or traveling within the U.S., or apply to change to another status. Once you exit the U.S., you will not be permitted to re-enter in J status if your program has finished. You can re-enter the U.S. in another status, such as a tourist, if you choose.

Airport

The nearest international airport to Kingsville is The Corpus Christi International Airport (CCIA). It is roughly 40 miles from the university, so travel arrangements will need to be made to from the airport to Kingsville. Airport Code: CRP

Shuttle

A shuttle service from the airport to Kingsville is available but reservations must be made in advance as same day pick up is not guaranteed. For more information, please visit [Blue and Gold Express](#)

[Airport/Greyhound Reservation:](#) The University has contracted with Kleberg County Human Services to provide limited shuttle service to and from the Corpus Christi Airport.

Taxi

Taxis from Corpus Christi International Airport to TAMUK will cost approximately \$80 (Estimate for an additional 15% for tipping driver).

Note: Currently, the university is not providing airport pick-up due to the pandemic. However, students may request taxi service from Green Cabs Taxi Service by calling 361-855-5555, or search for alternative transportation services online, such as Uber or Lyft. For more information, please contact our Dean of Students Office at 361-593-3606.

III. In Kingsville

Housing

Most one bed room apartments for rent will cost \$400-\$700 a month (add an additional \$100-\$150 a month for utilities). We have prepared a list of [off-campus housing options](#) for you.

Electricity

Electricity providers and rates can be compared at <https://www.choosetexaspower.org>

Banking

There are several banking options in Kingsville to choose from. We have listed a few below; however, it is advisable for you, as an international, to go in person.

<https://www.klebergbank.com/>

<https://www.wellsfargo.com/>

<https://www.abc.com/enus/Pages/default.aspx>

Cellular Services

Kingsville has a few options for Cellular Phone services; however, we advise that you compare rates with different service providers. Below are links to some of the major service providers you can find in Kingsville. [AT&T](#), [Boost Mobile](#), [Cricket Wireless](#), [Metro/PCS](#)

ZipCars

Texas A&M University-Kingsville has an agreement with Zipcar, the world's leading car sharing network, to offer a Zipcar car-sharing program on campus. The transportation option is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for students, faculty, and staff ages 18 and older, as well as members of the local community ages 21 and over. <https://www.zipcar.com/universities/texas-a-and-m-kingsville>

IV. Information to Consider

On-Campus Employment Basics

Federal regulations allow J-1 students in good standing and legal status with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to work on the premises of the school that issued their currently valid DS-2019 while they are attending that school and maintaining their J-1 status.

The employment must be performed on the school's premises (with the exception of those who are authorized to do "on-campus research at an off-campus location"). Exchange Visitors must be on the TAMUK payroll, with the exception of jobs providing services to students, such as the Bookstore or Food Services. This may not include employment on the school's premises for a commercial firm that is not providing on-campus services for students, for example a construction site for a new building.

On-campus employment is not permitted after completion of an academic program (graduation or letter of completion), unless the student has valid Practical Training authorization or has been issued a Form DS-2019 to begin a new academic program and is registered for the next semester at the same school.

Exchange Visitors may not be compensated for work done while in illegal immigration status or while a reinstatement application (to regain legal status) is pending approval by the DHS.

All students must maintain a full course of study and have valid documentation in order to work on- campus.

You will need to obtain a "Verification of In-Status Work Authorization" letter from Office of International Student & Scholar Services (OISSS).



Two-year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

Some Exchange Visitors, depending on their program, will be subject to the Two-year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement. This provision requires EVs to return to their home country for two years upon the completion of their program. EVs subject to this are, as stated by the Department of State, as follows:

- Government funded exchange program** - *The program in which the exchange visitor was participating was financed in whole or in part directly or indirectly by the U.S. government or the government of the exchange visitor's nationality or last residence;*
- Graduate medical education or training** - *The exchange visitor entered the United States to receive graduate medical education or training;*
- Specialized knowledge or skill: Skills List** - *The exchange visitor is a national or permanent resident of a country which has deemed the field of specialized knowledge or skill necessary to the development of the country.*

You can read more about the **Physical Presence Requirement** at the [Department of State website](#).