ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Created by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1890, the University of Oklahoma (OU) is a doctoral degree-granting research university serving the educational, cultural, economic, and health-care needs of the state, region and nation. The Norman campus serves as home to all of the university’s academic programs except health-related fields. The OU Health Sciences Center, which is located in Oklahoma City, is one of only four comprehensive academic health centers in the nation with seven professional colleges. Both the Norman and Health Sciences Center colleges offer programs at the Schusterman Center, the site of OU-Tulsa.

The University of Oklahoma attracts students across the nation and from more than one hundred countries around the world. The Health Sciences Center (HSC) is a leading educational, research, and patient care campus with internationally prominent faculty and state-of-the-art facilities and technology. The HSC serves approximately 4,000 students in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. In 2011, The University of Oklahoma received the Carnegie Foundation’s highest tier of research activity classification, the first time a public institution in Oklahoma has been honored with this recognition. Through recruitment, the OUHSC continues to grow its ranks of top researchers.
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INTERNATIONAL FACULTY & STAFF SERVICES

On behalf of the University of Oklahoma, International Faculty & Staff Services (IFSS) welcomes you to the Health Sciences Center. We are pleased that you have chosen OU to experience the rewards of participating in the educational and cultural exchanges of our Research Scholar Program. The IFSS office is located within the office of Human Resources (HR) and assists administrative departments with bringing international faculty, staff, and scholars to the University of Oklahoma. Our office serves the OU Norman, OUHSC, and OU Tulsa campuses.

All requests for the employment of foreign nationals at the University of Oklahoma must be processed through IFSS. Only the IFSS staff is authorized to sign the legal documents and forms required to sponsor international scholars and staff. Please schedule an appointment before visiting the IFSS office to speak with an IFSS Specialist. This allows us to prepare for your visit and dedicate time to answering all of your questions. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm. Walk-ins are welcome; however, we ask that you limit your visit to 15 minutes. If your case requires more in depth discussion, we will be happy to schedule an appointment.

**While every reasonable effort is made to provide you with guidance regarding job-related immigration concerns, help cannot be provided for personal or family immigration matters and may be further limited by staff resources and institutional priorities. You can visit our website for more information at http://hr.ou.edu/immigration.

OU Norman, Health Sciences Center & Tulsa Campus
Responsible Officer (RO)
Nima Zecavati, JD, MPH, RO
Nima-Zecavati@ouhsc.edu

OU Health Sciences Center & Tulsa Campuses
Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)
Serena Prammanasudh
1100 N. Lindsay, Service Center Building # 119 Oklahoma City, OK 73104
Phone: (405) 271-2189 Fax: (405) 271-3925
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Email: adam.r.telfer@ou.edu
J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program was created by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended, the purpose of which is to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.” The program is administered by the Department of State with the aim of facilitating the cultural and education exchanges to further foreign policy objectives of the United States. The U.S. Department of State designates U.S. organizations such as academic institutions to administer exchange visitor programs. These organizations are known as sponsors. An exchange visitor is a foreign national selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program and who is seeking to enter or has entered the U.S. temporarily on a J-1 visa.

Participants are expected to return home and maintain a physical residence abroad during the entire duration of their program. It is hoped that upon return to their home countries, exchange visitors will share their experiences and knowledge. The J-1 visa is a nonimmigrant visa, and participants are granted entry into the U.S. with the understanding that they will complete the objectives of a single educational and cultural exchange program. The J-1 visa is inappropriate for foreign nationals seeking to immigrate permanently to the U.S. The J-1 visa is also inappropriate for organizations seeking to augment their personnel complement. Parties so interested must use other legitimate avenues of immigration and/or temporary employment described in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

OU’s Research Scholar Program

The J-1 Exchange Visitor is an individual who participates in a program designed to promote the interchange of person, knowledge, and skills in the fields of education, arts, and sciences. Participants include trainees, scholars, students, teachers, researchers, graduate medical education, observation, consultations, or demonstrating specialized knowledge or skills, or participants in organized people-to-people programs. Sponsors may terminate an exchange visitor’s program for violating U.S. laws or program regulations or rules governing their particular program.

IFSS administers OU’s J-1 program for the categories of Professor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, and Specialist. Under no circumstances can a participant be a candidate for a tenure-track position.  

Professor exchange visitors primarily teach, lecture, observe, or consult at post-secondary accredited educational institutions.  
Research Scholar exchange visitors must be primarily engaged in conducting research, observing or consulting in connection with a research project in a post-secondary, accredited research institution.  
Short Term Scholar exchange visitors may lecture, observe, consult, participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, study tours, professional meetings, or other types of educational and professional activities, but cannot stay more than 6 months.  
Specialist exchange visitors are foreign specialists that come to the United States to observe, consult, or demonstrate special skills.
**Research Scholar Minimum Qualifications**

- Have at least a Bachelor’s degree and appropriate experience in the field of which research is to be conducted;
- Not be a candidate for a tenure track position;
- Not have participated in or completed a professor or research scholar program within the last 24 months preceding the beginning date of the new program’s commencement;
- Not have participated in a J-Visa program for all or part of the 12-month period immediately preceding the start date of a research scholar program unless they meet one of the following criteria:
  - The participant is currently in a research scholar program and is transferring to another institution in the U.S. to continue their current J-1 program;
  - The participant’s prior physical presence in the U.S. on a J-visa program was less than six months in duration as a short-term scholar.

**English Proficiency Policy for All Exchange Visitors**

22 C.F.R. § 62.10, which regulates a J-1 Exchange Visitor sponsor’s responsibilities regarding program administration, has been revised to require proof of English language proficiency for all J-1 participants sponsored by the University of Oklahoma. Department sponsors must screen and select prospective exchange visitors to ensure that (1) the program is suitable to the exchange visitor’s background, needs, and experience and (2) that the exchange visitor possesses sufficient proficiency in the English language as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, including one of the following methods: a signed letter from an academic institution or English language school that is internationally recognized by IALC or another official entity documenting dates of attendance and at least intermediate level language skills; conduct an English language interview with the potential scholar in person, via telephone, via teleconference, or via videoconference; proof of attainment of minimum scores on either the TOEFL iBT, IELTS, Cambridge English First (FCE), Cambridge English Advanced (CAE), or TOEIC.

**Postdoctoral Fellows**

Postdoctoral Fellows are categorized as Research Scholars in SEVIS and on the DS-2019, although their internal title may be “Postdoctoral Fellow”. Qualifications for these programs vary according to department programs, and candidates must additionally apply to and be accepted by the OUHSC Graduate College (http://graduate.ouhsc.edu/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Category</th>
<th>Duration of Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor or Research Scholar</td>
<td>Up to an aggregate of 5 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Scholar</td>
<td>3 weeks – 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>1 calendar year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 5 year calendar period is based on a “use or lose” basis, meaning any amount of time that the participant returns home counts towards the total 5 year period, including time away for vacation visits.

*Participants who complete the program in less than 5 years have the option to transfer to another institute or extend their program up to the maximum duration of 5 years, provided that requirements for extension are met and departments agree upon further sponsorship.*
**J-2 Dependents**

The Exchange Visitor Program permits the entry of the participant’s dependents under the J-2 visa at the sponsor’s discretion. Dependents are defined as the J-1 visa holder’s spouse and minor unmarried children (less than 21 years of age). The status of the J-2 visa holder remains valid as long as the principal J-1 visa holder is valid: if the J-1 expires, and the participant has to return to his or her home country, the J-2 dependents must return as well. J-2 dependents may apply for employment authorization after arrival in the U.S., if the work is not to support the principle J-1 holder. The J-2 visa holder must apply for work authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) by filing Form I-765 (http://www.uscis.gov/i-765). There is no legal limit to what they can earn, and they can work full time or part time after permission is granted from USCIS. Exchange visitors may not leave J-2 dependents in the U.S. for long periods of time.

**J-1 & J-2 Visa Petition Process**

The petition process is initiated by an OU department and has several steps.
1. The exchange visitor must meet the qualification requirements for a specific category described above.
2. The OU department initiates sponsorship of the J-1 exchange visitor by submitting Form HR2019 to IFSS.
3. HR IFSS will submit Form HR2019 to be reviewed by the U.S. Office of Export Control. This office will determine if the proposed activity is subject to Export Control Regulations and whether a professional license is required.
4. After the HR2019 has been approved, HR IFSS will issue a DS-2019: Certificate of Eligibility. This certificate is generated through the SEVIS online system administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to track J-1 visitors.
5. The OU department sponsoring the J-1 exchange visitor will mail the DS-2019 form to the visitor.
6. The J-1 exchange visitor submits the DS-2019 to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate as part of their visa application.
7. A J-1 exchange visitor that is transferring from another U.S. institute or agency will retrieve their DS-2019 from the IFSS office when they arrive on campus.

**Visa and Fees**

All foreign nationals who seek to enter the U.S. in the J-1 exchange visitor category must obtain a visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before coming to the U.S. Applicants should apply at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over their place of permanent residence. NOTE: Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement but must comply with all other documentation requirements.

J-1 visa applicants should apply for their visa far in advance of their desired arrival date in the U.S. J-1 visitors are allowed to enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date listed on the DS-2019. Under no circumstances should they enter after the program start date without first notifying the program official.

**SEVIS Fees:** In addition to any visa fees, individuals applying for J visas must pay the $180 SEVIS fee before applying for their visas. Fee payment must be processed at least 3 business days before the scheduled date of the visa interview. Proof of payment must be presented during the visa application process. Review information about
the SEVIS payment (http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901) and submission of the SEVIS form I-901. The applicant is responsible for all visa and SEVIS fees. The university does not pay these fees.

- SEVIS is a federal Internet-based system that maintains accurate and current information about nonimmigrant students (F and M visas), exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-1, M-2, J-2 visas).
- The SEVIS fee must be paid when applying for initial classification as a J nonimmigrant, when changing to a J classification from a different visa, and when applying for J-1 category change.

Denial of Visa: The SEVIS fee is valid for 12 months from the date of the initial application if the applicant wishes to apply again for the same or a different program category.

Family Petitions & Applications: All family-based application and petition expenses must be paid by the individual.

U.S. Tax Requirements for Foreign Visitors

Foreign visitors to the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center may be subject to income tax on income or other benefits received while at the University. Payments which may be taxable include employee wages, fellowship and scholarship payments among others.

A general rule of U.S. tax law is that wages are taxed unless specifically exempted. Income tax on employee wages is withheld at the graduated rates mandated by law. That means tax tables are used withholding different amounts of tax pending on the taxable amount of wages. This is also known as federal and state tax withholding.

Wages may also be subject to 7.65% FICA tax (also known as Social Security and Medicare tax). FICA is a different type of tax and is in addition to federal and state tax withheld from pay.

Tax treaties exist between the United States and about 70 other countries and some include exemption for certain foreign visitors for a specified length of time and/or certain dollar amount. Please keep in mind that even if a treaty exists between the U.S. and your country of Tax Residency, it does not necessarily mean you are exempt from tax withholding on U.S. wages. Applicable exemptions can be determined once you are in the U.S. and complete the Foreign National Information form.

For more information you can visit this link: http://www.ouhsc.edu/financialservices/Payroll/U.S.TaxRequirementsforForeignVisitors.asp or contact BJ-Loving@ouhsc.edu.

Other helpful links include:

http://www.ouhsc.edu/financialservices/Payroll/foreign_nationals.asp

J-1 ARRIVAL CHECKLIST
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<td><strong>Make housing arrangements before you arrive.</strong> Your hosting department can advise you on this.</td>
<td>For campus housing see village.ou.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Check in with your hosting department</strong> as soon as you arrive on campus</td>
<td>Service Center Bldg., Room 119, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 11:30 am and 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm. IFSS will not activate your SEVIS record until you have presented in person to the IFSS office. Your record must be active before you apply for any benefits (Social security, state ID, Driver’s License, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Check in with IFSS within 3 days of arrival** with the following documents:  
  ✓ IFSS check in form to report local address, email, & phone number  
  ✓ Foreign Passport/US Visa  
  ✓ I-94 card printout (available here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home)  
  ✓ Original DS-2019  
  ✓ J-1 Exchange Visitor Health Insurance Acknowledgement & Pledge | Contact Serena Prammanasudh at serena-prammanasudh@ouhsc.edu |
| **Purchase insurance within 30 days of arrival to campus** if not purchased prior to arrival. See back of DS-2019 and/or J-1 Packet for Medical Health Insurance Requirements and selected options of insurance companies | Contact Serena Prammanasudh at serena-prammanasudh@ouhsc.edu |
| **Apply for OUHSC ID card** | Contact OneCard@ouhsc.edu, Service Center Bldg., Room 115 |
| **Open a local bank account** | Social Security Administrations:  
  200 NE 27th St, Moore, OK 73160  
  OR  
  12301 N. Kelley Ave.  
  Oklahoma City, OK 73131  
  More information & SS-5 form can be found here. |
| **Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)** if you are being paid by OUHSC. Do this with assistance from the Human Resources Department’s letter to accompany the SS-5 SSN application. The issuing of a SSN may take up to 2 months. The Social Security Administration can issue you a temporary number that you can provide to Human Resources. | Social Security Administrations:  
  200 NE 27th St, Moore, OK 73160  
  OR  
  12301 N. Kelley Ave.  
  Oklahoma City, OK 73131  
  More information & SS-5 form can be found here. |
| **Apply for an Oklahoma Driver’s License, OR drive with your valid foreign Driver’s License.** The International Driver’s License is NOT recognized as valid in the state of Oklahoma. | See below. |
| **Attend mandatory J-1 Orientation** | Contact serena-prammanasudh@ouhsc.edu |

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**Applying for a Social Security Card**
Exchange visitors receiving monetary support directly from the university will require a Social Security number. The application process with the Social Security Administration can take up to two months before a card is issued with the assigned number. **You must check in with the IFSS office before applying for the Social Security card or the Social Security Administration will not be able to verify your nonimmigrant status in the SAVE system if your SEVIS record was not first validated by the IFSS office.** In the interim, a temporary number can be assigned for payroll purposes until the Social Security card is received. To apply for the Social Security card, you will need the SS-5 application form, your passport, I-94, and the form DS-2019. The Social Security Administration will issue you a receipt of application and a temporary Social Security number.

**DO NOT carry your social security card in your wallet. Keep it in a safe place with other important documents at home to prevent identity fraud and theft. If you must, carry a copy of the card with you.**

**Maintaining your J-1/J-2 status:**

- You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before your program start date and up to 30 days after your program start date on your DS-2019. Failure to notify IFSS and/or your department sponsor of any delay in your travels may result in the U.S. Department of State’s immediate cancellation of the visitor’s SEVIS record and subsequent DS-2019 form.
- Check in with the IFSS office within 3 days of your arrival to campus.
- Attend J-1 Orientation
- Keep immigration documents current (passport and DS-2019)
  - EVs are required to have a valid, unexpired DS-2019 form and a valid, unexpired passport at all times.
- Report local address to program sponsor
  - You are required by immigration regulations to maintain your local address with OUHSC at all times. Please update any change of address to the IFSS office within 10 days of the change. Immigration regulations require a physical, home address rather than a P.O. Box or an office address.
- Maintain adequate medical, medical evacuation and repatriation insurance
  - You must maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and all J-2 dependents for the entire duration of your program as listed on the DS-2019 and provide proof to IFSS.
  - The required minimum benefit levels are:
    - Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness;
    - Repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000;
    - Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of $50,000, and;
    - A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.
  - Willful failure on the part of the participant or any J-2 dependents to maintain active medical insurance coverage is grounds for termination from the program. Health coverage through the University’s benefit plan does not contain the medical evacuation or repatriation insurance requirement. A separate policy must be purchased additionally for this coverage.
  - Some providers that offer services to international scholars include:
    - ISO Insurance ([https://www.isoa.org/](https://www.isoa.org/))
• Notify us of any program changes
  o Early termination/departure
    ▪ Research Scholars withdrawing from an OU research program before the end of the program date listed on the DS-2019 must inform the IFSS office prior to their departure. Departments may give notice to IFSS via the J-1 Early Program Termination form.
    ▪ Correctly recording your program completion date is important because it can affect the date on which you can return to the United States on a new J-1 program or in another visa status.
  o Program activity
    ▪ Exchange visitors are required to notify IFSS when there are changes in their research program or program dates, including changes in faculty or department sponsorship.
  o Program activity location
    ▪ If the exchange visitor is vacationing, attending a conference, or conducting research outside of the U.S. for a period of more than 30 days, the scholar must complete the Form HR6220 with his/her department and return it to IFSS.
    ▪ If the exchange visitor’s status is to continue participation in the exchange program while abroad, an Out of Country record must be created by the program sponsor.
  o Program transfers
    ▪ Exchange visitors are allowed to transfer to another sponsor if they are released by the first sponsor. To qualify as a transfer instead of a new program, the transfer program must clearly have the same purpose as the original program category.
  o Travel
    ▪ Visa applicants should prepare in advance and allow sufficient time for potential delays when applying for visas of any type at a U.S. consular post abroad.
    ▪ You must take your original DS-2019 and current DS-2019 forms when traveling. Prior to traveling outside the U.S., you should obtain the responsible program officer (RO) or alternate responsible program officer’s (ARO) travel validation signature at the bottom right of your form. J-2 dependents must each have their own DS-2019 with a valid travel signature dated within the last 6 months. Failure to revalidate the DS-2019 could result in delays or possible denial of re-entry into the U.S.
    ▪ A letter may be requested from your department sponsor. IFSS can provide an example, if requested. This letter will certify that you are participating in an Exchange Program and are in good standing. You can keep it with you when traveling and re-entering the U.S., although it is not necessary.
    ▪ You must make sure your passport is valid at least 6 months beyond the date of your intended stay in the U.S. If your passport expires before your U.S. visa does, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will limit your U.S. admission stay to correspond with your passport’s expiration date.
    ▪ Check your visa to make sure it will be unexpired on your anticipated re-entry date. Also note the number of entries allowed on your visa. Although the visa date may still be valid, you may have used all allowable entries.
    ▪ Exchange visitors must have financial documentation with them while they travel, for example, an appointment letter, an award letter from a funding organization, or personal financial documents.
• Upon re-entry to the U.S., check IMMEDIATELY that the immigration inspector **stamps your passport with the correct status, J-1. THIS IS CRITICAL. If the stamp does not match your visa status, you will not be able to resume your position at the university.**

• Travelers needing evidence of readmission to the U.S. should visit the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website to print or review an I-94 form [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/consent.html;jsessionid=92jwVbTTsv4Sft3QqtV21Q9PQj1KQGfnnt13YcNLnS1LmNV2gsp!1053642144](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/consent.html;jsessionid=92jwVbTTsv4Sft3QqtV21Q9PQj1KQGfnnt13YcNLnS1LmNV2gsp!1053642144) based on the data that was electronically submitted at your entry. This data includes your I-94 number, which may be needed to prove lawful U.S. entry for benefits providers and other purposes.

• Upon returning to the OUHSC campus, you must send a copy of your I-94 to the IFSS office.

  - **Extension of stay**
    - An extension of your exchange program may be requested for current J-1 participants, as long as the extension is completed before the expiration date of the DS-2019 and is within the 5-year maximum period for Professors or Research Scholars. The HR2019 form must be submitted to IFSS at least 10 business days prior to the current DS-2019 expiration date. The participant must include evidence to show that he/she is maintaining the required insurance coverage while in the U.S. for themselves and any accompanying J-2 dependents.
    - The extension of your DS-2019 extends the immigration status of the J-1 participant, but it does not extend the visa stamp in the passport. It is the exchange visitor’s responsibility for applying for a new visa, if necessary.

  - **Incoming dependents**
    - If a participant’s dependents plan to arrive in the U.S. after the exchange visitor arrives, IFSS must approve the accompaniment of the spouse and/or children who each will be issued their own Form DS-2019. To request a DS-2019 for eligible family members, the J-1 scholar will complete the Form HR2019-2 and submit it to IFSS for processing. Incoming dependents will then apply for a visa just as the J-1 visa applicant did.

  - **Funding source/changes in department or faculty sponsorship**
    - If there is any change in your funding source (salary increase) or any change in department or faculty sponsorship, you must inform IFSS so your DS-2019 can be updated to reflect the most current information.

  - **Employment**
    - Exchange Visitors can only be engaged in authorized employment only. As a J-1 Exchange Visitor, you are eligible for employment with OUHSC, but only in the field specified on the DS-2019. Unauthorized employment may result in a violation of immigration regulations and loss of valid J-1 status. Professors and Research Scholars may engage in occasional outside lecture or consultation for compensation with written permission from their RO/ARO.
### J-1 DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early exit: Contact the IFSS office if you are leaving the United States more than 30 days prior to the end date listed on your DS-2019.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Serena-prammanasudh@ouhsc.edu">Serena-prammanasudh@ouhsc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you complete your program by the date indicated on your DS-2019 and are utilizing the 30 day grace period, check the expiration date on your OK driver’s license because it will probably be expired. This means you will need to drive with a valid driver’s license from your home country or use alternative transportation during this period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update your forwarding address with your hosting department</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay any outstanding university fees, if applicable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save all of your immigration documents, even after they expire. They may be helpful, and even necessary, when arranging future travel to the United States and/or Change or Adjustment of Status. Be sure to keep your Social Security Card, Driver’s License(s), and OUHSC ID.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File your tax return or mark your calendar for tax filing season.</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:BJ-Loving@ouhsc.edu">BJ-Loving@ouhsc.edu</a> for any questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request the return of your apartment deposit from your apartment complex landlord. A walk-through with the apartment complex manager will be necessary to determine eligibility for receiving the deposit back. Check your lease to confirm the 30- or 60-day notice of vacating that is required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure you have received reimbursement on all of your medical insurance claims if you filed any for yourself or for your dependents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all questions regarding benefits deduction refunds (OUHSC employees only), visit <a href="http://hr.ou.edu/Contact-Us">http://hr.ou.edu/Contact-Us</a>.</td>
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**Grace periods**

Following the completion of their program, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will allow participants a 30-day travel period commonly referred to as the “Grace Period.” During this 30-day grace period, participants are no longer in J-visa status and are under the jurisdiction of the USCIS. The USCIS grants this period to allow participants to settle their affairs and to prepare to return to their home countries. During this period, program participants may not work or continue program activities. **If the exchange visitor is terminated from the program, he or she is not granted the 30 day grace period, and they are to leave immediately (within 15 days).**

**Change of status**

New offers of employment and changes in current employment may require a change of status. Consult the IFSS office as early as possible to determine eligibility for a change of status to enable continued employment. Some offers of employment may come from the University. Current openings can be found here:
An application for a change to another nonimmigrant status requires a minimum of three to six months for processing by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Individual circumstances may influence procedures and processing times, so it is important to discuss such plans with the IFSS office in detail as soon as possible. Please note that if you are subject to the 212(e) two-year home residence requirement, you will not be eligible for a change of status from within the United States unless you receive a waiver.

**INA 212 (e) Two-Year Home Country Residency Requirement**

Certain categories of exchange visitors are subject to this requirement under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA Section 212 (e)) and must return home for two years after completing their J-1 program. An exchange visitor is subject to the INA 212 (e) requirement, if the following conditions exist:

- The exchange visitor participated in an exchange program that was funded in whole or in part by a U.S. government agency, you home country’s government, or an international organization that received funding from the U.S. government or your home country’s government.
- The exchange visitor is a national or resident of a country designated as requiring the services of persons engaged in the field of specialized knowledge or skills in which the exchange visitor was engaged for the duration of their program. You can access the skills list at [http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html). Be advised that the skills list is always subject to change, and the most updated version may not be immediately available.
- The exchange visitor entered the U.S. to receive graduate medical education or training.

If the exchange visitor is subject to INA 212 (e) requirement, he or she cannot change his or her status to that of H, L, K, or immigrant lawful permanent resident (LPR) until he or she has returned to his/her home country for at least two years or received a waiver of that requirement. Such waivers can be obtained under five separate bases: No Objection Statement, Exceptional Hardship or Persecution, Conrad Program, or Interested Government Agency. For more information see Waiver of the J Visa Two-Year Foreign Residency Requirement [https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student/residency-waiver.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student/residency-waiver.html).

Individuals that hold a derivative dependent J-2 status are also subject to INA 212 (e). An exchange visitor who is subject to the requirement is not permitted to change to any other nonimmigrant status within the U.S. Individuals can write to the U.S. Department of State and request a formal advisory opinion on the applicability of the requirement.

**The nature of the 212 (e) waiver application process is a personal one that is specific to each J-1 Exchange Visitor’s situation; therefore, the IFSS office can provide general information about applying for it, but cannot provide any legal assistance or advice.**

**12-month and 24-month bar rule**

This rule governs when a scholar can return to the U.S. as a Research Scholar/Professor after completion of their program. The Department of State has determined that completion of the program is defined as EVs who are no longer actively participating in the activities of a Professor or Research Scholar. The status of the SEVIS records for
EVs who meet this definition should be listed as either “Inactive” or “Terminated” (as appropriate). Countdown of the bars begin the day after the status of the EV’s SEVIS record becomes “Inactive” or “Terminated”.

Any EV (J-1) category other than Professor/Research Scholar (such as Specialist or Short-Term Scholar) who stayed in the U.S. in their previous J-1 visa status for 6 months or less can return immediately as a Professor/Research Scholar.

Any EV (J-1) category other than Professor/Research Scholar who stayed in the U.S. more than 6 months in their previous J-1 visa status can return as a Professor or Research Scholar after 12 months from the EV’s Program End date or Effective Date of Completion.

Research Scholars and Professors that have stayed 6 months or less in the U.S. can return after 24 months from the EV’s Program End Date or Effective Date of Completion.

You can see the IFSS for details on how this rule affects J-2 dependents.
Oklahoma City is the capital and the largest city in the state. The city ranks 27th in population size in the country. With all of the amenities of a large city, low traffic congestion, an excellent ground transportation system, and affordable cost of living, you can devote more time and energy to things you care about. Oklahoma is one of the top ten states with the lowest cost of living in the country. The metro area encompasses Canadian, Cleveland, McClain, Oklahoma, and Pottawatomie counties.

Oklahoma City lies in the Great Plains region and features one of the largest livestock markets in the world. Oil, natural gas, petroleum products, and related industries are the largest sector of the local economy. The city is situated in the middle of an active oil field and oil derricks can be found in the city and around the Capital grounds.

The average January temperature in Oklahoma City is 36°F with a July temperature average of 81.5°F. The area receives an average of 32 inches of rain annually and 6 inches of snow. The temperature frequently drops to 20°F during the winter and rises to as high as 100°F during the summer. Oklahoma City has 310,000 dwellings, 67.3% being owner occupied. Rental housing is readily available.
In 2013, 75% of the population was White, 7.7% Black or African American, 9% American Indian and Alaska Native, 2% Asian, 9.6% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.2% other.

**Life and Customs in the United States**

Americans, like all people, have unique social customs. A few are discussed below, but it is impossible to list them all. By observing Americans and asking questions, you can learn about others, but you can also visit InterExchange Cultural Compass (https://www.interexchange.org/american-culture/cultural-customs-us#cultural-differences) for more information.

*Introductions and Greeting*

It is proper to shake hands with everyone with whom you are introduced, both men and women. If you want to introduce yourself to someone or if you are being introduced by someone, extend your hand for a handshake. You may see some Americans hug each other upon meeting. It would be improper to hug someone you have just met. Americans value privacy and personal space. Eye contact and smiling is considered good manners and respectful. Disclosing wealth and money is usually a taboo subject when first meeting someone.

*Gifts and Thank Yous*

As a rule, gifts are given to relatives and close friends. They are sometimes given to people with whom one has a casual but friendly relationship, such as a host or hostess, but it is not necessary or even common for gifts to be given to such people. Gifts are not usually given to teachers or others who hold official positions. The offering of gifts in these situations is sometimes interpreted as a possibly improper effort to gain favorable treatment from that person. It is not necessary to bring a gift when you are invited to dinner. However, a small item you brought from home can be a pleasant surprise to hosts.

*Timing and Scheduled Appointments*
Most Americans value punctuality. Being on time is important, and many Americans consider it impolite to arrive unannounced. In a professional environment you are expected to make an appointment or result in a delay in you receiving services. Additionally, it is custom for Americans to wait in lines almost everywhere.

**Transportation**

**Roads:** Three major interstate (I) highways intersect within Oklahoma City. These are I-35 (N/S), I-40 (E/W), and I-44 (NE/SW). Interstate 240 connects I-40 and I-44, and I-235 connects northbound to U.S. Highway 77 on to suburban Edmond and southbound at I-44 on to I-35 and I-40. Many major U.S. & State highways also pass through the city.

**Airport Transportation:** Transportation to and from Will Rogers World Airport will require driving by car, taxi, or a van/shuttle. The Will Rogers World Airport [http://www.flyokc.com/OtherTransportation.aspx](http://www.flyokc.com/OtherTransportation.aspx) webpage offers more information on these forms of transportation.

**By Car:** It is challenging to get around the Oklahoma City metro area without a car (or a friend who can drive you around). The majority of residents own a car and drive to their daily destinations. If you do not plan on buying a car and getting an Oklahoma Driver’s License, there are other ride share options like Uber and Lyft which you can use via smart phone. **Uber and Lyft are normally considerably less expensive than taxis.**

**By Train:** There is currently no metro subway or mass transit train system in Oklahoma City. Amtrak [http://www.amtrak.com/home](http://www.amtrak.com/home), however, is a National Railroad Passenger Corporation with 21,000 route miles in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces. Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day – at speeds up to 150 mph – to more than 500 destinations.

**By Bus:** Greyhound Lines [https://www.greyhound.com/](https://www.greyhound.com/) is the largest provider of intercity bus transportation, serving more than 3,800 destinations across North America with a modern, environmentally friendly fleet. Amtrak passengers use Greyhound to make connections to cities not served by rail on Amtrak Thruway service by purchasing a ticket for the bus connection from Amtrak in
conjunction with the purchase of their rail ticket. Union Bus Station (405-606-4382) is located in downtown Oklahoma City at 1948 E. Reno.

Embark OKC (http://embarkok.com/) is Oklahoma’s only public bus system. They do not have service to the Will Rogers World Airport. Embark provides bus, ferry transit, bike share, and downtown parking solutions in the Oklahoma City Metro area. Embark OKC bus services runs 22 routes, including to Norman, from approximately 4:30 am to 7:30 pm. Two routes run until midnight. Reduced and varied Saturday service runs from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm.

Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) (http://www.ou.edu/cart.html) runs seven Norman city routes and three University of Oklahoma campus routes on weekdays and most Saturdays. CART also operates a commuter route, the Sooner Express, to Oklahoma City each Monday through Friday.

OU HSC shuttle buses (https://www.ouhsc.edu/parking/transport2.htm) run a central route and a Veteran’s Affairs (VA) route. The central route has one bus that circulates the campus every 20 minutes and runs from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. The VA route runs from 4:30 am to 6:30 pm. Two busses run from 6:30 am to 9:00 am and 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm. Buses run counter-clockwise and pass by stops every 15 minutes and every 7 minutes when 2 busses are running.

IFSS is located here
Driving in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma City metropolitan area is expansive, making it difficult to navigate without access to a vehicle. Several car dealerships sell new and pre-owned cars. If you choose to purchase a car, you will be required to purchase auto insurance coverage on any vehicle that is driven on Oklahoma roads to comply with state law. Research Scholars who will be in Oklahoma for longer than 30 days and plan to drive a car are advised to apply for an Oklahoma driver’s license.

Oklahoma State Statute cites the following:

- A nonresident who is sixteen (16) years of age or older may operate a motor vehicle in this state as authorized by the class, restrictions, and endorsements specified on the license, if the nonresident is:
  - Properly licensed in the home state or country to operate a commercial or noncommercial motor vehicle and who has immediate possession of a valid driver license issued by the home state or country.

- The Commissioner of Public Safety is hereby authorized to adopt rules as may be necessary to enter into reciprocity agreements with foreign countries. The rules shall specify that the driver license standards of the foreign country shall be comparable to those of this state. The rules shall also require foreign drivers, who are operating a motor vehicle in Oklahoma under such a reciprocity agreement, to comply with compulsory motor vehicle liability insurance and financial responsibility laws of this state.

- **International Driver’s Licenses are not a valid form of identification nor a valid license to drive in Oklahoma. You must have a valid Oklahoma driver’s license or a valid driver’s license from your home country, or another U.S. State to drive a vehicle on Oklahoma’s roads.**

- It is Oklahoma law that all drivers and front seat passengers ages 13 and older must have a safety belt properly fastened about his/her body at all times while the vehicle is being operated.
Be advised that it is best to apply for a state ID or driver’s license two days after the activation of your SEVIS record. Also, the Oklahoma driver’s license is issued with an expiration date that matches your visa. If you choose to extend your stay, you will need to renew your driver’s license. Additionally, if you utilize the 30 day grace period after completing your program, your license will be expired.

**Taking the driving exam and getting your Oklahoma license**

You must be one of the first 8-10 candidates in line to take the driver’s test, or you can make an appointment online [https://www.ouhsc.edu/parking/transport2.htm](https://www.ouhsc.edu/parking/transport2.htm). The vehicle must have a current tag, valid insurance, and pass an on-site vehicle inspection. No exams will be given during inclement weather or any kind of precipitation that requires windshield wiper use.

Driver License Exam Sites:

- **Community Center**  
  28 E. Main St., Edmond, Oklahoma 73034  
  Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 4:45 pm, 405-341-4930

- **430 Berry Rd., Norman, Oklahoma 73069**  
  Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 4:45 pm, 405-364-9595

- **728 East I-240 Service Rd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73149**  
  Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 4:45 pm, 405-425-7222

Applicants must bring a primary ID (Passport with visa, if applicable, and the I-94); DS-2019; and a secondary ID (health insurance card, motor vehicle registration or title, auto insurance policy, out of state driver’s license, social security card), and provide the Insurance Security Verification Form that has the vin number matching the vehicle you will be driving to test in.

After passing the driver license exam, you must go to a local Department of Motor Vehicle office (DMV) (or tag agency) to acquire the actual Driver’s License.

DMV locations:

- **Classen Tag Agency & Mail Center**  
  3100 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

- **Brad Sullivan Tag Agency**  
  2511 N. Western Ave, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

- **Edmond South Tag Agency**  
  3216 South Boulevard, Edmond, Oklahoma 73013

- **Edmond Downtown Tag Agency**  
  2 West 1st St., Edmond, Oklahoma 73003

**Traffic Enforcement**
When are you being stopped or pulled over by a police officer, the police will turn on its lights and pull up close behind you. If you are stopped by a police officer:

- Immediately signal, pull to the right, and stop.
- Remain in your vehicle until otherwise instructed by the police officer.
- You will be required to provide a driver’s license and insurance verification for the vehicle.
- If you are issued a citation, you will either be required to sign the ticket or will be arrested and transported to court to post bond.
- Your signature on a ticket is not an admission of guilt but serves as a promise to appear at the court on or before the date printed on the ticket.

Contact the IFSS office for more information regarding driving statues and law in Oklahoma.

Safety and Security

The University of Oklahoma’s Emergency Communication System (ECS) enables the University to send time-sensitive notifications about emergency situations to all students, faculty, staff, and identified campus affiliates. These urgent messages will be transmitted to all available voice service, email and text messaging options listed for your account. It is up to you to provide and confirm the contact information for the messages to reach you. To update or check your contact information, please go to: HSC Employees and Students Self-Service (http://www.ouhsc.edu/selfserve.aspx).

If there is an immediate emergency situation, call 911. Land line 911 calls from the 271 exchange (campus landline phones) will go directly to the OUHSC Police Department, however, under some conditions, it may be re-routed to the Oklahoma City 911 Communications Center. In addition, cell phone calls to 911 will automatically route to the closest Communications Center, so you may need to be very specific about the exact location of the emergency when using 911.

Every year Oklahoma thunderstorms, normally during the months of March through August, give rise to a reasonably predictable tornado season, as the state is located in “Tornado Alley”. Tornados are violent windstorms characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud. It is produced by a thunderstorm and formed when cool air overrides a layer of warm air, forcing the warm air to rise rapidly. If you hear a tornado siren during severe weather, seek shelter immediately. The safest place to be during a tornado is underground or in a small interior room like a bathroom or closet. Never stay in a car or try to outrun a tornado. Avoid doors and windows and protect yourself from flying debris. Know the difference between a “tornado watch” and a “tornado warning”. A tornado watch means that conditions are favorable for a storm to produce a tornado. A tornado warning is the ultimate in severe warnings, meaning that a tornado is either occurring or imminent based on radar and you should take cover immediately.
You should be aware of the tornado drills and locations to take shelter at your place of residence and on campus. Visit [http://www.okc.gov/safety/tornado/](http://www.okc.gov/safety/tornado/) for more information on tornado safety.

**Shopping**

*Groceries*

Walmart and Target Supercenters are one-stop locations for groceries, pharmacy items, household items, sports & fitness, electronics, apparel, and other items.

International groceries:
- Super Cao Nguyen - 2668 N. Military Ave.
- Chinatown Supermarket – 1228 NW 27th St.
- Halal Mart – 3718 NW 50th St.
- Halal Meat & Grocery – 3620 NW 39th St.
- Travel by Taste – 4818 N. MacArthur
- Mediterranean Imports and Deli – 5620 N. May Ave.
- Spices of India – 3810 NW 39th St.
- Ok Ko-Mart (Oriental and Korean) – 6000 SE 15th St.
- Feria Latina Supermarket – 4909 NW 23rd St.
- El Mariachi Supermercado – 3020 NW 16th St.

*Discount shopping*

Discount shopping for new or used items is very accessible in Oklahoma City. Used household items, clothes, furniture, and personal items can be found on Craigslist (use caution!), at local thrift stores, resale shops, and garage sales. Garage sales are held at one's own residency and items are priced by the owner. Bargaining at garage sales is common. Estate sales are usually more organized than garage sales, and they are also held at a person’s home. Both estate sales and garage sales locations can be found in newspaper classifies or online.

Other popular bargain stores are Nordstrom Rack, Khol’s, Ross, and TJ Max.

*Electrical devices*

American standard voltage ranges between 100-115 volts. If you intend to bring an electrical device from your home country, you should purchase a travel adapter plug. First check to see if the adapter is compatible with your local plug configuration.
**Cell Phone Carriers**

There are several cell phone service providers to choose from in Oklahoma City. Many below offer pay as you go, prepaid no contract plans. Walmart is an easy place to by prepaid smartphones and/or sim cards.

AT&T (https://www.att.com/local/oklahoma/oklahoma-city/)

T-Mobile (https://www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans?cmpid=ADV_PB_LEM1_43700013226068673&gclid=Cj0KEQiA8orFBRCEpODivaOft_EBEiQAy3mlffhxAldJ98NeSSuUhhrM_VgkJtobfLUqbWJoIDW68aAtl98P8HAQ&gclsrc=aw.ds)

Cricket (https://www.cricketwireless.com/)

TracFone (https://www.walmart.com/c/brand/tracfone)

Verizon https://www.verizonwireless.com/stores/oklahoma/oklahoma-city/


U.S. Cellular https://www.uscellular.com/

**Money Matters**

Initial costs may be expensive to cover apartment deposits and rent, telephone and utility services, and other necessities. While average monthly rent and utility costs vary greatly from home to home, an apartment’s utilities could cost around $200/month with rent starting at $550. If your bank card is authorized for use in the United States, it should be readable from any ATM as long as it has a magnetic strip or chip. Set up a bank account at any local bank. Account fees will vary from bank to credit unions.

**Always be aware of your surroundings when withdrawing from ATMs or entering your PIN number in public due to identity theft.**

Here is a list of some banks located nearby campus. Each bank may require different documentation in order to set up an account.

- **Focus Federal Credit Union** – 420 N.E. 10th Street (on campus)
  - Requires a social security number, verification of a local residential address, and a valid passport
- **Bank SNB** – 1106 N. Stonewall Suite 160 (on campus)
  - Unknown – Please contact the bank.
- **Midfirst Bank** – 901 N. Lincoln Blvd. #110
  - Requires a valid passport, copy of visa (must be valid at the time of opening), and bill or other document to verify a local address
- **First Fidelity Bank** – 722 N. Broadway Ave. #1
  - Requires a valid passport and verification of local residential address
- **Banc First** – 1200 Children’s Ave. (on campus – 3rd floor)
  - Requires a valid passport and verification of a foreign address
Intercultural Immersion and Cultural Exchange

**Time zones**
The United States is divided into four time zones: Eastern Standard Time (EST), Central Standard Time (CST), Mountain Standard Time (MST), and Pacific Standard Time (PST). Oklahoma is located in the Central Standard Time Zone. The United States recognizes Daylight Savings Time. This means that on the first Sunday in April of each year, clocks are advanced one hour so that people can enjoy more sunlight hours during the warmer days of the year. When people adjust the clocks forward one hour, this is known as “Spring Forward”. When people adjust their clocks back to standard time in October, this is known as “Fall Backwards”.

**Popular Holidays**
Americans celebrate many holidays. There are growing numbers who celebrate holidays like Eid, Ramadan, Norooz, and Chinese New Year.

- **New Year’s Day (January 1):** Americans celebrate on December 31 and stay up to celebrate during the stroke of midnight.
- **Independence Day (July 4):** Americans shoot off fireworks, grill, and enjoy the company of others to commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain in 1776.
- **Halloween (October 31):** This holiday is primarily celebrated by children, but adults sometimes dress up in costumes and go to parties. Children normally dress up and go “trick or treating”, which means knocking on doors of houses whose porch lights are on and ask for candy.
- **Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November):** This holiday recognizes the assistance that Native American peoples gave the Pilgrims who landed in Massachusetts in the early 1600s. After a rough winder, the Pilgrims hosted a celebratory feast to thank the Native peoples for showing them how to cultivate crops. Today Americans give thanks for several things and enjoy a dinner that is distinctly eaten on this one day a year.
- **Christmas (December 25):** This Christian holiday celebrates the birth of Jesus. Many Americans celebrate with dinner and opening presents either on Christmas Eve, Christmas morning, or both. Christmas trees and lights are put up in advance, shortly after Thanksgiving.

**Restaurants with International Cuisine**
**In American restaurants, a 10%-20% (depending on the kind of restaurant/service) tip is expected in additional to your bill. This is due to the fact that most waiters and servers are paid a lesser minimum wage because they are expected to be compensated by tips.**

While it may seem like Oklahoma City may not have a huge international cuisine scene, it is not true. You just need to know where to go. There are several restaurants that have international/national acclaim and should be part of your cultural exchange while in the state. Here is a selection of popular restaurants:

**Asian:**
Pho Lien Hoa – 901 NEW 23rd Street (Vietnamese, cash only)
Lee’s Sandwiches – 3300 N. Classen Blvd.
Golden Phoenix – 2728 N. Classen Blvd.
Guernsey Park – 2418 N. Guernsey Ave
Grand House – 2701 N. Classen Blvd.
Fung’s Kitchen – 3231 N. Classen Blvd.
Tokyo – 7516 N. Western Ave.
Sushi Neko – 4318 N. Western Ave.
Gogo Sushi – 432 N.W. 10th St.
Tamashii Ramen – 321 NW 8th St. Ste B

Szechuan Bistro – 1010 W. Memorial Rd.
Chae – 1933 NW 23rd St.
B-won – 4517 S. Sunnylane Rd.
Seoul Garden – 6012 SE 15th St.
Himalayas – 709 N. Moore Ave.
Sala Thai – 1614 NW 23rd St.
Sheesh Mahal – 4621 N. May Ave.
Dot Wo Garden – 6161 N. May Ave.
Gopuram Taste of India – 4559 NW 23rd St.
Pho Cuong Restaurant – 3016 N. Classen Blvd.
Goro Ramen + Izakaya – 1634 N. Blackwelder Ave

**Mediterranean:**
Capers – 6317 N. Meridian Ave.
Nunu’s Mediterranean Café – 3131 W. Memorial Rd.
Travel By Taste – 4818 N. MacArthur Blvd.
The Cloud – 3608 N. May Ave.
Gyros by Ali – 3214 N. Classen Blvd.
Mediterranean Imports and Deli - 5620 N. May Ave.
Basil – 6620 E. Reno Ave.
ZamZam – 3913 N. MacArthur Blvd.
Zorba’s – 6014 N. May Ave.
Camila’s Café – 10942 N. May Ave.
Istanbul – 3604 N. May Ave.
Jamil’s Steakhouse – 4910 N. Lincoln Blvd.
The Hubbly Bubbly – 2900 Classen Blvd.

**African:**
Queen of Sheba – 2308 N. MacArthur Blvd.
Mama Sinmi’s – catering only
http://www.mamasinmi.com/
Haiget’s Restaurant & Catering – 308 W. Edmond Rd.
Couscous – 6165 N. May Ave.
Argana Café – 2908 NW 23rd St. Ste. A

**Latin American:**
Naylamp Peruvian Restaurant – 2106 SW 44th St.
La Oaxaquena – 741 SW 29th St.
La Brasa – 1310 NW 25th St.
1492 New World Latin Cuisine – 1207 N. Walker Ave.
Café Antigua – 1903 N. Classen Blvd.
Café Kacao – 3325 N. Classen Blvd.
Fogon de Edgar – 2416 NW 23rd St.
Café do Brasil - 440 NW 11th St.
Yucatan Taco Stand – 100 E California Ave.
Maya Latin Cuisine – 3929 N. College Ave.
Taqueria La Original – 1143 N. Rockwell Ave.
Taqueria La Original 2 – 36 W. Memorial Rd.

Zarate’s Latin Mexican Grill – 706 S. Broadway
There are various good taco trucks in OKC.
La Cacerola Catracha – 4401 NW 23rd St.

**European:**
Ingrid’s Kitchen – 3701 N. Youngs
La Baguette – 7408 N. May Ave.
The Wedge Pizzaria – 4709 N. Western Ave.
Royal Bavaria – 3401 S. Sooner Rd.
Vito’s Ristorante – 7521 N. May Ave.
Rococo – 12252 N. May Ave.
Nonna’s – 1 Mickey Mantle Drive
Bellini’s Ristorante – 6305 Waterford Blvd. #100
Bella Vista – 5801 S. Western Ave.
Creperie & European Café – 2839 S. Douglas Blvd. #113
Other Local Oklahoma City restaurants:
Waffle Champion – 1212 N. Walker Ave. #100
Cattlemen’s Steakhouse – 1309 S. Agnew Ave.
Pearl’s Crabtown – 303 E. Sheridan Ave.
Vast – 333 W. Sheridan Ave.
Redrock Canyon Grill – 9221 Lake Hefner Pkwy
Re Empire Slice House – 1734 NW 16th St.
The Mule – 1630 N. Blackwelder Ave.
Paseo Grill – 2909 Paseo
Ludivine – 805 N. Hudson
Cheever’s Café – 2409 N. Hudson Ave.
Picasso Café - 3009 Paseo

OKC Attractions

Oklahoma’s diverse landscape includes the Great Plains, mountains, lakes, and forests. In Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas you can find many activities ranging from professional sports games to outdoor activities, museums, and nightlife.

The OU Norman campus offers a myriad of cultural exchange events year-round. You can keep up with these events at https://www.ou.edu/content/cis/news_and_events.html.
To keep up with community events in the Oklahoma City metro area, you can visit these websites:
http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/kgou/events.eventsmain
http://okgazette.com/
http://newsok.com/events
http://www.downtownokc.com/events
https://www.facebook.com/365.okc
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/great-plains/oklahoma-city
http://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions-/oklahoma-city-us-ok-okc.htm
http://www.travelok.com/things-to-do/attractions
http://www.visitokc.com

Sports:
OKC Barons (hockey)
Oklahoma City Energy (soccer)
Oklahoma City Dodgers (baseball)
Oklahoma City Thunder (basketball)
OU Sooner Football

Entertainment/Shopping Districts in Oklahoma City:
The Paseo Arts District (first Fridays of the month Gallery Walk)
The Plaza District (every second Friday of the month Live on the Plaza)
The Windsor District
The Asian District
Oklahoma City Boathouse District
Midtown

In addition to 34 state parks in Oklahoma, the following are some highlighted natural destinations of the state: Talimena National Scenic Byway, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Honor Heights Park
(Muskogee), Myriad Botanical Gardens, Martin Park Nature Center, Keystone Ancient Forest (Tulsa), Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, Standing Bear Park, Museum, & Educational Center, Robber’s Cave, Pensacola Dam & Grand Lake, Heavener Runestone, Black Mesa, Cavanal Hill, Braum’s Family Farm, the Illinois River, and Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area, and Tatanka Ranch.

Selected Oklahoma travel destinations/events:

In Oklahoma City & metro area:

- Oklahoma City State Fair
- National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
- American Banjo Museum
- Oklahoma History Center
- The American Pigeon Museum & Library
- Oklahoma City Museum of Art
- Oklahoma City Farmers Public Market
- Old Paris Flea Market
- Festival of the Arts
- Oklahoma State Capital Buidling
- Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion
- Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

Made in Oklahoma Wine, Beer, and Food Festival
Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival
Riverwind Casino
Overholser Mansion
Remington Park Casino
Oklahoma City Zoo
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art
The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum
Science Museum & Planetarium
Museum of Osteology

Outside of Oklahoma City:

- Pops Restaurant & Round Barn (Lake Arcadia)
- Chickasaw Cultural Center
- Whirlwind Winery
- Blue Whale & Totem Pole Park (Catoosa)
- Conoco Museum (Ponca City)
- Route 66 Vintage Iron Motorcycle Museum

45th Infantry Division Museum
Mount Olivet Cemetery
Washita Battlefield
Twister Museum
Downtown Guthrie
Sequoyah’s Cabin
Sipokni West

Cultural Centers

http://okgit.com/cultural/

American Indian Cultural Center and Museum – 900 N. Broadway Ave. # 200
Raindrop Turkish House – 4444 Classen Blvd.
Allied Arts - [http://alliedartsokc.com/](http://alliedartsokc.com/)
Red Earth, Inc. – 6 Santa Fe Plaza [https://www.redearth.org/](https://www.redearth.org/)

**Religious Centers**

The Edmond Bahá’ís Center - 321 E. Campbell St.
The Norman Bahá’í Center - 526 Iowa
OKC Bahá’í - [http://www.okcbahai.org/](http://www.okcbahai.org/)
Temle B’nai Israel (Reform Synagogue) – 4901 N. Pennsylvania Ave.
Chabad Community Center for Jewish Life and Learning – 3000 W. Hefner Rd.
Emanuel Synagogue – 900 NW 47th St.
Rosh Pinah – 2600 NW 55th Place
Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma – 3815 St. Clair Ave
Masjid Mu’min – 1322 NE 23rd St.
Grand Mosque – 3201 NW 48th St.
American Druze Foundation - [http://www.americandruzefoundation.org/](http://www.americandruzefoundation.org/)
Hindu Temple and India Cultural Foundation – 7200 N. Coltrane Rd.
Vien Giac Buddhist Temple – 5101 NE 36th St.
Buddha Mind Monastery – 5800 S. Anderson Rd.
Risho Kosei Kai Dharma Center – 2745 NW 40th St.
Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center – 4340 NW 23rd St.
St. Elijah Antiochian Orthodox Church – 15000 N. May Ave. [http://stelijahokc.com/](http://stelijahokc.com/)
St. George Greek Orthodox Church – 2101 Northwest 145th St. [http://www.saintgeorgeokc.org/](http://www.saintgeorgeokc.org/)
Seventh Day Adventist Church – 1407 NE 10th St.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints – 11224 S. Meridian Ave.
Kingdom Hall of Jehovahs Witnesses – 5749 NW 37th St.
St. George Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church – 11221 N. Western Ave
https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-George-Ethiopian-Orthodox-Tewahedo-Church/100858043291805

There are many Christian denomination churches in Oklahoma City that can be searched for online.

**English Language Classes**

Many places in Oklahoma City and the metro area provide English Language Classes, some free of charge.

Here are some websites with more information:
[http://www.occc.edu/coe/esl.html](http://www.occc.edu/coe/esl.html)
The OU Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) in Norman provides an Intensive English Program (IEP) for those who are interested in receiving English Language instruction. The CESL also provides a wide range of cultural activities outside the classroom. Visit [http://esl.ou.edu](http://esl.ou.edu).
Understanding the American Healthcare System
The American healthcare system can be a daunting one to try to comprehend when fulfilling the J-1 Exchange Visitor insurance requirements. The following video teaches international students how to prepare for their arrival in the U.S.; how the U.S. healthcare system works; and how exchange visitors should seek medical care appropriately if they become sick or injured.

Oklahoma City Public Schools
Visit here to find out more information and locate schools in your area: http://www.okcps.k12.ok.us/ and http://edmondschools.net/our-schools/about/. This is a website with more school information and reviews:
http://www.greatschools.org/.

Housing
For temporary housing, there are many hotels near Will Rogers World Airport. An alternative is AirBnb (https://www.airbnb.com/). University Village is the housing available on the OUHSC campus. See the website for details: http://www.ou.edu/housingandfood/hsc-operations/hsc-living.html. If you are seeking to rent a house, http://www.zillow.com/ is a great resource. Because many rental contracts are for a minimum of 1 year, it is important to plan housing in advance to make your stay in Oklahoma City easier. Additionally, this website gives you a good idea of the cost of living in Oklahoma City http://www.areavibes.com/.

Safety in OKC
While Oklahoma City does not have the crime rates seen in other major urban cities in the United States, you may want to research which areas in the city best suit you and/or your family.


Oklahoma City Public Libraries
Visit here to discover the library locations in OKC as well as the services that they have to offer:
http://www.metrolibrary.org/

For incidents of sexual assault/misconduct report to Bobby Mason, 405-271-2110, bobby-mason@ouhsc.edu OR call the 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline at 405-917-9922 or the 24-hour Sexual Assault Hotline at 405-943-7273.

Useful Links and Information:
IFSS HR website where many useful forms can be found: http://hr.ou.edu/immigration

U.S. Department of State Office of Designation Academic and Government Programs Division
ECA/EC/AG – SA-44, Room 668
301 4th Street SW
Washington D.C. 20547
Telephone: (202) 203-7131 Fax: (202) 203-7779 Email: JVisas@state.gov
For regular communication or questions: jvisas@state.gov
U.S. Department of State - USAinfo Facts: http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa
U.S. Department of State – Education & Cultural Affairs: http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us
Reporting Abuse or Exploitation: J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline – 1-866-283-9090 – a Department of State representative is available 24 hours a day.
Current Regulations – The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, (22 CFR, Part 62) and can be found at the J-1 Visa website: http://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/current/regulations-compliance/.

Notes

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