

IRVINE New International Postdoctoral Scholar Checklist

This checklist has been developed to assist you in your transition to UC Irvine. The items are arranged in sequential order. The outline below lists the respective task headings within the checklist. More detailed information follows in the subsequent pages. Note: some websites may not be active at all times. If you have questions please contact the Graduate Division at: (949) 824-4611 or by e-mail at grad@uci.edu.

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New International Postdoctoral Scholar Checklist

Disclaimer- The International Center is the authority on campus in regards to immigration issues. Visit the International Center website for the latest information about Visa and immigration related issues.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1. Pay the \$200 SEVIS fee</p> <p>You need to have your <u>DS-2019 in order to pay this fee</u>. To pay over the internet, enter the credit card number at the stated website. Submit payment with the I-901 form. To pay by check, fill out the application online, print out the internet generated coupon and mail along with a check to the stated address. To pay by money order, mail a check and the I-901 form to the stated address.</p> <p>Pay online: www.fmjfee.com</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2. Schedule VISA Interview Appointment</p> <p>Contact your local US embassy or consulate to schedule an interview to approve your visa. You must bring these items to the interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS-2019 (make sure all the details are correctly filled by UCI) • DS-2019 (for J-2 dependents if applicable) • Verification of financial support (can be stated in letter from Department) • Evidence of residence abroad and intent to depart after completion of program (make sure you can prove that you're a permanent resident in your home country) • Current passport (for avoidance of later problems make sure it's valid at least for the whole time of your appointment) • Non-immigrant visa application • Photographs • Visa fee • SEVIS fee (printed proof of payment) • Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable) <p>**Canadians are visa exempt. They just need to present the Notice of Approval or DS-2019 at the US border.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3. Pay VISA Application Fee</p> <p>As part of the J-1 Visa application process, an application fee must be paid to the U.S. Department of State. Contact the Consulate to ask for the method of payment and the forms because the procedure varies from place to place.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>4. Contact Your Department</p> <p>If you have any questions regarding how to make a smooth transition to UCI, visit</p> <p>http://www.grad.uci.edu/forms/postdoc/StaffContactList.pdf OR http://www.grad.uci.edu/contact/applicant_prgm_dir.htm for the contact information of individual departments.</p>

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

5. Establish Your Annual Budget

Plan your budget for the year early. You must have enough money to live on during your tenure with UCI. Take into account the average rent you'll have to pay, and other monthly expenses. For more information visit <http://housing.uci.edu/och/localapt.asp>

Proof of the amount of funding must be provided and will be noted on the DS-2019. Minimum support is \$1,400 per month for a J-1 exchange visitor, \$400 per month for a J-2 spouse. This is the minimum. When coming to America, do not carry a large amount of cash with you. Instead, use traveler's check or bank cards to transfer or withdraw funds from your bank account to cover your initial expenses. There are banks that have international agreements and don't charge transaction fees. Ask your home bank.

6. Find Housing

Housing may be expensive in Irvine. It is recommended you make housing arrangements before coming to Irvine. Your department may be able to assist you. Current UCI postdocs are also a resource and contact can be made through the mailing list ucipostdocs@uci.edu

Staff and Faculty Housing: Information for faculty and staff housing can be found at www.icha.uci.edu or by calling 949.824.6254. **Please Note: On-campus housing is very limited for Postdocs.**

Apartments: Apartment communities in areas surrounding UCI cost at a *minimum* of \$1,300/month for a large one bedroom apartment and \$2,400/month for a larger apartment. Rentals require 2 months rent in advance and security deposits of \$600-1000. For more information visit <http://housing.uci.edu/och> The left column of this site offers valuable information on how to find a home and other resources. (NOTE: Some apartment communities accept lower security deposits if you mention that you work at UCI.)

Housing Outreach Services: Located in the Student Center- G465 (UCI Map #113), the Housing Outreach Services provides additional information on UCI and off-campus housing.

Other: Other sites that can help you plan your move to Irvine include

- UCI: www.uci.edu
- Irvine Public Schools (if you have children): www.iusd.k12.ca.us
- City of Irvine: <http://www.cityofirvine.org/depts/cd/planningactivities/affordablehse/default.asp>
- County of Orange: www.oc.ca.gov
- Orange County Register: www.ocregister.com
- LA Times: www.latimes.com

If you have further questions, contact Housing Administrative Services (UCI map #6) 949.824.7247 housing@uci.edu

7. Make Airline Reservations

It is important to book a flight early to ensure that you arrive here within your scheduled plans. If you are arriving at any airport in the U.S., try to obtain a connecting flight to the John Wayne Airport in Orange County (SNA). The airport is located approximately three miles from the UCI campus. See website: www.ocair.com Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is the next closest, but is 40 miles from UC Irvine.

IMPORTANT: You may only make a plane reservation upon the arrival of the Visa Issuance. When making travel arrangements, remember you can enter the U.S. **no more than 30 days** before the program's start date on the SEVIS DS-2019 form.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

8. Make Hotel Reservations

Try to make hotel reservations before you depart. Local hotels in the Los Angeles and Orange County areas are available on both UCI websites. To find information about each hotel in Orange County, visit the 3rd site.

<http://www.ic.uci.edu/students/arrival.html>;
<http://www.uci.edu/community.shtml>
<http://snap.uci.edu/viewXmlFile.jsp?resourceID=259>

9. Arrange for Shuttle Services

You should arrange for shuttle service or transportation for the day you arrive in California. Some shuttle websites are listed below. If you're landing at John Wayne Airport (SNA), you can take a cab to campus.

www.supershuttle.com; www.xpresshuttle.com/home.htm; <http://primetimeshuttle.com>;

10. Make Plans to Come to UCI

The Parking and Transportation Office offers an overview of the transportation services available to you. Be familiar with them before you arrive here.

Visit the following websites for more information:

Campus Map of UCI & Directions: http://uci.edu/campus_maps.php; <http://www.parking.uci.edu/wayfinding/>
Parking Permit Types: <http://www.parking.uci.edu/>
Transportation Options: <http://www.newstudents.uci.edu/?p=9>

11. Review Your Health Insurance Benefits

As a postdoctoral scholar (employee, fellow, paid direct), you are entitled to select and enroll in the UC Postdoctoral Scholar Benefits Plan (PSBP). **

Visit <http://garnett-powers.com/postdoc/index.htm> to look at benefits and details about your health insurance plan. The deadline to enroll in the plan is 31 days from your starting appointment date. For more information, visit <http://www.grad.uci.edu/postdoc/health.htm>

**Postdoctoral scholars whose term is 3 months or longer are eligible for this insurance plan.

Remember, if you arrive prior to your appointment you are not insured and might want to have some kind of insurance from your home country.

12. Make Final Preparations before going to the Airport

The Transportation Security Administration website offers helpful advice on what you need to know before you travel. Visit the website to know how you should pack your luggage, what items are acceptable or prohibited, and guidelines if you are traveling with children, etc. <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>
Remember that individual airlines charge differently for luggage

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

13. Gather Your Documents for Entry into US Borders

All postdoctoral scholars flying into US borders need to have the following documents:

REQUIRED

- U.S. Visa (except Canadian students)
- Valid passport
- DS-2019
- I-94 (white form, given to you by flight crew; fill in your name and address. Put UCI, city and state if you don't have an address).

RECOMMENDED

- Letter of invitation from your department
- Proof of funding/financial evidence
- Receipt for the SEVIS fee
- Name & Contact information for your department and UCI International Center

Names should appear on all documents the way it appears on your passport. Always hand carry your documents. Do not put them in your luggage. Be prepared to answer questions regarding your reason for entering the country, how long you'll be staying and what you'll be doing here. It may be helpful to have a written statement to provide to customs officials.

Additional Information: <http://www.ic.uci.edu/students/docsrequired.html>

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

1. Check in with your Department Personnel Coordinator:

On the **first day of your arrival** (or as soon as you arrive), check in with the personnel coordinator in your department who will complete the UCI Non-Employee Verification Form (found here: <http://ic.uci.edu/forms/NEV.pdf>) and fax it to the International Center (Fax: 949.824.3090; Open Monday-Friday 8-5pm).

You will have to contact the personnel coordinator ahead of time to set up an appointment to meet on that first day

2. Enroll in the UC Postdoctoral Scholar Benefits Plan (Health Insurance)

As a postdoctoral scholar (employee, fellow, paid directs), you are able to select and enroll in the UC Postdoctoral Scholar Benefits Plan (PSBP). **

Complete the enrollment process to receive health insurance:

<http://garnett-powers.com/postdoc/enrollment.htm>

You have 31 days from your starting appointment date to enroll in benefits. Contact your department (<http://www.grad.uci.edu/forms/postdoc/StaffContactList.pdf>) or Sharon Metzger (smetzger@uci.edu) for questions regarding the enrollment process.

For more information, visit <http://www.grad.uci.edu/postdoc/health.htm>

**Postdoctoral scholars whose term is 3 months or longer are eligible for this insurance plan.

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

3. Obtain a Social Security Number:

You are required to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) before any payment can be received. A SSN will also make it easier for you to open a bank account, obtain a credit card, or get insurance. You should not apply for a SSN earlier than **2 weeks** after your SEVIS record has been validated by the International Center to allow for information transfer.

Do the following to begin the process:

1. Go to <http://ic.uci.edu/forms/SSNInfo.pdf> to begin applying for it. Documents required for J-1 Scholar are: Passport, Visa Stamp, I-94; DS-2019. The International Center can assist you in filling it out.
2. Visit the nearest Social Security Office: 26051 Acero Road, Mission Viejo, CA

It takes approximately 3-6 weeks to receive your SSN which you will receive in the mail. Banks and landlords sometimes ask for your SSN but **be sure to verify why the number is needed and use discretion when giving it out**. Visit www.ssa.gov/pubs/10120.html for more information about your SSN.

4. Check into the International Center:

After the International Center receives the UCI Non-Employee Verification Form, they will send you an e-mail with an appointment to complete the check-in process. This process must take place within 3 business days of beginning your employment.

Bring the following items to your appointment:

- DS-2019
- Passport with Visa Stamp
- I-94 (White card usually stapled to passport)
- Social Security Card or receipt of your application
- Proof of Health Insurance (including repatriation and accidental death insurance)

5. Begin your New Job

You must report to your UCI Department Administrator by the program start date on your DS-2019. If you cancel plans to do research or teach at UCI, or postpone your arrival date you must inform the academic department **and** the International Center at scech@uci.edu **as soon as possible**. Your J-1 program must be validated in SEVIS immediately after the start date in section 3 of your DS-2019.

You are required to apply yourself to the work described as your primary purpose. You may be authorized to do additional tasks according to the DS-2019 (i.e. teaching a course, participate in a conference) as long as the activities relate to the purpose of your exchange; they don't interfere with your primary purpose stated in DS-2019, and you get written authorization in advance.

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>6. Activate Your UCInetID & Obtain Your UCI ID Card</p> <p>You will receive notification to activate your UCInetID (used to access e-mail, campus resources, etc.) through your personal e-mail account. The time of the issuance of the UCInetID varies from department to department. Contact your department to find out when you can activate yours. Also contact your department for assistance on how to obtain the UCI ID card.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>7. Attend the Postdoctoral Scholars Orientation</p> <p>Attend the Postdoctoral Scholars Orientation to learn about the programs and services designed to support you in your endeavors and meet other Postdocs. Campus resources will be shared as well as other relevant information.</p> <p>Visit http://www.grad.uci.edu/center/ to learn more.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>8. Learn About Resources for Your Personal Daily Needs</p> <p>Visit this website below to find comprehensive information about local supermarkets, post offices, churches, on-campus and off-campus dining facilities, shopping destinations, utility companies, furniture rental companies, and more. http://www.housing.uci.edu/och/comresources.asp</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>9. Open a Bank Account</p> <p>Checking accounts allow checks to be written and savings accounts offer a place for you to keep your money while earning interest. When you open an account, an ATM card will be given to you so you can retrieve money anytime. It is <u>NOT safe to carry large amounts of cash.</u></p> <p>To open a bank account at most banks you need 2 valid forms of identification and a local mailing address to receive mail. For international scholars, a passport and UCI ID card are usually sufficient. Banks sometimes have “hidden” fees so be sure to inquire about all possible fees. Not all banks require a US Social Security Number but you will have more services if you have one (tell them that you’re applying for one and will submit it later. Visit http://www.housing.uci.edu/och/comresources.asp and http://www.ic.uci.edu/forms/BankingOptions.pdf to see a listing of all local banks and their hours.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>10. Obtain a Credit Card</p> <p>Credit cards are used commonly for transactions and allow one to establish a credit history. It is considered a safer way to withdraw money than carrying cash with you. Obtaining a credit card will ease the process of making payments. Some banks offer secure credit cards which are an alternative.</p>

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

11. Apply for a California Drivers License

If you intend to drive, you must get a California drivers license within 10 days of your arrival. To apply for a CA drivers license:

1. Schedule an office visit to the DMV Office. Go to <https://eg.dmv.ca.gov/foa/clear.do?goTo=officeVisit>
2. Complete application form DL 44, give a thumb print, have your picture taken, provide your Social Security Number (you can start the process before you have it), verify your birth date or legal presence, and provide your true full name.
3. Pay the \$25 application fee
4. Pass the following exams: vision exam, traffic laws and sign test, and the driving test.**

If you have a license from another country, you have to take the driving test. You have 3 chances to pass the driving test. International postdoctoral scholars need a valid foreign passport and the I-94 to obtain one.

12. Visit the UCI Postdoctoral Scholars Website for Extensive Resources

The UCI Postdoctoral Scholars Website has been specially created to meet your needs. The website features resources for academics & research, finding additional sources of funding, career and job opportunities, technology, leisure activities & other social life links, and much more.

Visit the site: <http://www.grad.uci.edu/postdoc/>

13. Sign up for Free Affiliate Membership with the National Postdoctoral Association

You can sign up for free affiliate membership to the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) as a UCI Postdoctoral Scholar! Free membership includes subscription to NPA's quarterly newsletter (Postdocket), periodic e-mail Alerts (E-Alerts), and access to all Member-Only content on the NPA website. You must have your UCI e-mail address to enroll.

Visit the National Postdoctoral Association Affiliate Membership Page below for more information or to join.
http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/site/c.eoJMIWOBIRH/b.1850773/k.5AF4/Affiliate_Membership/apps/ka/ct/contactus.asp?c=eoJMIWOBIRH&b=1850773&en=ghJHLSNCLiKMLXOFI7LGKUPHJiJPI4PHLeJL3OQKvE

14. Find Additional Sources of Funding

Postdoctoral Fellows are eligible for funding through extramural and internal sources. Visit <http://www.grad.uci.edu/postdoc/funding.htm#positions> for more details. The website www.research.uci.edu/funding/ offers comprehensive information regarding finding funding for your research.

15. AntPac: Library Research Resources

As you begin your research here, it is important for you to know where to access current information. Search for materials in all of UCI's libraries by going to this website.

<http://antpac.lib.uci.edu/screens/opacmenu.html>

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

16. Ride the OCTA bus for Free!

Get unlimited FREE access to the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) bus system 24 hours a day. Stop by the Parking and Transportation Services Office (UCI map #7) or UC Items (UCI map #113-Student Center) to get your ID card encoded to ride for free! The card lasts from August 1st to June 30th.
<http://www.parking.uci.edu/AT/modes/OCTA.cfm>

17. Buy a Car

Once you have obtained a California Drivers License, you can purchase a car. Visit <http://www.samarins.com/buying/index.html> to find resources on how to buy the right used car.

Remember that to drive in California, you need to have automobile and liability insurance. You must carry the minimum monetary limits: \$15,000 for injury/death of 1 person/accident; \$30,000 for 2 people; \$5,000 for property damage. Evidence of financial responsibility must be carried in the vehicle (the most common is the insurance identification card).

18. Life at UCI

Start making Irvine your home by exploring the resources available to you on and off campus. The first website contain information on stores, dining, travel destinations, and other services at or around UC Irvine. The second website offers good information on additional Irvine and Orange County Attractions.

http://www.grad.uci.edu/prospective/uci_life.htm

<http://uci.edu/visitors.php>

19. File a Tax Return: Mandatory for All Postdoctoral Scholars

You must report your annual income by filing a tax return between January 1 and April 15 for the previous tax year. To do this, you must have your Social Security Number. If you are a Scholar receiving a fellowship stipend, additional documents need to be completed and submitted to your Program Coordinator. Please visit http://www.grad.uci.edu/postdoc/tax_docs.htm for more information.

The International Center organizes a Tax Workshop with a representative from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) each March to assist with your questions. The time and location of this workshop is available every February of each year. Visit www.ic.uci.edu to learn more.

IRS also has an International Office if need help with specific questions. The number to their office is (215) 516-2000. Additional resources and information can be found at the IRS homepage (<http://www.irs.usreas.gov>) and the National Postdoctoral Association website (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/site/c.eoJMIWOBIRH/b.3790739/k.7323/Overview_of_Tax_Issues_for_Postdocs.htm)

20. Keep Your Information Current and Safe

Contact the International Center immediately if your DS-2019 appointment should change. Make sure to also keep your passport current and take care of all of your important documents. Put them in a safe place. If you travel outside the US (except Mexico and Canada) you will have to get a signature on your DS2019 form from the international Center. If you'll get a new I-94 at reentry you'll have to submit this to the International Center.

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

21. Stay in touch with the International Center

Every time you enter the USA check in with the International Center. Also keep the International Center updated with your telephone number and e-mail address and go there if you need any additional forms, information, or signatures.

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