Exchange Visitor Visa Compliance: ADS 252 Frequently Asked Questions

An Additional Help for ADS Chapter 252

PURPOSE: This document provides frequently asked questions and answers to assist implementing partners (IPs) and missions regarding Exchange Visitor Visa Compliance. For policy questions, contact the Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate RO (ARO) at **evpolicy@usaid.gov**. For technical questions regarding Training and Exchanges Automated Management System (TEAMS), contact TEAMS@usaid.gov.

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I. BASICS OF EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA COMPLIANCE

1. I'm completely new to Exchange Visitor (EV) Visa Compliance. What's the first step?

First, become familiar with USAID's policy regarding U.S.-based EV Visa Compliance by reviewing ADS Chapter 252, Visa Compliance for Exchange Visitors and learn the various roles and responsibilities for the Role 1 (R1) Initiator, Role 2 (R2) Award Verifier, Role 2 (R2) Country Verifier, and Role 3 (R3) Approver.

Second, become familiar with the Training and Exchanges Automated Management System (TEAMS), the workflow system that supports USAID EV Visa Compliance and is the entry point for data on EV programs. The TEAMS Helpdesk (**TEAMS@usaid.gov**) can provide assistance and direct you to online tutorials.

2. Where can I find USAID's policy regarding U.S.-based EV Visa Compliance?

ADS 252 provides USAID's current policy towards U.S.-based EV Visa Compliance and includes all of the required documentation needed for each EV. Note that the ADS contains policy requirements for Agency staff. Contractors and recipients with EV programs should reference the terms and conditions of their awards.

3. What are TEAMS and SEVIS?

To manage EV programs, USAID uses an online database system called TEAMS. TEAMS interfaces with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the online database that produces the *Form DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor* (J-1 Visa) Status. The Department of Homeland Security uses SEVIS to maintain and monitor participants in U.S. programs.

4. How do I gain access to TEAMS?

In general, when the IP and Mission staff are ready to gain access to TEAMS they should contact the TEAMS Helpdesk at **TEAMS@usaid.gov**.

More information on roles (Rs) and responsibilities are found in Section II. Below is a brief introduction to the roles in TEAMS and steps for registration.

R1 Initiator and R2 Award Verifier - The Contracting Officer's Representative or Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/AOR) for the award must confirm the R1 Initiator/ R2 Award Verfier's information by emailing the TEAMS Helpdesk at **TEAMS@usaid.gov**. The TEAMS helpdesk then handles the setup for R1 Initiators and R2 Award Verifiers directly.

R2 Country Verifier - The R3 Approver must send the TEAMS helpdesk an email at **TEAMS@usaid.gov** confirming the individual(s) designated for this role. The TEAMS helpdesk will then handle the setup.

R3 Approver - Mission Directors must send the R4 Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate RO (ARO) an email at **EVpolicy@usaid.gov** with the name of the individual appointed to the R3 role (alternatively, the Point of Contact [POC] can forward an email from the Mission Director designating an individual to this role).

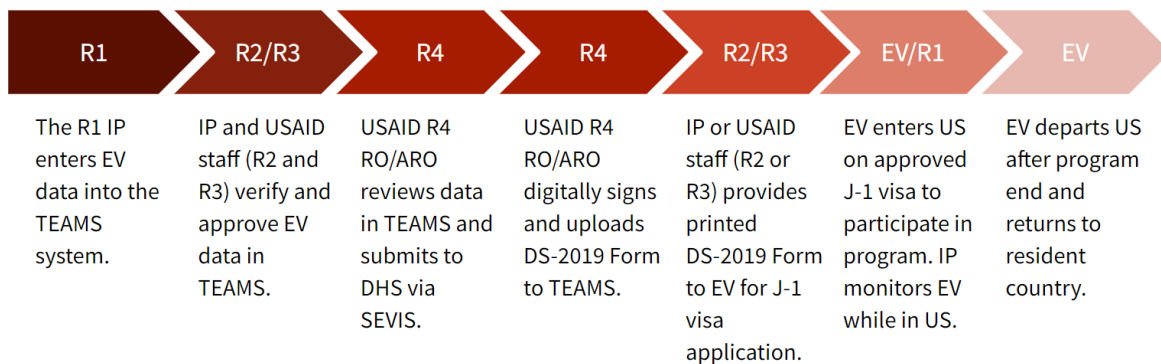## 5. Where can I access training to TEAMS?

There are a number of tutorial videos on our [website](#), and you can consult the [TEAMS manual](#).

6. What is the process to bring USAID-sponsored EVs to the United States?

The IP, whose award includes an EV program, begins by entering information about the EV(s) in TEAMS. Once the Mission approves the submission, the RO, located at USAID headquarters in Washington DC, submits the information in SEVIS via TEAMS. SEVIS produces the DS-2019 form for the R4 RO/ARO to electronically sign and upload to TEAMS. Once downloaded, the R1 Initiator, R2 Verifier, or R3 Approver can either print the form and coordinate pick-up/delivery arrangements with the EV, or email the form directly to the EV (using encryption to ensure PII is secure) and instruct the EV and their dependent(s) to submit the form to the U.S. Consulate as part of their J-1/2 visa application.

The R3 Approver may request the R4 RO/ARO physically sign and ship the DS-2019 form to Missions via postal mail, instead of digitally signing and uploading the form to TEAMS, by contacting the RO/ARO team (**EVpolicy@usaid.gov**). However, as this process takes an additional one to two weeks, the R4 RO/ARO highly recommends the use of digital signatures to avoid delays.

ADS 252: EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA COMPLIANCE WORKFLOW

R1	R2/R3	R4	R4	R2/R3	EV/R1	EV
The R1 IP enters EV data into the TEAMS system.	IP and USAID staff (R2 and R3) verify and approve EV data in TEAMS.	USAID R4 RO/ARO reviews data in TEAMS and submits to DHS via SEVIS.	USAID R4 RO/ARO digitally signs and uploads DS-2019 Form to TEAMS.	IP or USAID staff (R2 or R3) provides printed DS-2019 Form to EV for J-1 visa application.	EV enters US on approved J-1 visa to participate in program. IP monitors EV while in US.	EV departs US after program end and returns to resident country.

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II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7. What are the various roles of IPs and Mission staff?

<u>Role 1 (R1) Initiator</u> - Is typically an EV program IP staff responsible for entering all required data and initiating subsequent workflows within TEAMS for new EV programs and updates to EV programs (see ADS 252.3.3.1). The Initiator is nominated by each USAID COR/AOR for EV programs funded by the contract or assistance award. COR/AORs email the TEAMS Helpdesk (**teams@usaid.gov**) to nominate new Initiators and to remove former R1 Initiators. The R1 Initiator only views and verifies data for EVs funded under their respective contract(s) or assistance award(s).

<u>Role 2 (R2) Award Verifier</u> - Is an IP staff member who verifies data for EVs and dependents traveling to the United States on behalf of the IP (see ADS 252.3.3.2). The R2 Award Verifier is employed by the same organization as, and typically has an oversight role over, the R1 Initiator. The R2 Award Verifier's role is to verify the accuracy and validity of all data and documentation entered and uploaded by the R1 Initiator, in order to address any data integrity issues internally within the program IP's organization before the data moves to USAID. The Award Verifier is nominated by each USAID COR/AOR for EV programs funded by the USAID Office. COR/AORs email the TEAMS Helpdesk (**teams@usaid.gov**) to nominate new Award-Verifiers and to remove former Award-Verifiers. The R2 Award Verifier only views and verifies data for EVs funded under their respective contract(s) or assistance award(s).

<u>Role 2 (R2) Country Verifier</u> - Is a USAID Mission staff member who supports the R3 Country Approver by verifying EVs and dependents traveling to the United States (see ADS 252.3.3.2). R3 Approvers appoint R2 Country Verifiers by emailing the TEAMS Helpdesk (**TEAMS@usaid.gov**) to nominate new R2 Country Verifiers and to remove former R2 Country Verifiers. The R2 Country Verifier only views records for EVs who are residents of a country covered by their Mission. **Note:** The R2 Country Verifier role is optional.

<u>Role 3 (R3) Approver</u>. The R3 Approver is a U.S. citizen and Mission staff member who reviews EVs and dependents traveling to the United States (see ADS 252.3.3.3). The R3 Approver fulfills a frontline coordination role between the USAID program IP and the USAID Mission. Missions carry out the R3 Approver role for each EV and dependent whose legal residence is in a Mission's covered country. The Mission Director, or designee, appoints R3 Approvers for Mission staff.

8. Can a USAID Mission staff serve as an R1 Initiator?

Our standard practice is that the R1 Initiator role is held by IP staff, and instead Mission staff fill in the R2 Country Verifier and R3 Approver roles. Please contact the R4

RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov** so we can review your specific case and learn more about your Missions' process regarding EVs.

9. **My mission paused its EV program due to COVID-19, and we are ready to start it back up. When can we resume our EV program at our Mission?**

It's up to the Mission when they would like to resume their EV programs. Consult the [CDC website](#) for guidance on traveling to the United States and current requirements for EVs. Contact the TEAMS helpdesk at **TEAMS@usaid.gov** to learn whether your mission currently has any active TEAMS users and instructions to set up new users for R1 and R2 roles. To set up a new R3 user, you will need to contact the R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov**.

III. POLICIES REGARDING EVs AND DEPENDENT(S)

10. **A participant has left the program early without telling anyone and has not departed the U.S. when they were supposed to (i.e. they are still in the United States). What should I do?**

Immediately notify R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov** as this may be grounds for program termination. Details will need to be recorded in TEAMS and the R4 RO/ARO may need to directly update SEVIS.

11. **Are dependents allowed to come to the United States? If so, what is the process?**

EVs may bring family members to the United States either for an EV's full duration of stay or for short visits. USAID considers spouses of any age and unmarried children under the age of 21 traveling to the United States to accompany, join, or visit U.S.-based, USAID-sponsored EVs to be dependents.

EVs are responsible for paying all travel costs for an accompanying spouse and dependent(s) and may only bring family members to the United States if the EV possesses adequate financial resources to support an accompanying spouse and dependent(s). All dependents of USAID-sponsored EVs must obtain, use, and abide by the terms of the J-2 visa processed under a USAID program number. The same J visa application procedures that apply to EVs also apply to dependents (see [ADS 252.3.3](#)).

IV. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS (INCLUDING DS-2019s)

12. **Which Documents Are Most Important for the EV?**

The critical documents that each EV and any dependent(s) must retain for the duration of their stay in the United States includes:

- All DS-2019 forms issued and signed by the RO/ARO. This form, also known as the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status, permits a prospective EV and/or dependent to seek an interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate in order to obtain a J visa to enter the United States. The Form DS-2019 identifies the EV and their designated sponsor;
- Passport;
- Visa, issued by the Department of State; and
- Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record, which is available electronically.

13. What happens if a DS-2019 form gets lost in the mail (or stolen)?

Immediately contact the R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov** so we can review the specific case and provide instruction, including reissuing a new DS-2019 form.

V. VISAS

14. How long will it take to obtain and process a J-1 Visa?

USAID Missions are advised to allow two to four weeks from the time the EV data is entered into TEAMS until the completed and signed DS-2019 is uploaded to TEAMS. The total number of weeks is an estimate based on time needed for:

- Mission processing procedures;

- Submitting the DS-2019 form request to the State Department and processing of the form;

- Obtaining an electronic signature of the DS-2019 Form and uploading to TEAMS; and

- Mission and IP coordinating with the EV to deliver the DS-2019 form and the EV attending their consular appointment.

For the consular interview, you can find current visa appointment wait times by Embassy or Consulate on the State Department's website. Actual times may vary from country to country. Missions should account for any lead time they need before TEAMS data entry, as well as any follow-up time required for an EV to apply for the J-visa at their local consulate.

15. What types of visas can a USAID-sponsored EV apply for?

USAID-sponsored EVs traveling to the United States must travel on a J-1 visa exclusively. An EV must obtain the Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Visa Status (DS-2019) to apply for the J-1 visa (for an individual studying in the United States under a USAID

scholarship), or a J-2 visa (for the EV's dependents - spouse, or children under the age of 21). Exceptions can be made on a limited basis (see ADS 252.3.1). Missions should contact the R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov** to review exception cases.

16. One of our participants holds a valid A-1/A-2 visa. Do we need to enter this individual into TEAMS, and if so, how?

For individuals who hold a valid A-1/A-2 visa and who received an exception (see ADS 252.3.1), the records do not need to go through the TEAMS workflow since they would not be requesting a DS-2019. However, Missions may track these individuals in TEAMS for recordkeeping purposes. When adding an individual to a program in TEAMS, you can select the A-1/A-2 visa type instead of the standard J-1 visa. If you have any system functionality questions, the TEAMS helpdesk (**TEAMS@usaid.gov**) is able to assist.

17. Do short-term trainees (ex. one or two week program duration) have to go through the same visa process?

Yes. All USAID-sponsored EVs must obtain, use, and abide by the terms of the J-1 visa processed under the USAID program number.

VI. HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE (HAC)

18. Is health insurance required to get a DS-2019 Form, or is the promise of coverage enough?

In all instances, an EV must have health insurance coverage for the duration of their program in the United States. This includes the day the EV departs from their residency country to the day they return to their residency country.

An EV must have proof of health insurance uploaded to TEAMS prior to receiving a DS-2019. In limited circumstances, the R4 RO/ARO will allow a promissory letter in lieu of proof of insurance. To request an exception, please contact the R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov**.

19. Who provides health insurance for EVs and what are minimum coverage requirements?

USAID does not have a contract to provide health and accident coverage (HAC) coverage. HAC is obtained by contacting the HAC provider directly and by completing their enrollment information.

If purchasing private health care insurance, select the appropriate level of deductible, minimum per illness or accident coverage, and ensure there is coverage for repatriation

of remains and medevac to the levels stated in [ADS 252](). Please review [ADS 252.3.5.3]() EV Health and Accident Insurance.

USAID follows the regulatory requirements for EV insurance at [22 CFR 62.14](), which states:
Minimum coverage must provide:

1. Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness;

2. Repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000;

3. Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of EVs to their home country in the amount of $50,000; and

4. Deductibles not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.

20. What health insurance coverage proof would you accept?

Insurance cards with program dates and the EV's name. For exceptions, please contact the R4 RO/ARO at **evpolicy@usaid.gov**.

VII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

21. Who can I contact to help answer policy or technical questions?

For policy questions, contact the R4 Responsible Officer at **evpolicy@usaid.gov**. For technical questions regarding TEAMS, contact **TEAMS@usaid.gov**.

22. Where can I find additional resources on U.S. policy regarding U.S.-based EV Visa Compliance?

- [22 CFR 62]() Exchange Visitor Program
- [ADS 252, Visa Compliance for Exchange Visitors]()
- [ADS 252maa, TEAMS Users' Manual]()
- [ADS 252sab, Exchange Visitor Visa Compliance: Checklist for TEAMS Users R1 Initiator and R2 Award Verifier]()
- [ADS 252sac, Exchange Visitor Visa Compliance: Checklist for TEAMS Users R2 Country Verifier and R3 Approver]()
- [International Travel to and from the United States CDC website]()
- [USAID Exchange Visitor Visa Compliance Website]()
- [U.S. Department of State DS-2019 Frequently Asked Questions]()
- [U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Visa Website]()
- [U.S. Department of State J-1 Visa Website]()

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