USA

- Guide for researchers and PhD students planning a stay in the USA while being employed at AU

Note: A good place to start is to check whether your host university/institution has an international centre or contact person, where you can receive help and guidance. The information below covers the most central issues you will come across when doing a research stay abroad.

Disclaimer: The International Academic Staff Services does not assume responsibility for any incorrect or outdated information in this guide. Please refer to the listed references for the most recent information.

Visa

Do I need a visa?

To work or study in the USA, you will need a visa. In many cases your host university/institution will be part of the visa application process. Once you have been given an academic appointment and documented that you have sufficient funds to finance your stay, the American host will send you a visa form. This visa form enables you to apply for a visa through the American Embassy in Denmark.

Visa types

The visa form you receive from the American host determines which visa category you qualify for. If you receive a Form DS-2019, you can apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. On the other hand, if you receive a Form I-20, you can apply for an F-1 Academic Visa.

Some universities/institutions issue one visa form, others issue the other. The difference between the J-1 visa and F-1 visa is the number of days you can stay in the USA after the end of your period of work or study. With the J-1 visa, you are allowed to stay in the USA for 30 days after the end of your period of work/study, while you are allowed to stay for 60 days with an F-1 visa. With both types of visa, you can enter the USA no more than 30 days prior to commencing your work/studies. If you would like to extend your stay prior to or following your visa period, you must re-enter on a tourist visa as a supplement your visa for study/work. Please note that you will not be allowed to work on a tourist visa.

What can I expect during the Visa application process?

Once you have received your visa form (DS-2019 or I-20) from your host university/institution, you should:
- Complete the DS-160 form online. You will find the DS-160 form at the embassy’s website.
- Pay the visa application fee.
- Submit the application.
- Schedule an appointment for an interview at the American Embassy.
It is important to be well-prepared for your interview at the embassy. You must bring all the documents listed in the embassy’s visa check list - please note that there is both a general “Visa Check List” and some additional requirements for the individual visa types. It is important to follow the checklist carefully and to comply with all the guidelines.

Your photo is a vital part of the visa application and you can find specific information regarding the photograph requirements at the USA Government website. Most Danish photographers can shoot photographs that comply with the requirements for American visa photographs.

If your application is incomplete, you risk being denied your visa - and risk having to pay another application fee and travel to Copenhagen again. The interview is normally very short. It can be quite a long wait before you are seen, so allocate a whole day for your visit to the embassy.

After the interview, most visa applicants receive their passport and visa within five working days. However, some applications may require additional clearances and a longer processing time. You can pick up your visa at your local post office after receiving a notification from the Embassy. Make sure to check that your visa is correct, and remember that it is only valid in conjunction with the I-20 or DS-2019 document which you must have with you at all times when travelling.

A J-1 visa entitles you to work/study in the USA for the specific American host university/institution, in compliance with the information stated in your Form DS-2019. It is therefore illegal to seek employment – both paid and unpaid – with other employers in the USA. An F-1 visa entitles you to study in the USA, and to work on campus and in some situations even off campus.

It is recommended that you do not buy plane tickets before you receive your visa.

**How much time should I expect to spend on obtaining a visa?**

It is important to allocate sufficient time to obtain a visa. Visa appointments with the embassy can be booked up to two months in advance.

Below is an example of the visa application process for the fictitious character, Paul, who is planning a stay at UC Berkeley for six months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 2015</th>
<th>UC Berkeley decided to invite Paul.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of March 2016</td>
<td>Paul received a visa document from UC Berkeley, and booked a visa appointment with the US Embassy in Copenhagen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late April 2016</td>
<td>Paul visited the US Embassy, and received his visa and passport a week later. Paul booked flight tickets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late May 2016</td>
<td>In order to have time to settle in, Paul arrived to the USA a week before commencing work/studies at UC Berkeley. He reported his arrival at UC Berkeley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of June 2016</td>
<td>Paul began working/studying at UC Berkeley.</td>
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Security restrictions at the US Embassy in Copenhagen

Security restrictions at the Embassy of the United States in Copenhagen are rather strict, and in order to have a pleasant visit at the embassy, please pay attention to the special requirements.

When arriving at the embassy, you will need to present valid photo identification to the guards. Once verified, the guards will begin the security scanning process, which is similar to that of most international airports.

Due to security restrictions, no portable computers, iPads, eReaders such as Kindles or Nooks and large bags (back packs, suitcases, etc.) are allowed in the embassy. You are strongly advised not to bring such items to the embassy.

All small electronic items, such as mobile phones, iPods, MP 3 players and USB sticks, must be left with the guards. The items stay in the security area, where you may recover them upon your departure. The guard provides a receipt for your items. Given that the waiting time may be lengthy, it may be a good idea to take a book along with you.

Visa Waiver Program

If you are travelling to the USA for tourism or business for up to 90 days, you might qualify for the Visa Waiver Program. This is a significantly easier process than applying for a visa. There are thirty-seven countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program: a full list of the countries can be found at The US Embassy Website.

If you qualify for the Visa Waiver Program you will have to apply through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). It is recommended that you apply for an ESTA at least 72 hours before travel. In most cases, a reply is received within seconds of submitting an application, but the processing of an ESTA can take up to 72 hours.

If you are traveling on a valid visa you are not required to apply for an ESTA.

A number of non-governmental websites charge a fee for submitting ESTA applications on behalf of the applicants. The use of such sites has in some instances caused problems, and more information can be found on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website.

What about visas for a spouse and children?

You can apply for a visa for your accompanying spouse and children under the age of 21 concurrently with your own visa application. Spouses and children of J-1 visa holders may apply for J-2 visas. Spouses and children of F-1 visa holders may apply for F-2 visas. Accompanying spouses and children will be entitled to enter the USA, and in some cases it is also possible to obtain a work permit. Find more information about the J-2 visa.

Paperless partnerships – regardless of the duration of the relationship – cannot be cited as basis for obtaining a ‘spouse’ visa for your partner. In cases of long-standing cohabitation, it will normally be possible to apply for a tourist visa for your partner which will be valid for the same period as your work permit.
Insurance

Aarhus University has travel insurance covering travels on official business. To be covered by this insurance, you have to apply for a personal insurance card. Information about this procedure can be found here: www.ias.au.dk/goingabroad/insurances

You will most likely be requested to document the specific insurance conditions for Aarhus University’s insurance covering travel on official business. The insurance conditions can be found on this website: http://tjenesterejser.europaeiske.dk. Enter customer number: 31119103 and password: 30191113. Click on “Betingelser” → “English conditions” → download the Insurance Conditions.

If the host university/institution asks for further proof of the insurance terms, please contact Europæiske, who will be able to provide a declaration confirming the coverage of the insurance. The phone number for Europæiske can be found on your insurance card.

If you are going to be stationed at a university in the US, special circumstances may apply as a number of federal states and/or institutions have additional – and often very extensive - requirements for insurance coverage.

In such circumstances it is important to clarify the following with your employer before you make the final decision to relocate:

a) Does the particular American state or institution require any additional insurance?

b) In this case, will your employer take on the (significant) additional expenses this may entail as a consequence of the extended coverage? And if affirmative:

c) Is it possible to get the federal state/institution to accept a declaration from your employer guaranteeing to accept any additional costs that are not included in the ordinary travel insurance covering travels on official business and thus will not be included in the disbursement from Europæiske? Or

d) Alternatively, in case the federal state/institution does not accept such a declaration, will the employer pay the supplementary insurance?

Tax

This section will describe the current tax rules for researchers employed at Aarhus University but working in the USA. However, please be advised that binding tax answers can only be given by SKAT. A fee of DKK 400 is charged for a binding ruling and the response time to get an answer may be up to three months. Hence, it is recommended that you contact your local tax office before departure.

If you live abroad, you may be subject to either full or limited tax liability, or you may not be liable to pay tax at all in Denmark. The decisive factor in determining your tax liability, if any, is whether you still have the right of disposal of your year-round accommodation in Denmark.

- If you keep the right of disposal of your accommodation in Denmark, you will, as a general rule, be subject to full tax liability and thus liable to pay Danish tax on your entire income.
• If you live abroad and stay in Denmark for a period of less than six consecutive months, you will, as a general rule, not be liable to pay tax in Denmark. However, you may receive income on which you must still pay tax.
• Denmark has entered into double taxation agreements with a number of countries to prevent that the same income is taxed twice.

If you sell your property or terminate the tenancy agreement of your rented home, your full tax liability in Denmark will cease. If you rent out your home, you must enter into a non-terminable three-year tenancy agreement with your tenant in order for your full tax liability to cease.

If you still own property or have income from Denmark when moving abroad, and if SKAT has assessed that you are no longer subject to full tax liability, you will become subject to limited tax liability in Denmark.

Limited tax liability means that you only need to pay tax on certain income from Denmark. This may, for example, be:

• Rental income from Danish property
• Salary/wages from an employer in Denmark
• Pension, state pension, fee for board membership and other A-income (income taxed at source)
• Dividends
• Income from Danish property
• Property value tax based on the public property assessment of a holiday home or second home in Denmark

When you leave Denmark to move abroad, you must notify SKAT by completing and submitting form no. 04.029 (Information about residence and other relevant information when leaving Denmark to stay abroad).

As a researcher, if you are a Danish citizen, employed by a Danish institution and you are expatriated to a foreign institution (salary paid from Denmark), you will be subject to full tax liability to Denmark according to the Act on Taxation at the Source (Kildeskatteloven) section 1, (4) whether or not you still have the right of disposal of your year-round accommodation in Denmark.

According to section 33 A (1) of the Tax Assessment Act (Ligningsloven), a person who is fully tax liable to Denmark can apply for a tax exemption if he or she is working abroad. The stay abroad must last no less than 6 months.

According to section 33 A (2) (2) of the Act, section 33 A (1) does not apply if the salary is determined according to a collective agreement unless the collective agreement clearly states that the salary has been determined in view of an exemption according to section 33 A (1).

The salary for public employees in Denmark is normally determined by the collective agreements. As a researcher, you are still covered by the collective agreement when you are expatriated in connection with your employment at Aarhus University. Hence, section 33A (1) cannot be used and you are not eligible for tax exemption. You may however be eligible for deductions for double housekeeping or for food and accommodation (see section 4.2).

The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (Akademikerne) and the Agency for the Modernisation of Public Administration are currently negotiating the possibility of individual salary negotiations between the employer and the employee which would make it possible for public employees to apply for tax exemption even though they are covered by a collective agreement. However, the status of these negotiations is unknown at this time (September 2015).
If you are a non-Danish citizen and you leave Denmark to work abroad for a period of time, SKAT will assess whether you are still tax liable to Denmark. Please contact SKAT directly and ask for an assessment of your situation.

Denmark and USA have entered a Convention for the avoidance of double taxation (dobbeltbeskatningsoverenskomst). The purpose of the convention is to prevent both double taxation and tax evasion on income taxes. The convention can be read on the Danish Ministry of Taxation website (in Danish only).

Read more about taxation when leaving Denmark.

**Address**

**Do I have to deregister my address in Denmark?**

If you are moving abroad for more than 6 months, you have to deregister your address from the Danish CPR register. This should be done online by logging on to www.lifeindenmark.dk with your NemID and choosing the municipality where you live. If you are abroad for less than 6 months and retain your accommodation in Denmark, it is usually possible to keep your address registered in Denmark.

You are entitled, though not required, to have your new address registered in the Danish CPR register if you move from one address to another while living abroad.

Information about deregistering your address

Non-EU/EEA citizens: Please note that if you cancel your address in Denmark, your residence and work permit will most likely be terminated. It is, however, possible under certain circumstances to get a dispensation for the termination of your residence and work permit. You should contact the Danish Immigration authorities or International Academic Staff Services for further information and assistance. Read more about the termination of your residence and work permit.

**Do I have to register my address in the USA?**

There is no formal resident registration system in the USA. Therefore you do not have to formally register your address in the USA. You will, however, probably be requested to inform your host university/institution and the border authorities about your address when you arrive in the USA. For further information, contact the university/institution where you are going to study/work.

**Driving permit**

If you consider driving while in the USA, some states allow you to drive with an international driving permit. The United States does not issue international driving permits to foreign visitors, and you will therefore need to obtain this document before traveling to the United States. You can obtain an international driving permit at Citizen Service (Borgerservice) in your municipality in Denmark if you have a valid Danish driving permit.

Depending on which states you are going to visit in the USA, different rules regarding driving permits apply and you may have to get an American driving permit instead of an international driving permit. You can find more information on the U.S. government’s official web portal.
Accommodation

How do I find accommodation in the USA?

Your host university/institution may have an international centre or something similar, where you can receive help and guidance when it comes to finding accommodation.

When looking for accommodation in the USA, here are some of the main housing portals:

- [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) – accommodation, furniture, etc.
- [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com)
- [www.forrent.com](http://www.forrent.com)

Living costs

In general, living costs in the USA are lower compared to Denmark. According to the OECD, the price level in the USA is approximately 81 pct. of the price level in Denmark (Sept. 2015). Some major cities in the USA are, however, relatively expensive also compared to Danish standards. At the website [www.numbeo.com](http://www.numbeo.com) average prices for some of the major cities in the USA can be found. At the website it is also possible to compare average prices in Denmark and the USA.
Links

General information on planning a stay abroad for studying, work or research purposes: www.ias.au.dk/goingabroad

For more information about visa, visa waiver program and ESTA, go to the website for the USA embassy in Copenhagen: http://denmark.usembassy.gov

For information about photograph requirements for visa applications: http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/photos.html

For information about the J-1 exchange visitor program from the U.S. Department of State: http://j1visa.state.gov

Information about deregistering your address: https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/Pages/Practical-matters-before-leaving.aspx (in English) and www.borger.dk/Sider/Flyt-til-udlandet.aspx (in Danish)

Information from borger.dk about how to obtain an international driving permit (in Danish): www.borger.dk/sider/koerekort-i-udlandet.aspx

Information from the United States government’s official web portal about driving in the USA as a foreign visitor: www.usa.gov/Topics/Foreign-Visitors-Driving.shtml

Information from Department of Homeland Security related to restrictions about bringing food, agricultural products or other restricted/prohibited goods to the USA: www.cbp.gov/travel/clearing-cbp
www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/kbyg/prohibited-and-restricted-items

Information about Aarhus University’s travel insurance covering travel on official business: http://tjenesterejser.europaeiske.dk, Enter the customer number: 31119103 and password: 30191113.

Information about the Convention for the avoidance of double taxation (in Danish): www.skm.dk/love/internationalt/dobbeltbeskatningsoverenskomster

Information about taxation when leaving Denmark: www.skat.dk/SKAT.aspx?id=1899711&vld=203515&search=leaving%C2%A4denmark

Information for non-EU/EEA citizens about the termination of a residence and work permit: www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/if_you_leave_denmark/work_and_studies

Danmark-Amerika Fondet & Fulbright Kommissionen offers grants and guidance (for Danish nationals only): www.wemakeithappen.dk

Information about living costs: www.numbeo.com

Learn what you need to know about entering the U.S., transportation within the U.S., money, and much more by visiting: www.discoveramerica.com