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Checklist for going abroad for your change of research environment

Before planning your change of research environment, read general background information provided by Graduate school: <https://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/studyabroad/> and International Staff Mobility: <https://ism.ku.dk/> , <https://phd.ku.dk/english/abroad/>

The information on this checklist is mostly obtained from the Graduate school and ISM and is subject to change. Many thanks to MoMeD students who contributed to this checklist with their experience.

Step 1: Find out where you want to have your change of research environment

- Start early: preferably plan this as early as possible in your PhD, to avoid last minute cancelations or to provide enough time to setup a collaboration.
- Talk to you supervisor and consider the desired outcome of your trip. Where does it make most sense to go? How long should your stay be?
- Find a host university/institution. Either you or your supervisor can reach out to the host institution.
- Make a budget estimate (rent, travel, insurance, local transport)

Step 2: Apply for financial support at the Graduate School for Health and Medical Sciences

You will keep receiving your UCPH salary while you are doing change of research environment. In addition, the **Graduate school provides financial support to cover your travel expenses, rent, local transport, health and travel insurance** (please check whether your workplace covers travel insurance).

You are eligible for financial support from the Graduate School if your change of research environment lasts for **at least four weeks in total** and is completed at a research institution **abroad or in Denmark outside the Capital Region of Denmark or Region Zealand**.

The maximum grant is DKK 20,000 for the first month and up to DKK 5,000 for the following five months. The maximum grant you can receive during your PhD programme is DKK 45,000 (equivalent to a six month stay).

As of 1 February 2023, you must apply for financial support at the same time as you register your change of research environment (in PhD planner). You cannot apply for financial support without completing all necessary steps in your application regarding change of research

environment.

When to register your change of research environment/apply for financial support?

You can register your change of research environment before, during or after you go abroad.

It might be better to register after the change of research environment is completed, since by this time you would have a full overview of your expenses. Make sure to provide correct documentation for the Graduate school.

Apply for financial support from the Graduate school in PhD planner:

- Obtain **invitation letter** from the host university/institution with the exact period you are abroad. The documentation must contain the institution signature or logo. If you're staying at different host universities/institutions, you need documentation from all of them.

Prepare a **short statement** explaining the connection between your stay and your PhD project.

- Obtain **project account information** from your department (UCPH employees only). **The funding will be transferred to the department/group account, not your personal account!** If you paid for accommodation/transport/other relevant items yourself, you will need to apply for reimbursement at your department/group.

Step 3: Prepare your stay abroad

Addendum to your employment contract

- If you are employed at UCPH and your stay abroad exceeds 28 days, you will need an addendum to your employment contract to be covered by UCPH's travel insurance. Please contact your place of employment or HR if this applies to you. If you need further information or have any question concerning the addendum, please contact International Staff Mobility.
- If you are employed elsewhere, make sure to check your employer's insurance conditions.

Visa

- Check <https://visumservice.dk/> if you need visa. If you do, please contact your host for invitation letter for visa application. Contacting HR department of your host institution could also be a way to get help with visa arrangements.
- Enquire what type of visa and what supporting documents you need and, if relevant, make an appointment at the embassy as soon as possible.
- If you are not from EU/EEA/Switzerland, make sure your Danish residence permit is valid during your stay abroad.

Accommodation and travel

- It is a good idea to start looking for accommodation as soon as the dates for your secondments have been settled. Consider reaching out to your host or members of your host group for advice.
- You must book your travel through [CWT](#). Make sure you have an activated account in advance!
- Collect and keep all relevant receipts for your reimbursement (in [Rejsud2](#)).

Travel insurance and insurance in the lab

Travel insurance

- Check if your department/institution provides travel insurance for you. If yes, remember to collect your travel insurance card before you leave!
- If you are EU/EEA/Switzerland citizen and stay within EU/EEA/Switzerland, you may use the [blue European health insurance card](#). However, it must be issued by Denmark.

- **Travel insurance for the USA**

It is often a requirement that you have an extended travel insurance when you are going to the USA.

If you have already received the health insurance requirements from the host, you must contact Europæiske at erhverv@europaeiske.dk to receive an insurance statement for the purpose of checking if the travel insurance at UCPH covers the request by the USA. Kindly state:

Your full name

The period of travel

UCPH's policy no.: 29979812

If the travel insurance by Europæiske is not sufficient, you will need an extra insurance. You can include the costs in the funding application for the Graduate school.

Insurance in the lab

- It depends on your host institution if you will be covered by local insurance in the host lab. Make sure to clarify at your UCPH department whether you should get a separate insurance for the time you are abroad or if you will continue to be insured.

Additional information:

- Consider applying for a personal [UCPH credit card](#) – you can use it for booking of flights or payment for accommodation (this procedure applies to BRIC but may be different elsewhere, contact your department for advice).

Step 4: Ensure everything is settled before you leave

- If you are away from Denmark for more than 6 months, you must [deregister from the Danish Civil Registration System \(CPR\) + notify the Danish Tax Agency](#)
- Check with your host institution whether you are to pay any tax on your Danish income in your country of destination. Double-check with the [Danish Tax Agency](#) (72 22 28 92).

If you are going to the USA

- Find more information in the attached guide from ISM.



USA

Guide for PhD Students planning a change of research environment in the USA

Visa

Do I need a visa?

You will need a visa to either study or work in the USA.

For informal visits you may be able to travel to the USA without a visa if you are a citizen of a country participating in the Visa Waiver Program (registration is always required though - see more below).

In most cases, your host institution will assist you with the visa application process. Once you have received a formal invitation from the host institution, you will also receive a visa form which enables you to apply for a visa through the [U.S. Embassy in Denmark](#).

Visa types

Most PhD Students travel on a [J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa](#).

The host institution will initiate the visa application process for you by sending you the DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status).

Note that at the end of the J-1 visa you may be subject to the two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement. This means that you will be required to return to your home country for two years at the end of your exchange visitor program.

Your host university might also apply for a [F-1 Student Visa](#) for you, either to avoid the two-year home-country physical presence requirement mentioned above or because the quota of students sponsored on a J-1 visa has been reached. If this is the case, you will receive the I-20 form instead.

With both types of visas, you can enter the USA no more than 30 days prior to commencing your work. At the end of your exchange, you are allowed to stay on holiday in the USA for 30 days on the J-1 visa and for 60 days on the F-1 visa.

Visa application process

Once you have received the visa form (DS-2019 or I-20) from your host institution, you should complete the [DS-160 online form](#). Once you have submitted the DS-160 form, you should pay the SEVIS fee online and schedule an appointment for an interview at the Embassy.

It is important to be well prepared for the interview. [You must bring all the required documents and comply with all the guidelines](#).

You can find specific information regarding the photograph requirements [on the webpage of the U.S. Department of State](#). Most Danish photographers can shoot photographs that comply with these requirements.

If your application is not complete you risk being denied a visa (and having to pay another application fee). Even though the interview is normally very short, you might have to wait a long time before you are seen, so allocate a whole day to your visit at the Embassy.

Note that security restrictions at the Embassy are rather strict, so in order to have a pleasant visit you should pay attention to some 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 the one of most international airports. No portable computers, iPads, eReaders or large bags are allowed. You are strongly advised not to bring such items to the Embassy. Similarly, all small electronic items, such as mobile phones, iPods, MP3 players and USB keys, 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.

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 the local post office after receiving a notification from the Embassy. Make sure to check that the visa is correct and remember that it is only valid in conjunction with the I-20/DS-2019 form which you must have with you at all times when travelling.

It is important to allocate sufficient time to obtain a visa. It is also recommended that you do not buy plane tickets before having received your visa.

Visa Waiver Program

If you travel to the USA to attend either:

- a meeting
- a scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conference
- short-term training for less than 90 days

you may be able to travel with an [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) through the [Visa Waiver Program](#) if you are a citizen of a [participating country](#). If you are not, you may be able to travel on a [B-1 business visa](#).

It is important to keep in mind that you must not formally enroll in any study program, nor receive credits, diplomas or salary. Likewise, you must not contribute to the production of the host institution. On an ESTA/B-1 you must, in fact, not be paid by any source in the USA (with the only exception of expenses incidental to your stay).

It is recommended to apply for an ESTA at least 72 hours before travelling. In most cases, a reply is received within seconds of submitting the application, but the processing of an ESTA can take up to 72 hours.

Travelling with family

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 would also be possible to obtain a work permit.

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 and Tax

Insurance

If you are employed by and receive salary from the University of Copenhagen during the whole stay in the USA you will be covered by the Travel insurance policy for Danish Government employees.

You should ask your department to help you apply for a personal insurance card. This insurance policy covers treatment of acute illnesses, transportation on doctor's orders (including repatriation) and, under certain circumstances, robbery and liability. The policy is handled by the private insurance company [Europæiske](#).

In order to fulfill the health insurance related requirements when applying for a J-1 visa, you may have to ask Europæiske to issue you a declaration describing the policy's coverage and confirming that the policy is backed by the full faith of the Danish Government.

You may also experience that some host institutions in the USA might require further coverage for routine treatment and/or treatment of existing conditions, which is by default not covered by the Travel insurance policy for Danish Government employees. Ask your department whether they can purchase further insurance coverage for you. You may also want to double-check with your host institution whether you can be covered by their insurance as a visitor and, if not, whether they can recommend any insurance policy.

If you plan to take any holiday in connection with your change of research environment, note that the Travel insurance policy for Danish Government employees does not cover you while you are on holiday, so you should make sure that you are covered by a private travel insurance policy.

Tax

As long as you are employed and receive salary from the University of Copenhagen and keep your home in Denmark, you will continue paying taxes in Denmark.

As you travel for your employer, you may have the possibility of having your travel expenses covered by the University of Copenhagen. If it is approved by your department that you can receive per diems and get hotel/accommodation covered under the general rules for posted researchers, this is tax-free and does not need to be reported to the Danish Tax Agency.

Should this not be approved, you can still apply for funding either from a private or public foundation. If you manage to obtain external funding, it is advisable to report it to the Danish Tax Agency, even though it may be tax-free.

If you bear such expenses yourself, note that you can apply for [tax deductions](#).

You should also remember to double-check with your host institution whether you are to pay any tax on your Danish income in the USA. Denmark and the USA have entered a [Convention for the avoidance of double taxation](#) (in Danish only) to prevent both double taxation and tax evasion on income taxes. If in doubt, call the Danish Tax Agency at 72 22 28 92.

If you leave Denmark for more than six months, you should notify the Danish Tax Agency by calling 72 22 28 92.

Residence and practical issues

Address in Denmark

If you leave Denmark for more than 6 months, you have to de-register from the Danish Civil Registration System (CPR). This can be done [online](#). 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 Civil Registration System (CPR) if you move from one address to another while living abroad.

If you are a third country national and hold a Danish residence and work permit as a PhD Student, you should not be concerned about having to lose your permit. This kind of permit does, in fact, not lapse in connection with stays abroad. If you are in Denmark on other legal grounds and are in doubt about the applicable conditions when leaving Denmark, do not hesitate to contact International Staff Mobility.

Address in the USA

There is no formal registration requirement in the USA. Therefore, you do not have to formally register your address with the local authorities. You will, however, probably be requested to inform your host institution and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection about your address upon arrival. Contact your host institution for further information.

Driving permit

If you consider driving while in the USA, you should bring an international driving permit (IDP). The United States do not issue international driving permits to foreign visitors, and you will therefore need to obtain this document before travelling. You can obtain an international driving permit at your local [Citizen Service \(Borgerservice\)](#); note that in order to obtain an IDP you will need to have a valid Danish driving permit.

Depending on which states you are going to visit in the USA, different rules regarding driving permits apply. You can find more information on the [U.S. government's official webportal](#).

Accommodation

Ask your host institution whether you can receive help and guidance in finding accommodation. Most American universities have housing options available to visitors on campus.

Otherwise, here are some of the main housing portals:

www.craigslist.org

www.apartments.com

www.forrent.com

www.apartmentfinder.com

Living costs

As a rule of thumb, living costs in the USA are lower compared to Denmark. Some major cities in the USA are, however, relatively expensive, also compared to Danish standards. On the website www.numbeo.com you can both find average prices for some of the major cities in the USA and compare average prices in Denmark with the ones in the USA.

Useful links

Both [Danmark-Amerika Fondet](#) and [Fulbright Denmark](#) offer grants and guidance.

Final note: *A good place to start is to check whether your host institution has an international office that can guide you and assist you throughout the entire process.*

Disclaimer: *International Staff Mobility does not assume any responsibility for any incorrect or outdated information in this guide. Please refer to the links for the most recent information.*