Hosting a J-1 Visiting Scholar

Purpose of Exchange Visitor Program*: To increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.

*At UWL, "Exchange Visitor” is often referred to as ”Visiting Scholar or Scholar”.

The University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (UWL) has been approved by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor J-1 Exchange Visitors participating in academic research, teaching, and observation at UWL.

Exchange Visitor (J-1) is not appropriate for individuals who will:
- Engage in any position that does not require the minimum of a Bachelor’s degree;
- Hold tenure-track or tenured faculty appointments or long term positions;
- Pass through the formal recruitment and hiring process with UWL’s HR Department;
- Pursue US Permanent Residency (green card)

Scholar Categories:
- **Professor** (3 week minimum - 5 year maximum teaching, observing, lecturing)
- **Research Scholar** (3 week minimum - 5 year maximum, conducting research, observing, consulting)
- **Short Term Scholar** (no minimum, 6 month maximum, NO EXTENSIONS – lecturing, conducting research, observing, or consulting)
- **Specialists** (3 week minimum, 1 year maximum – observing, consulting, or demonstrating his/her highly specialized knowledge or skills)

Minimum Qualification: Potential Scholar must have earned a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in order to be considered for a visiting scholar position.

Timeline: Bringing in an individual in J-1 status may take anywhere from 3 to 4 months. After determining the scholar’s proposed activity is suitable for the J program, the next step in bringing a scholar to campus is to prepare a letter of invitation.

Host Department Invitation Letter:
Letter must include the following information:
- Name of the department that will host the scholar
- Name and contact information of the supervising faculty from the host department assigned to the scholar for the duration of the program
- Scholar’s category
- Terms of scholar’s program at UWL including start/end dates, salary (if applicable)
- Specific information on what type of activity the scholar will be engaged in (for example if research, the name/topic/brief description of research project)
- Host department’s expectations of the scholar
Identify any type of university support which will be provided to the scholar such as availability of office/lab space, access to equipment, computer access, clerical support, resources, and faculty collaboration available to the scholar.

How to submit an application to bring a visiting scholar to campus:
The Host Department/Supervising Faculty is advised to contact Diane Sasaki, International Education & Engagement’s (IEE) J-1 Scholar Coordinator, directly at dsasaki@uwlax.edu to arrange a meeting to receive and review necessary forms required of the Host Department. Both the visiting scholar and the host department must complete forms and prepare documentation in order for the scholar to receive form DS-2019 (a legal form the scholar will need to apply for a J visa). The host department is responsible for collecting all necessary forms/documents directly from the scholar and submitting them along with required departmental forms/documents directly to IEE.

IEE provides a wide variety of services to Visiting Scholars and Host Departments, including the following:

- Prepare form DS-2019 and letter of invitation for visa interview.
- Provide directions on how to pay the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee and schedule a visa appointment.
- Provide scholar’s dependent(s) with form DS-2019 necessary to obtain J-2 visa(s).
- Prior to arrival on campus, scholar will receive via email the U.S. State Department’s Exchange Visitor Program Welcome brochure, a Living in La Crosse Guide, and Housing information.
- Prior to arrival on campus, scholar will be emailed the cost of the mandatory health insurance for themselves and any dependents along with a health insurance brochure outlining coverage prepared by Student Assurance Services Incorporated, the provider of the mandatory insurance scholars and dependents will be enrolled in upon their arrival to the U.S.
- Coordinate the scholar’s and any dependents’ enrollment in the mandatory health insurance program and provide instructions on how to pay for this coverage.
- Answer questions the scholar and/or host department may have regarding applications, forms, processes, etc.
- Provide a mandatory immigration check-in within 20 days of scholar’s program start date as listed under item #3 on form DS-2019. During this orientation, the scholar will be provided with information on how to maintain their J-1 visa status for the duration of their stay, receive information on how to use the mandatory health insurance, process for obtaining a travel signature, explanation of employment authorization and the process used to request it for themselves and eligible dependents (if applicable), review of services provided by IEE to the scholar, including the office’s International Scholar Coordinator’s advising schedule.
- Provide advising and support to scholar on transitioning to living in the U.S. and cross-cultural concerns.
- Update scholar’s SEVIS record as needed.
- Explain and process extension of program requests.
- Assist with scholar’s request to transfer to another school’s J program, if applicable.
- Provide scholar and host department with J program updates and/or policy changes.
- Provide scholar with opportunities to engage in cross cultural experiences and culture sharing activities during their program.

Host Department Responsibilities:
1. Determine if the program is suitable to the exchange visitor’s education, experience and needs.
2. Determine if the scholar and accompanying dependents have adequate financial support for the duration of the scholar’s program. If paid by UWL, the salary is commensurate with the proposed activity.
3. Determine if the scholar has the English language proficiency adequate for the proposed activity and daily life.
4. Assign a department member to serve as supervising faculty.
5. Determine the supervising faculty member has clarified expectations with the scholar regarding UWL support, benefits, length of program and availability of office/lab space, equipment, computer access, clerical support, and faculty collaboration.
6. The supervising faculty will assist the scholar and any accompanying family members with orientation to UWL and the surrounding area.
7. Ensure the scholar is aware that s/he is required to purchase international scholar and dependent health insurance through IEE for the duration of his/her program and the scholar is responsible for paying all premiums and costs.
8. Provide information and/or assist the scholar with such things as housing, furniture and house goods rental or purchases, enrolling children in school, daycare options, locating the nearest grocery store, clothing store, public transportation, how to obtain emergency medical care, how to contact the fire and police departments, and life and customs in the U.S.
9. Provide the scholar with an emergency departmental contact and telephone number for days, evenings and weekends.
10. Make available to the scholar a variety of appropriate cross-cultural activities to give them the broadest exposure to American society and culture.
11. Encourage the scholar to voluntarily participate in activities which are for the purpose of sharing the language, culture, or history of their home country with Americans, provided such activities do not delay the completion of their program.
12. Notify IIE via email of the scholar’s planned arrival date on campus. If the scholar is delayed, the supervising faculty member will notify IEE and provide the expected date of arrival. The department will also notify IEE upon the scholar’s arrival.
13. Ensure the scholar will engage in activities consistent with the original program.
14. Notify IEE of any changes in the scholar’s program such as changes in financial support and/or loss of funding, discontinuation of the program, and any unexpected departures from the U.S. by the scholar.
15. Understand the scholar is not allowed to accept payment/employment, unless this information is listed on the DS-2019. The host department is not authorized to provide the scholar with work permission. All work authorization requests must be approved by IEE prior to the scholar beginning any type of employment, on or off campus.
16. Notify IIE of any changes to the supervising faculty.

Additional Important Information:

- All J-1 Scholars and J-2 Dependents are REQUIRED to enroll in UWL’S International Student/Scholar and Dependent Health Insurance Plan.
- Scholars and their dependents CANNOT access UWL’s Student Health Center for medical services. They must go off campus for medical care.