International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

and the

Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Guidance for Initiating and Extending Visiting Scholar/Scientist designation requests and J-1 Visa Sponsorship

Agenda

This presentation will provide on overview of the:

- definition of a Visiting Scholar/Scientist (VS)
- workflow and approval process for designating/extending:
  - VS designations
  - J-1 visa sponsorship
- estimated processing times for each stage of the workflow
- resources and contact information to assist you

Visiting Scholars/Scientists (VSs)

Purpose of the VS visit:

To conduct independent (non-collaborative) research, facilitated by:

- UNI, CU ID Card, library access and library borrowing privileges

The CU Faculty Sponsor:

Serves as a professional resource for the Visiting Scholar

- should share the same research interests as the VS
- should not be in the role of advisor, supervisor, collaborator
- should be on active CU appointment (not on sabbatical or other leave), or Barnard or TC faculty

Duration of VS Designation:

Generally up to one year

Extensions beyond one-year are rare and require compelling reasons as part of approval process

Visiting Scholars/Scientists (VSs)

Description of the VS Designation is in the Faculty Handbook

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visitors

Description of the five categories of visitors is found on the Provost Office website

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visitors

Required Documentation for VS Designation

Complete documentation for approval of the VS Designation, must follow guidance at:
https://provost.columbia.edu/content/description-proposals-required-visiting-scholarscientist-designations

- ❖ Up-to-date CV
- ❖ For faculty, researchers, industry professionals:
    - ▪ description of the project on which they are currently working
- ❖ For graduate students:
    - ▪ description of thesis/dissertation as outlined in prospectus of home institution
- ❖ Description of research done to date
- ❖ Explanation of why they want to come to Columbia, including:
    - ▪ the research they intend to accomplish
    - ▪ CU materials and equipment they seek to access
    - ▪ the CU faculty sponsor and how this sponsor (and any other CU faculty/staff) may be helpful

Reminder: All requests must be approved by a chair/dean/director prior to submission

VS Designation Review Process

In the Scholar Sponsorship Portal (SSP):

- Visual Compliance screening occurs
- the research is defined as *not* collaborative
- the Visiting Scholar/Scientist designation title is selected

Upon submission, the Academic Appointments team reviews the request to ensure:

- ❖ the research is independent
- ❖ the CU faculty sponsor role/relationship correlates with the VS designation
- ❖ the CU resources being sought correlate with the nature of the independent research

This initial review process may result in further questions

- ❖ such cases are "recycled" back to department
- ❖ resubmission must include the original documentation <u>and</u> the additional information

Columbia University Visa Sponsorship Policy

Those admitted to the U.S. as B-1/B-2 or ESTA (Visa Waiver Program) are not eligible for a University ID Card or UNI, Visiting Scholar/Scientist Designation

The decision regarding visa type should not be made by the proposed visitor, even though they consider it "easier" to enter as B-1/B-2/ESTA

If a prospective Visiting Scholar/Scientist enters as B-1/B-2 or ESTA, a change of status to J-1 inside the U.S. is not possible. It requires departing the U.S., applying for a J-1 visa abroad and re-entering in J-1 status.

Documentation for J-1 visa Sponsorship

Compile complete set of documentation to ISSO for J-1 Visa Sponsorship:

- ❖ CV, Passport
- ❖ Funding documentation to cover monthly living expenses estimated to be:
  - ▪ $3000/mo for the J-1
  - ▪ $1000/mo for J-2 spouse; $500/mo per J-2 child
- ❖ J-1 Visiting Scholar Fee payment confirmation ($500)

Allow 5-7 business days for ISSO's initial review process

- ❖ DS-2019s are issued through the federal SEVIS database – not immediate
- ❖ DS-2019s are sent via email with instructions on visa and port-of-entry processes
- ❖ ISSO generates UNIs for Visiting Scholars, not departments

J-1 English Language Proficiency

J-1 regulations require the visitor to demonstrate proficiency sufficient to function in US on day-to-day basis and achieve program goals

A phone, video conference or in-person interview

English3 option

Diploma from academic institution where English is the language of instruction

Proof of Citizenship from a country where English is the official language

Evidence of previous successful J-1 Exchange Program (DS-2019s)

English language Test (eg- TOEFL or IELTS) instruction

J-1 SEVIS Reporting Requirement

SEVIS is the federal database through which DS-2019s are issued

J-1 Exchange Visitors report arrival to the visa sponsor to "Activate" the SEVIS record

- J-1s sponsored by Columbia must complete SEVIS Report Form online ASAP
- J-1s *not* sponsored by Columbia (e.g. Fulbrights) do not complete ISSO's form
- ISSO's "welcome" email included a PID number to access the SEVIS Report Form

Important Tips for the SEVIS Report Form:

- The scholar's SEVIS Report Form is different from the <u>student</u> SEVIS Report Form
- ISSO does not have UNI in our database for new J-1 appointments, so PID is needed
- Other government databases require an "Active" SEVIS Record (E-Verify, SSA/SSN)
- DO NOT send your J-1 scholar for an I-9 or SSN unless SEVIS Report Form is done

Social Security Numbers

ISSO website provides an overview of documentation needed for SSN applications by visa type. J-1 categories (section 4 of DS-2019) require different SSN documentation.

Keep in mind:

- SSN documentation is based on visa status and J-1 category, not the academic title

- J-1 Exchange Visitors in non-student categories do not require a CU letter

- **J-1s must complete the SEVIS Arrival Report Form prior to SSN application**

- ISSO recommends allowing two business days for SEVIS data flow before SSN application

Visiting Scholars without J-1 Sponsorship

Within the Scholar Sponsorship Portal, you will be prompted with the question:

Will you be seeking Columbia's J-1 visa sponsorship?

While B-1/B-2/ESTA is not possible, under certain situations no J-1 is needed

- U.S. Citizens, Permanent Residents, Pending Immigrants, Asylees
- Fulbright scholars (J-1 is facilitated through IIE - Inst. of International Education)
- Dependent visa statuses (e.g.F-2, L-2) or externally sponsored visas (e.g. H-1B, F-1)

Compile a complete set of documentation for the VS designation:

- ❖ Government-issued ID (e.g. passport, driver's license) for UNI creation
- ❖ No J-1 Visiting Scholar Fee payment is required
- ❖ Academic Appointments documentation remains same, regardless of visa status

After Academic Appointments approves VS designation, SSP flows to ISSO for UNI creation

Required Documentation for Extensions

Extensions require <u>updated</u> documentation, not a re-submission of initial request

This includes the following for approval of the extended VS designation:

- <u>Updated</u> research proposal stating why additional time is needed
- Confirmation of the new end date and confirmation of CU faculty sponsor

This includes the following for extension of J-1 visa sponsorship:

- Updated funding documentation to cover the additional period
- Note: Certain J-1 categories have a restricted duration which may prohibit further extensions (e.g. J-1 short-term scholar has 6-month max; J-1 student intern has 12-month max)

Resources and Contacts

Always be sure the terms of the visit are consistent with Faculty Handbook

Resources available:

Office of Research and Compliance
- Visual Compliance Screening Guidance, Export Control

Faculty Affairs, Provost's Office
- VS Designation Process
- Overview/differences between different types of Visitors

ISSO
- UNI creation/issues, Visa Sponsorship, J-1 Orientations
- Post-arrival support and assistance
- Programming for J-1 Visiting Scholars and accompanying family

Thank you!

Q&A

@ColumbiaISSO

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