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

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
Agenda

This presentation will provide an overview of the:

• definition of a Visiting Scholar/Scientist (VS)
• workflow and approval process for designating VSs
• process for requesting J-1 visa sponsorship
• process to request an extension of a VS designation & J-1
• estimated processing times for each stage of workflow
• resources available to assist you at each stage of the process
Visiting Scholars/Scientists (VSSs)

Purpose of the VS visit:
To conduct independent (non-collaborative) research with a UNI, CU ID Card, library access and library borrowing privileges

Role of CU Faculty Sponsor:
To be a professional resource for the VS (not a P.I. or supervisor)

Duration of VS Designation:
Up to one year (visa permitting)
Extensions beyond one-year are rare and require compelling reasons as part of approval process

*Full Description of the VS Designation is in the Faculty Handbook
Required Documentation for VS Designation

Be sure the terms of visit correlate with Faculty Handbook definition of a VS:

❖ Independent (non-collaborative) research
❖ Visits involving work / supervision / co-publishing require an appointment
❖ CU faculty sponsor should share the same research interests and not be an advisor, supervisor or collaborator

Be sure the visit passes Visual Compliance (VC) Screening

❖ Send CV and a government-issued ID to your school’s designated VC screener
❖ For assistance in identifying your school’s VC screener, contact ISSO
❖ For assistance in understanding the VC screening process and purpose, contact:
   ❖ Michelle Avallone: Director of Export Control (ml125)
   ❖ Jan Cheesman: Asst. Director for Research Compliance (jtc2168)
Required Documentation for VS Designation

Compile complete set of documentation for approval of the VS Designation:

❖ Up-to-date CV
❖ Confirmation of Visual Compliance Screening
❖ Research Proposal, which clearly states:
   ▪ the nature of the independent research and the academic field
   ▪ the anticipated dates and duration
   ▪ the Columbia resources required for the research (e.g. a specific library, lab)
   ▪ the name of the CU faculty sponsor and the connection (not Barnard or TC)

Submit complete documentation to Academic Appointments division of Provost’s Office:

❖ VP Appointments team may require documentation be sent through a specific route
   ▪ By email to VPAcademicAppts@columbia.edu or another established channel
❖ All requests must be approved by a chair/dean/director prior to submission
VS Designation Review Process

VP Academic Appointments team reviews the VS designation request to ensure:

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

During Q&A the VP Academic Appointments team can address the duration of time needed for their initial review process

This initial review process may result in further questions to ensure the visit meets the Faculty Handbook definition of a Visiting Scholar/Scientist

❖ such cases are “recycled” back to department
❖ resubmission must include the original documentation and the additional information
Documentation for J-1 visa Sponsorship

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

- CV, Passport
- Confirmation of VP Appointments Approval
- Funding documentation to cover monthly living expenses estimated to be:
  - $3000/mo for the J-1 **increase from $2800/mo effective 1/1/2023**
  - $1000/mo for J-2 spouse; $500/mo per J-2 child
- J-1 Visiting Scholar Fee payment confirmation ($500)
- DS-7002 if visit fulfills an academic practicum for home school curriculum

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

- DS-2019s are issued through the federal SEVIS database – not immediate
- ISSO generates UNIs for Visiting scholars, not departments
- ISSO FedEx’s DS-2019 with instructions on visa and port-of-entry processes
Columbia University Policy Reminders

• 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

• The initial VS designation cannot exceed 12-months, per Faculty Handbook

• Extensions require justification, updated documentation and re-review
Required Documentation for Extensions

Extensions require updated documentation, not a re-submission of initial request

This includes the following for VP Appointments team:

- Updated research proposal stating why additional time is needed
- Confirmation of the new end date and confirmation of CU faculty sponsor
- Updated CV, confirmation of Visual Compliance (VC) Screening

This includes the following for the subsequent ISSO process:

- 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; J-1 student intern)
Resources and Contacts

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

Resources available:

- Office of Research and Compliance – VC Screening Guidance
- Faculty Affairs, Provost’s Office - VS Designation Process
- ISSO - UNI, Visa Sponsorship, Post-arrival support, Orientations, Programming for scholars and accompanying family

New Initiative: Revised Scholar Sponsorship Portal (SSP) - Spring 2023

- To incorporate VC Screening, VS designation process and visa sponsorship
- To expedite processing, minimize duplication of effort, embed VC process
- Trainings will be provided in Spring 2023 for SSP users and VC screeners
Thank you!

Q&A

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