J-1 Visa Sponsorship for Visiting Student Interns
Undergraduate or Graduate Students who are:

- enrolled in a non-CU postsecondary degree program
- **conducting research training** with a P.I. (a CU faculty member or officer of research)
- coming for a period not to exceed 12-months
- funded with no more than 49% personal funds of the $3000/mo amount to cover living expenses

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visiting-student-interns
Visiting Student Interns:
- P.I. provides training for a student practicum as per home school’s degree objective
- Engage in collaborative activities connected to their prospective degree
- Student-intern is the ‘primary beneficiary’

Visiting Scholars/Scientists:
- Independent research No collaboration or training
- Enrolled graduate students in Humanities, Social Science, Professional fields conducting independent research for thesis/dissertation

Staff Associates
- Employees subject to FLSA wage requirements
- Collaborative research services benefiting P.I. & CU
- P.I./CU is the ‘primary beneficiary’
B-Visitor Visa/ESTA/Visa Waiver Program

• 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, Visiting Student Intern affiliation, or an Academic Appointment.

• 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.

• A Visiting Student Intern can be under the visa sponsorship of another institution (e.g. an F-1 sponsor, IIE) but cannot be in visitor visa status.
VSI Workflow

Prior to initiating visa sponsorship with ISSO, your Dean/EVP/Director’s Office must approve the VSI title, based on:

- Visiting student intern (VSI) intake form
- Candidate’s CV
- Proof of funding (no more than 49% personal/family funds)
- Proof of enrollment
- Inventions Agreement for Visiting Personnel Using Columbia Research Facilities
- Draft invitation letter from P.I.

Once Dean/EVP/Director’s Office has approved the visit and authorized/signed the VSI invitation letter, visa sponsorship (if needed) can be initiated with ISSO through the Scholar Sponsorship Portal (SSP)

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visiting-student-interns
J-1 Visa Sponsorship for VSIs

J-1 is the only type of Columbia visa sponsorship possible for VSIs:

- Undergraduates > J-1 “student intern” category (DS-7002 req’d)
- Graduate students > J-1 “short-term scholar” or “research scholar” category
- Fulbrights will have J-1s sponsored by Institute of International Education (IIE)
- J-1 may be able to authorize Columbia research at multiple research locations, but research must be in-person (not remote)

If already in the U.S. in F-1/J-1 visa sponsorship through their degree program:

- CU sponsorship is not required
- The visa-sponsoring institution is immigration advisor (not ISSO)
- If paid, CPT or OPT or AT is required through that institution (not ISSO)
VSI Workflow with ISSO

Use Scholar Sponsorship Portal (SSP) to request J-1 sponsorship for your VSI

Helpful hints when completing the SSP:

Select title from drop-down list: *Visiting Student Intern Research* (regardless of payment source or degree level)

Will this scholar’s visit involve collaborative research? (includes research connected to prospective degree): *Yes*

Select “Yes”, so SSP will **not** route to Academic Appointments division of Provost’s Office

Will you be submitting a DS-7002 for an undergraduate student-intern? 

Select “NO”, *unless* the student is currently enrolled in an undergraduate program

ISSO $500 Fee payment is temporarily waived as part of roll-out *temporarily*

Select “fee does not apply”, similar to how J-1 appointments are handled
ISSO supporting documentation:

**VSI Invitation Letter** - Use Provost Office template. Must be signed by the office of the Dean/Director/EVP. ISSO requires proof that the approval process was followed.

**CV**

**Funding documentation of $3000/mo** (personal funds cannot exceed 49%)

  Additional $1000/mo for J-2 spouse; $500/mo for J-2 child (personal funds acceptable for J-2s)

**Passport ID page(s)**

**DS-7002 & J-1 Home School Form** *only if an undergraduate*

  - Use the VSI Intake Form to copy details into the DS-7002 template provided on ISSO website
  - DS-7002 Guide is provided on ISSO’s website
Helpful Reminders

J-1 process in SSP for VSIs is very similar to academic appointments
  Include **signed** invitation letter; Research activities are tied to their degree enrollment;
  No $500 fee temporarily

All required steps of VSI process need to be completed with **before** ISSO
  Docs must be submitted to Dean/EVP/Director, even if not required for J-1
  School’s approval must be issued **before** proceeding w/ ISSO

UNIs for VSIs must be issued by department in “contractor” role
  “Contractor” DIA role is temporary; UNI creation for VSIs is outside scope of ISSO
  “Visiting Student Intern” is a CU title and “Student Intern” is a J-1 category
    These are similar names, but have different definitions

ISSO cannot advise VSIs who are under visa sponsorship of another institution
  e.g. F-1s at other institutions, Fulbrights
Requirements Upon Arrival

J-1 VSIs under Columbia’s visa sponsorship must complete a SEVIS Registration

Refer to https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visiting-student-interns for guidance on:

- Centralized Tracking Form to be completed through above site, which also involves uploading the VSI intake form as an attachment
- PAC/LAF guidance for stipends, if your VSIs are paid by CU
- UNI issuance instructions
Thank you!
Q&A

Complete guidance on the Visiting Student Intern (VSI) title can be found at:

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/
https://provost.columbia.edu/content/visiting-student-interns

NEW: Guidance on Columbia University’s 5 types of visitors can be found at:

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

Official announcement on new websites to follow soon

NEW: Guidance on VS research proposals can be found at:

https://provost.columbia.edu/content/description-proposals-required-visiting-scholar-scientist-designations